

Sunday Night Message

December 2, 2018

Judges 15 – *Samson's Revenge*

Series – *Judges*

Text – Judges 15

Introduction

When we last left Samson in chapter 14, we saw him demand that his parents get him to wife a woman of the Philistines. The parents gave in to Samson's command, and began the process of making wedding arrangements.

We also saw Samson violate his Nazarite vow by going to the vineyards, and also by touching the carcass of a dead lion, which was forbidden for Nazarites to do.

Before the marriage is consummated, Samson proposes a riddle to the young Philistine men that were gathered as guests to the wedding. His wife to be eventually nags him to the point where he reveals the riddle to her, and then she betrays her husband by telling the young men the solution to the riddle. Because Samson loses the challenge, he is obliged to pay up with thirty changes of raiment and thirty sheets, which he gets by going into another Philistine village and killing thirty other young men, and then taking the clothing and sheets from them.

In the end, he ends up leaving town without consummating the marriage, and his bride to be is given to the best man.

As we have already stated, Samson is not an example of a man who is yielded to God. He wants what he wants, when he wants it, and he is also willing to break the rules to get what he wants. The fact that God uses this man at all is an illustration of the fact that God can use the worst of his children to bring glory to Himself and accomplish His will. Samson could certainly conquer, but unfortunately, he could not conquer his own flesh.

The thing that we need to consider as we study the life of Samson is not the fact that Samson fell short of what He should have been as a Nazarite and as a judge for the Lord; but rather we should consider that we are probably more like Samson than we would like to admit. If we would be honest with ourselves we would probably see that we are self-centered, spoiled, angry, impulsive, vengeful, unforgiving. You get the picture.

I Samson Returns to Claim His Wife (vs. 1 – 2)

Samson reconsiders and returns to Timnath during the wheat harvest, which was in May, to claim the wife that he left literally on the altar before the marriage could be consecrated. He even brings her a gift. He attempts to go in and consummate the marriage that he walked out on. The father of the Philistine woman apparently gave his daughter to Samson's best man. (his companion)

Here we see the impulsiveness of Samson. He wants (demands) a wife. He gets mad at her and leaves her on the altar. Now, he wants her back.

The Bible teaches that we should be slow to make a vows, but then never break the vows that we make.

"If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." (Numbers 30:2)

The father attempts to appease Samson by offering him his younger daughter.

II Samson Retaliates Because of His Wife (vs. 3 – 6)

This is a very incredible story that we have to take at face value by faith. Samson caught 300 foxes and took two at a time, tying their tails together with firebrands; and then released them into the crops of the Philistines, which destroyed them. Some say that the word translated, "foxes" could also refer to jackals, which would make some sense considering they travel in packs. Foxes are typically solitary creatures. Samson probably had help doing this.

Samson was not attacking the Philistines because God told him to, or because he was defending God's glory. He did it because of his own anger and his own revenge.

Wiesbe said:

As Christians, we need to beware of hiding selfish motives under the cloak of religious zeal and calling it “righteous indignation.” Personal vengeance and private gain rather than the glory of the Lord has motivated more than one “crusader” in the church. What some people think is godly zeal may actually be ungodly anger, fed by pride and motivated by selfishness. There is a godly anger that we should experience when we see wickedness prosper and defenseless people hurt (Eph. 4:26), but there’s a very fine line between righteous indignation and a “religious temper tantrum.”¹

The Philistines discover who burnt down their crops, and they also find out why he did it. They then take their own revenge on her and her father by slaughtering them by fire.

III Samson’s Revenge against the Philistines (vs. 7 – 8)

Samson is now furious because the Philistines killed his wife, and he slaughters them “hip and thigh,” which was a metaphor having to do with wrestling. It meant that Samson slaughtered them viciously or ruthlessly.

Samson knows that this act would cause the wrath of the mighty Philistine army down on him, so he flees to a cave in Judah.

IV Samson is Returned to the Philistines (vs. 9 – 13)

The men of Judah fear the Philistines and agree to bring Samson to them. Samson agrees to go voluntarily, and allows himself to be bound only on the condition that the men of Judah did not attempt to kill Samson themselves. Samson would not retaliate on the men of Judah, but he knew well what he would do the Philistines once he was given to them.

By the way – had the men of Judah simply trusted in God, He would have given them the victory against the Philistines with or without Samson. They did not need to turn Samson over to the Philistines.

Practical Thought – It would be better to fight for what’s right and potentially die for what is right than to give in to the wishes of evil men.

It is interesting to note that the Philistines seem to be operating with more restraint than Samson does. He is killing every Philistine he could find, but the Philistines had not killed anybody yet, except for the Philistine woman and her father.

V Samson Revives and Slaughters 1000 Philistines (vs. 14 – 20)

It is interesting that God gives Samson the victory with a jawbone, which he wasn’t supposed to be touching. And then, God miraculously provides water through that same jawbone.

Vs. 15 – 16 is a poem that makes a play on words. The Hebrew word for donkey is “hamor” and Hebrew word for heap or pile is “homer.”

Notice, however, that Samson’s song, unlike Deborah’s in chapter five, is all about him and doesn’t even mention God. God’s Spirit gave him the victory, but Samson claimed the credit for himself.

Ramathlehi – means the height of the jawbone

Enkakkore – means the spring of him that called

Even though Samson was not exactly Mr. Spirituality, he called upon God and God answered him.

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." (Jeremiah 33:3)

This victory gives Judah a reprieve from the Philistines for a period of twenty years. Even though Samson was operating selfishly, God brought him to the place where He used him to fulfill his purpose.

"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Romans 11:29)

Unfortunately, Samson’s frailties will get the better of him again in the future, but for twenty years, he does the job the Lord called him to do.

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1994). *Be Available* (p. 115). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

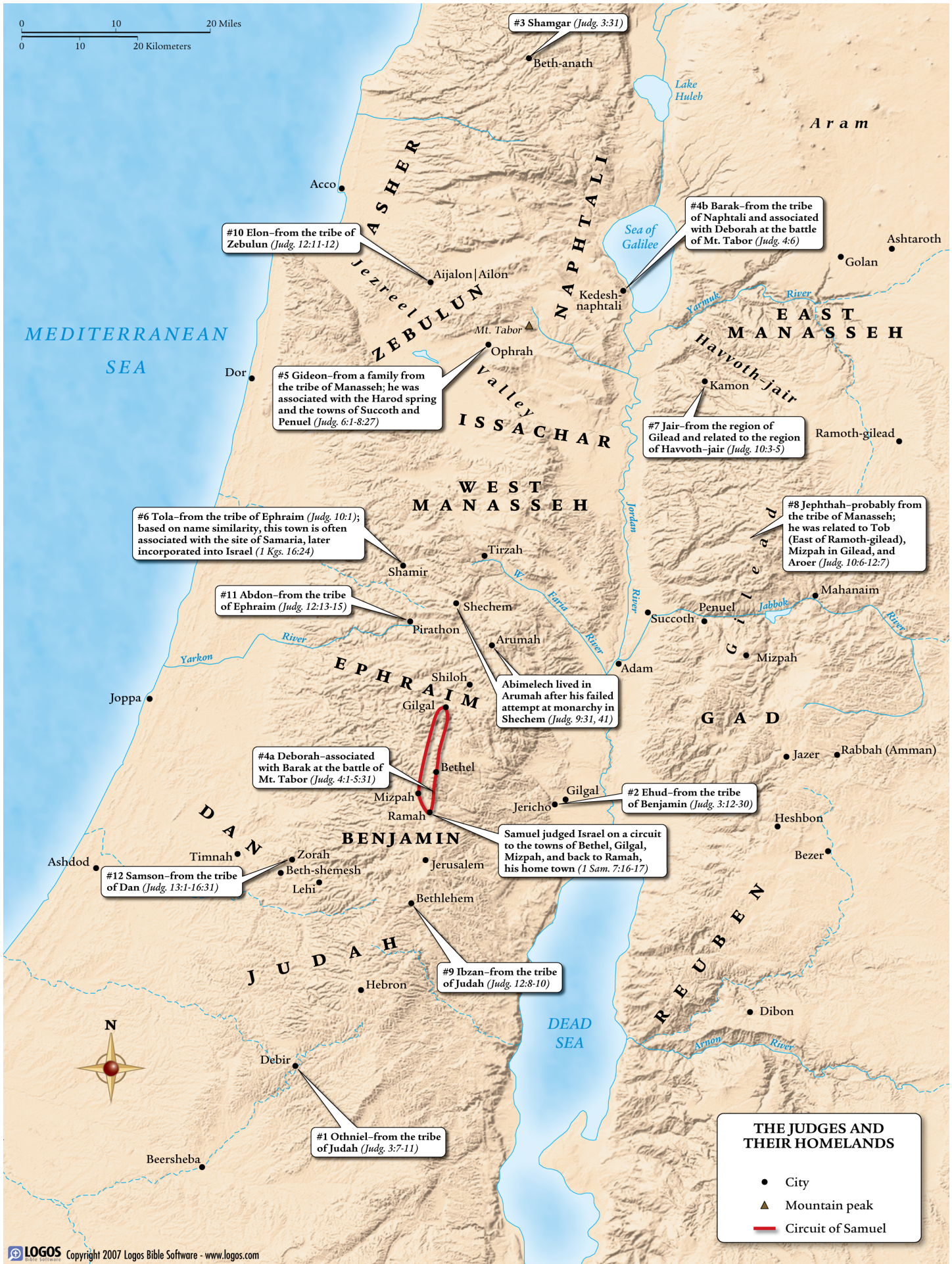
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JUDGESHIP OF SAMSON

- City
- ← Samson travels to Timnah (*Judg. 14:1*) and Ashkelon (*Judg. 14:19*)
- Philistine wheat fields (*Judg. 15:4-5*)
- ← Samson brought to Lehi (*Judg. 15:14*)
- ← Samson travels to Gaza (*Judg. 16:1*)
- ← Samson carries city gates from Gaza to Hebron (*Judg. 16:3*)
- ← Samson taken as prisoner to Gaza (*Judg. 16:21*)

0 10 20 Miles
0 10 20 Kilometers



#3 Shamgar (Judg. 3:31)
Beth-anath

#10 Elon—from the tribe of Zebulun (Judg. 12:11-12)
Aijalon|Ailon

#4b Barak—from the tribe of Naphtali and associated with Deborah at the battle of Mt. Tabor (Judg. 4:6)
Kedesh-naphtali

#5 Gideon—from a family from the tribe of Manasseh; he was associated with the Harod spring and the towns of Succoth and Penuel (Judg. 6:1-8:27)
Ophrah

#7 Jair—from the region of Gilead and related to the region of Havvoth-jair (Judg. 10:3-5)
Kamon

#6 Tola—from the tribe of Ephraim (Judg. 10:1); based on name similarity, this town is often associated with the site of Samaria, later incorporated into Israel (1 Kgs. 16:24)
Shamir

#8 Jephthah—probably from the tribe of Manasseh; he was related to Tob (East of Ramoth-gilead), Mizpah in Gilead, and Aroer (Judg. 10:6-12:7)
Mahanaim

#11 Abdon—from the tribe of Ephraim (Judg. 12:13-15)
Pirathon

Abimelech lived in Arumah after his failed attempt at monarchy in Shechem (Judg. 9:31, 41)
Arumah

#4a Deborah—associated with Barak at the battle of Mt. Tabor (Judg. 4:1-5:31)
Bethel

#2 Ehud—from the tribe of Benjamin (Judg. 3:12-30)
Jericho

Samuel judged Israel on a circuit to the towns of Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and back to Ramah, his home town (1 Sam. 7:16-17)
Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, Ramah

#12 Samson—from the tribe of Dan (Judg. 13:1-16:31)
Timnah

#9 Ibzan—from the tribe of Judah (Judg. 12:8-10)
Bethlehem

#1 Othniel—from the tribe of Judah (Judg. 3:7-11)
Debir

THE JUDGES AND THEIR HOMELANDS

- City
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Circuit of Samuel