

Shenandoah

church of Christ

TRIUMPH

“Do you know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it” (1 Cor. 9:24)

The Judges of Israel (25)

Gabriel Rodriguez

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Here are some final thoughts about the account of Samson before we proceed. While Samson judged Israel for 20 years, his rule was different from the other judges. The major difference being that Samson did not lead Israel into battle with the Philistines, gaining their independence, rather, the account of Samson was about his life and exploits while living among the people of Philistine (cf. 15:20). What Samson's life revealed was, although he was commanded and trained in the ways of the Nazarite vow (13:4, cf. Num. 6), and for this he was blessed (13:24), Samson (through free moral agency) began to deviate from the path of God by defiling himself with a dead corpse (14:5,8) and became addicted to lustful passions with pagan (Philistine) women (14:2-3; 16:1-2, 4-22), a no-no with God (Deut. 7:4-5). But despite these major character flaws and sinful conduct, the Bible says that “*the Spirit of the Lord*” was upon Samson and the reason for his source of physical strength (14:6,19). We later learn in 16:17-19 that his source of strength is somehow connected with his long hair, as part of the Nazarite vow.

Anyone looking honestly at this account should naturally ask some thought-provoking questions: (1) Why would God bless Samson with superhuman strength if he was living wickedly?, and (2) No where in Numbers 6 (the account of the giving of the Nazarite vow) does it equate long hair with superhuman strength?

The quick and standard answers given to these questions are: (1) Although God didn't approve of Samson's life, He still blessed him with strength in order to show Israel's dominance over Philistine, and (2) As long as Samson kept the Nazarite vow, Samson was blessed by God. The only problem with these answers are, to give someone superhuman strength while living in sin would only embolden the idea that his life was accepted by God and Samson had not kept the Nazarite vow as given in Numbers 6.

So how are we to make sense of these things. As my mantra goes, if it doesn't make sense then it must be discarded. Let's first begin with his source of

strength, because if we can figure this out then it will help with other difficulties. Was his strength supernatural? To answer this question, one must conclude that his strength was connected with the Nazarite vow; therefore, remove the vow and you remove his source of strength. So apparently, the Nazarite vow had something to do with his unusual strength. Let's consider two passages: Lamentations 4:7 and Amos 2:11-16. These passages give us insight into the life of a Nazarite. Lamentations 4:7 says that the Nazarites (in contrast to others) were “*more ruddy in body than rubies*.” The idea of “*ruddy*”, “*body*”, and “*rubies*” point to the concept of mental and physical excellence. In other words, the taking of the Nazarite vow afforded the person a better opportunity for mental and physical wellbeing. The Nazarite vow was about taking care of the mind first, which then was used to discipline oneself in keeping God's commandments (namely dietary laws and laws of cleanliness), which then lead to possessing a body that was firm, strong, and able. We see an example of this in Daniel 1:8-15 where Daniel, by choosing to eat vegetables and avoiding the king's meat and drink, was more mentally and physically able than all of the king's men. Hence, the keeping of the vow made one (naturally) mentally and physically strong, by avoiding the world's influences, which weaken someone. This is clearly seen in Amos 2:11-16 when Nazarites violated their vow, they became weak and powerless. Therefore, the Lord blessed Samson by giving him the opportunity to become mentally and physically strong, through the taking of the Nazarite vow. And indirectly, Samson was afforded the ability to be more mentally and physically dominant than the Philistines, and thus the reason the phrase “*the Spirit of the Lord*” now makes sense. Through the direction of God (the mind/plan of God, the Nazarite vow), Samson was prepared to do extraordinary “*natural*” feats, just like the ones king David (1 Sam. 17: 34-35) and David's mighty men (1 Chron. 11: 22-23) performed. When we do it God's way, then we afforded better abilities than those who lead their lives on their own. May God be praised!

How Israel Fell From Glory (23)

A Study in the Book of Isaiah

Church News and Announcements

CONGREGATION

The fellowship luncheon is today after our morning service. All our visitors are invited to enjoy the meal and fellowship with us.

The Ladies' Bible class and Men's Training Class will meet at 4:00 pm on January 22. The ladies will be studying lesson 5.

The Men's Dinner will be on January 24th and the ladies' get-together will be on January 26th. Sign up sheets are located in the foyer.

YOUTH

Our next youth devotional will be on January 20th at 7:00 pm in the annex building. The Dorries will be hosting this event.

YOUNG ADULT

Our next scheduled young adult devotional is for January 27th, but we are still needing a host family. Please see Gabriel if you can help.

AREA NEWS

See Bulletin Board for area wide meetings

In chapter 39, we read of king Hezekiah's grave mistake. After recovering from sickness, Merodach-baladan, the son of the king of Babylon, visited Hezekiah. We are told in verse 2 that Hezekiah in welcoming his guests, "*showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, gold, spices, precious ointment, all the house of his armor, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.*" This demonstration of Judah's wealth would show to be costly, as Isaiah, after learning what Hezekiah had done, said, "*Behold, the days comes, that all that is in thine house, and that which your fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. Thy sons, which you will beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon*" (vss. 6-7). Hezekiah responded unaffectionately, "*Good is the word of the Lord has spoken, For there shall be peace and truth in my days*" (v. 8). Surely this wasn't news king Hezekiah wanted to hear, and in my estimation shirked from any complicity to Judah's undermining; nonetheless, Judah's ultimate demise was her groping after sin and wickedness.

But the text tells us that good would come from all of this. As indicated in chapter 40, though despair and hardship would be experienced (v.4), this would prepare the people of God to respond in an appropriate way. It would help them to understand that they were nothing, likened unto the grass and flower that withers away (vss. 5-7). But God reminded them that His word endures forever (v.8). With God's word, the people of Israel could again strengthen themselves and be confident in their God and His blessed ways (vss. 9-11).

God then describes Himself to His people, reminding them of His power, abilities, and strengths, to a nation who unfortunately had gravitated toward idolatry. Therefore, the prophet Isaiah asks in gist, "*Who is like unto the Lord?*" (vss. 12-27). God is "*everlasting, the Creator of the ends of the earth, He does not faint, nor grow weary...He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increases their strength*" (vss. 28-29). What type of strength? Spiritual, meaning God will direct their minds to things that our holy, moral, and good. Hence, God will "*renew our strength and we shall run and not be weary, we shall walk and not faint*" (v. 31). May God be praised!

Bro. G. Rodriguez

WHAT SAITH THE LORD?

Nearly two thousand years ago an important question was raised before the Apostles after they had delivered the good news of Jesus's life, death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2:21-36). The hearer's conscience were pricked of sinful conduct (2 Cor. 7: 10-11) and asked: "*Men and brethren, what shall we do* (in order to be saved)? (Acts 2:37). Without hesitation, Peter elevated his voice and proclaimed: "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38).

Upon hearing the words of Peter, the people obeyed. This demonstrated their belief in Christ (Jn. 8:24). Hence, they repented of sin and confessed allegiance to the name of Christ (Matt. 10:32-33). Afterwards, the people were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:41, cf. Mrk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21) and given the hope of eternal life (Acts 2:38).

The people's submission to the words of salvation granted them a relationship with God the Father by accessing citizenship into the church of Christ (Acts 2:47, cf. Matt. 16:18; Mrk. 9:1; Acts. 2:1-4). As a member of Christ's body (Acts 8:4) the people were then encouraged to live faithful unto death by conquering sin in their lives (Rev. 2:10; Rom. 6: 4-12; 2 Tim. 4: 6-8). We then await for the coming day in which all men shall be judged the word of God (Jn 12:48; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10). Will we be ready?

SHEPHERD'S CORNER

The Book Of Acts Revealed The Church

Just before His departure from the apostles, Jesus "charge them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father...Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence...But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:4-8). As we continue to read, we find, "When the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place...And they were filled with the Holy spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1,4). A crowd assembled, and the apostles began preaching Christ. When the accusation was made, "These men are drunk" (Acts 2:13), Peter answered: "These are not drunken, as ye suppose...But this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:15-16). In this way, all the pieces of the prophecies come together.

The church was to begin "In Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3; Zech. 1:16) "in the last days" (Isa. 2:2-3), during the lifetime of the apostles (Mark 9:1) "with power." The power was to come when the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 1:8). All of it fits. The apostles were waiting in Jerusalem as Jesus instructed, The Holy Spirit came as He had promised, and they preached that "the last days" had now begun. We should expect the church (kingdom) to begin - and it does! When the gospel was preached, people asked, "What shall we do?" God replied by Peter's mouth, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins...Then they that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls...And the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved" (Acts 2:38,41,47). Jesus had promised, "I will build my church." That promise had now been fulfilled. That church had now been built, and when the Lord saved people, He added them to His church.

Bro. Wayne Holmes

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

BISHOPS/SHEPHERDS/ ELDERS

(1 Tim. 3: 1-6)

Brother Elwyn Hipp (830) 510-6311
Brother Wayne Holmes (210) 696-8597

DEACONS

(Acts 6: 1-5; 1 Tim. 3: 7-12)

Brother Raul Baltierra

(210) 843-9730

Brother Bill Dorries

(210) 253-0173

GOSPEL PREACHER

(1 Cor. 9:1-16; 2 Tim. 4: 2-5)

Brother Gabriel Rodriguez

(210) 315-4453



JANUARY 8

AM WORSHIP

Announcements: *D. Mathis*
 Opening Prayer: *R. Trevino*
 Song Leader: *E. Castillo*
 Lord's Supper: *B. Dorries; R. Baltierra, Jr.; J. Mokry; J. Guillen*

Scripture: *Lk. 23:44-49*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *Z. Watkins*

PM WORSHIP

Announcements: *D. Mathis*
 Opening Prayer: *A. Maldonado*
 Song Leader: *G. Rodriguez*
 Lord's Supper: *J. Watkins; R. Baltierra*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *S. Amos*

After Greeter: *B & B Dorries*
 Greeter/Usher: *E. Hipp*
 AV Duty: *T. Mayces*
 Elder in charge: *E. Hipp*

REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED

(by writing, calling, and praying)
 Wayne Holmes
 Joe Guillen
 Ina Dial
 David and Elijah Sudhoff
 Caral O'Banon
 Helen Gross (aunt of sister Sarah)
 Sam Amos (awaiting surgery)
 Parents of David Lyssy
 Sandra Welch (sister-in-law of Billie Dorries)
 Eloise Creek - recovering from a fall.
 She is at home now.

BATTLING CANCER:

Johna Dorries Abigail Reyes
 Graciola Anderson Sonny Cary
 Arturo Hernandez Tomas Guillen
 Renalto (brother-in-law of Joe Guillen)

SHUT-INS:

Dazel Ball
 Mildred Geest
 Sarah Cannon

TRAVELING:

A. Jacob; Courtney Cobb (Japan)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES JANUARY

Organizing Monthly Luncheon:
B. Garcia
 Preparing Lord's Supper:
Neaves
 Auditorium Service Duties:
Baltierra
 Wash baptismal garments; clean cry
 room
Baltierra
 Brother in charge of services:
R. Baltierra Sr.

AM Theme:
The Hall of Fame:
A Study of Hebrews 11
 PM Theme:
God's Love For His Church:
A Study of the Song of Solomon

AM Sermon:
The Account of Abraham (6)
PM Sermon:
The Second Song (2)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DEVOTIONAL

January 4: *M. de la Garza*
January 11: *E. Hipp*
January 18: *J. Guillen*

FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 1/4

Attendance:
 Sunday Bible Study 41
 Sunday AM Worship 59
 Sunday PM Worship 42
 Wednesday Bible Study 44
 Budget/Offering: **\$2,140.02/ \$1,452.18**

Weekly Bible Readers: NA (Adult Bible class)

SHENANDOAH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

Sunday: Bible Study at 9:30 am; Worship at 10:30 am;
 Worship at 5:00 pm.
 Wednesday: Bible Study at 7:00 pm