

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 (26)

Gabriel Rodriguez

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When one is afforded great blessings through God's provisions and insight, according to Deuteronomy 8:11-20, two things can happen: (1) Either we remember where our blessings came from, giving proper respect and thankfulness unto God, or (2) we can say, “*My power and the might of mine hand*” has gotten me where I am. This, I believe, is what happens in the case of Samson. As we learned last week, through the giving of the Nazarite vow, authored by God (Num. 6), individuals had the opportunity to be mentally and physically strong. But as we noted, once individuals received its blessings, they could either humble themselves, respect God, and give Him honor and glory, or they could conclude, that through their own efforts they've been able to do great things. You begin to see the latter with Samson. Through the blessing of strength, instead of using it for the honor and glory of God and humbling himself to see how he could be used by God, instead he asserts a selfish will to marry a pagan wife, touches a dead carcass, acts angrily and impetuously, exaggerates his condition of thirst, sleeps with a prostitute, and again entangles himself with a pagan woman. Instead of using his blessings to ultimately defeat the Philistines and their rule over Israel, Samson succumbed to self-aggrandizement, which in turn led him away from God, ending in his own demise. Although God was patient with Samson and helped him with thirst after killing 1000 Philistine men, Samson was ultimately rejected by God for his continued penchant for illicit sexual activity (16:20c). In his

conversation with Delilah, a pagan woman, who was trying to persuade Samson of where his strength lied, after numerous attempts and lies by Samson, he finally gave in and told her where his strength lied: “*There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man*” (16:17). What this revealed was, Samson's rejection of God for his own desires. As a result, Samson's hair was cut and subsequently, Samson lost his strength. But did his strength literally come from his hair? The logical and common sense answer is no. His strength came from practicing the Nazarite vow, and since hair in the ANE was symbolic of strength and honor, once Samson knew his hair had been cut, he equated this as God leaving him, thus weakening Samson mentally, which in turn weakened him physically. As a result, the Philistines were able to subjugate him and ironically, since Samson put so much stock on appearance, his eyes were plucked out and he was made to serve as a their slave. But in what capacity? According to 16:25, in connection with Philistine idolatry and Samson's known penchant for sex, the Philistines brought Samson for one of their idolatrous parties, shackled him between two pillars, and various women began to have sex with him. Disgraced and dejected, Samson prayed to God, and mustered enough strength to push apart the pillars of the house, killing himself and everyone therein (about 3000 souls). May God be praised!

How Israel Fell From Glory (24)

A Study in the Book of Isaiah

Church News and Announcements

CONGREGATION

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

God's plan, despite the failures of Israel, had been to restore Israel to her former glory and power for the sole purpose of ushering in a new king (Christ) and kingdom (the church of Christ). In chapter 41, God assures Israel of their future restoration by saying, "*But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*" (vss. 8-10).

And although God would restore Israel, God continued to remind Her of His strength and power; it is He that reigns and is inviolable (vss. 11-20). Why was this message given? Because God ultimately knew the outcome of Israel. Israel would eventually succumb to sin and wickedness (cf. Malachi), be rejected by God, leading to their ultimate destruction (Matt. 24), giving way to the coming of God's new king and kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19). This is why God makes a challenge to Israel: "*Set forth you case, bring your proofs. Let them bring them,*

and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come...that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified" (vss. 21-23). In other words, God wanted Israel to learn from her past and conclude, who ultimately was right and powerful, who is God, and whose word is final. God then said, "*Behold, you are nothing, and your work is less than nothing; an abomination is he who chooses you*" (v. 24). God reminded Israel that it was He who was responsible for their destruction as nations of the north were predicted to come to trample them underfoot (vss. 25-26). Therefore, there was none in Israel (i.e., seers and prophets) who had given her the right information, but they aimlessly followed "fae news" (vss. 27-28), and in the end, their words backfired, their works accounted for nothing, and the idols they served were as empty winds (v. 29). This travesty would then lead to God's ultimate purpose for Israel, which is the culmination of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - of a king and nation that would rule over all the world (Dan. 7:13-14). 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

Christ's Church Continued To Grow

As we continue to read through the book of Acts, we find that church growing as people were "obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). As the gospel was preached, "Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). Then we read, "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified...was multiplied" (Acts 9:31). This was the church of the Bible. Any church that began at some place other than Jerusalem is not the church of the Bible. Any church that did not begin during the lifetime of the apostles is not the church of the Bible. Any church that is not composed of all the saved is not the church of the Bible.

In the writing of the apostles (Romans through Jude), the church that Jesus built is pictured for us. The apostle Paul wrote of Jesus, "He is the head of the body, the church...God gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body...There is one body...He is the Savior of the body" (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1-22-23; 4:4; 5:23). The church that Jesus built is the "body of Christ." Surely no man-made church can make that claim! That church is also the bride of Christ: "I espoused you to one husband, That I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ...The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the church, being himself the savior of the body...Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it...For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I speak in regard to Christ and the church" (2 Cor.11:2; Eph 5:23-32).

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 15

AM WORSHIP

Announcements: *T. Mayces*
 Opening Prayer: *N. Esenowo*
 Song Leader: *E. Hipp*
 Lord's Supper: *E. Castillo; R. Trevino; G. Rodriguez; D. Mathis*

Scripture: *Mrk. 15:33-39*
 Sermon: *Guest Speaker*
 Benediction: *G. Rodriguez*

PM WORSHIP

Announcements: *T. Mayces*
 Opening Prayer: *E. Hipp*
 Song Leader: *R. Trevino*
 Lord's Supper: *Z. Watkins; M. de la Garza*

Sermon: *Guest Speaker*
 Benediction: *E. Castillo*

After Greeter: *J. Guillen*
 Greeter/Usher: *B. Dorries*
 AV Duty: *R. Baltierra Jr.*
 Elder in charge: *W. Holmes*

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)
 Lavender Nelson
 Lisa Bond (daughter of Pauline)
 Tita Cortez (sister of Sam Ramirez)

BATTLING CANCER:

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

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:

G. Speaker

PM Sermon:

G. Speaker

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DEVOTIONAL

January 4: *M. de la Garza*

January 11: *E. Hipp*

January 18: *J. Guillen*

FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 8/11

Attendance:

Sunday Bible Study 37
 Sunday AM Worship 53
 Sunday PM Worship 36
 Wednesday Bible Study 50
 Budget/Offering: **\$2,140.02/ \$1,620.26**

Weekly Bible Readers: NA (Adult Bible class)

SHENANDOAH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Fax: (210) 696-5181

Church email Address:

shenandoah@shenandoahcofc.org

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