

THE FIERCE JUDGE IN ISRAEL

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed for wisdom and read the Bible to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes below to meet the needs of your students.

Lesson Aim: Be dead to sin and its weaknesses, but alive unto God and His strengths.

Suggestion: Give next week's Student Lesson to your class to answer the questions. Let them share their answers in class. The questions below will reveal important truths you may want to emphasize.

Introduction: The story of Samson is difficult to evaluate because he had such contradictions in his life. He judged Israel, but failed to judge himself. He detested Philistine men, but desired Philistine women. He was physically strong, but morally weak. Samson's spiritual problems began when he denied the counsel of his parents. They wanted him to obey the LORD by choosing an Israelite wife instead of one from the Philistines. He overruled their objection and married the daughter of a Philistine (14:2, 3). When he did this, he also rejected the will of the LORD and his troubles began. Eventually the LORD made him learn the binding, blinding and grinding power of sin (16:21) as a testimony to the tragic end of believers who will not let the LORD have His way with them. Believers will be spared the tragedy of Samson, if they obey Romans 6:11. "Likewise reckon also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." However, the LORD honored his faith and used him for 20 years to begin His judgment of the Philistines (Jud 15:20; Heb 11:32).

How were the Israelites able to overcome the rule of the Philistines over them? 13:1, 5

When the Israelites turned from the LORD and returned to their evil worship of idols and the sins that accompanied it. So the LORD allowed the Philistines to rule over Israel for 40 years as punishment for their sins. He chose Samson to remove their oppressive rule, but He did not do it quickly, because they still loved their idols. Even Samson failed to live a holy life, so he did not fully deliver Israel from the Philistines. However, Samson had faith in the LORD for power, so he destroyed thousands of Philistines during his life and in his death. After his death, the LORD used the faith and godly work of Samuel and David to finally remove the rule of the Philistines over Israel. We learn that sin causes bondage and much pain. We need to hate sin and depart from it by the power that raised Jesus from the dead. Then we will be ready to help unsaved people to hate their sin, confess it to Christ and forsake it by His power. This is what is needed to be saved and set free as slaves to sin (Pro 28:13; Phil 4:13).

Who is the angel of the LORD that appeared to Manoah and his wife? 13:8-23

"Angel" means messenger in both the Hebrew and Greek languages. The context tells whether the angel is God's Son or a created being. In the case of Manoah and his wife, the angel of the LORD was the eternal, divine Son of God, bringing a message to them from the LORD. When the angel of the LORD ascended to Heaven, they realized they had seen God (13:22). There is little need for the LORD to send us an angel to bring His message to us, if we have a Bible. In it we have many messages from Him. So we need to read the Bible, the whole Bible, and find His messages to us (2 Tim 3:16-17).

How did Samson, chosen to be a Nazarite, show disrespect for the LORD? 13:5

The angel of the LORD told Samson's mother that she would have a son and he was to be a Nazarite. A Nazarite was consecrated to the LORD. Usually a Nazarite took a vow for a limited time, but Samson was chosen by the LORD to be a Nazarite from his conception to his death. He was not to drink anything that was fermented nor eat fresh or dried grapes. He was not to cut his hair or touch any dead body (Num 6:2-6). Since he was a Nazarite from conception, she was not to eat anything from the vine or drink wine or strong drink or eat any unclean food (13:4, 7, 14). Samson showed disrespect for the LORD when he demanded that his parents make arrangements for him to marry the daughter of a Philistine against their objection (14:2-3). Samson violated his Nazarite law when he touched the lion's carcass to eat the honey he found in it (14:8-9). He also made a feast for his wedding guests (14:10). The word for this feast indicates it was a feast of wine and strong drink. Knowing Samson's disregard for the Nazarite laws, it is likely that he drank with his Philistine guests. We may think that we can disregard the LORD's laws and do His work without any consequence as long as we have faith in Him. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; whatever a man sows that shall he also reap" (Gal 6:7).