

Judges 08-08-08b

Let's resume our study now, we're at the climactic episode with regard to Samson and Delilah, and we talked a little bit just at the end of the first lesson about the nature of these three previous attempts. There are Philistines hiding in the room and you're almost forced to the conclusion that perhaps they never revealed themselves on these three previous occasions. I mean, Samson would have had to be incredibly dumb after the first few times that these men leaped out of hiding to not check for them when he came over, or they would have to sneak in after the fact.

Is he getting inebriated so that he is sleepy? It just doesn't tell us any of these things. It would appear that the potential for his defeat and capture is imminent in each of these preceding situations, but it doesn't come to fruition. The men never leap out as soon as it becomes evident that he has not told the truth about the secret to his strength.

So, the Philistines become convinced that Delilah isn't going to get the secret. They don't bring men anymore, and so when she presses him and mocks him and continues to pester him daily with her words and press him, and these are the same verbs that were used of his Philistine wife trying to get the answer to the riddle. In Sola's vexed death, he told her all his heart, no razors ever come upon my head.

If I am shaven, my strength will leave me. I shall become weak and be like any other man. When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up one more time, for he has told me all his heart.

So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand. They were very wary early on that the men weren't ready to endanger themselves, and they had not paid Delilah in advance, waiting until it was a successful thing, but she is so sure now that they actually bring the money, and they're ready to do this deal. So she lulled him to sleep on her knees and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head.

Now, when it says shave off, one would think, no matter how sleepy you are, that if someone was going to give you a Yule Brenner, you would feel it. You've got a long, straight blade, and you're going to slice the hair very close to the scalp. Especially given the nature of blades and shaving and the whole thing in the ancient world, unless you were an Egyptian, it's far more likely that they simply gave him what we used to call a burr haircut, just a real short.

They would take each of these seven locks while he slept, lift it up, and just razor it off so that there's just an inch or two of hair sticking out of his head. That's all it takes is to remove these several feet of hair hanging off. It doesn't have to go clear to the scalp.

So he's basically just going to have one of these, I don't know what they call it today, we used to call it a butch haircut or a buzz cut or a burr haircut, a crew cut almost, a flat top, just very short. This is something that could be accomplished if they did it carefully while he's asleep.

Now, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, the idea here is that his Nazirite vow has been impinged.

It has been bent badly by contact with dead things, probably by drinking these Philistine banquets and things where drinking bouts his wedding night. It's very possible that there's alcohol involved in his relationship with Delilah. But none of these things completely severs his symbolic and evident status as a Nazirite.

And as Dan mentioned at the end of the first lesson, there's always been this one area of obedience. He may have broken every other thing, but he has kept the observance of never cutting his hair. And this is the last thing.

Once he does this, there's no part of his Nazirite vow that's not broken. And more importantly, this is visible to anyone who looks at Samson on any given day. They're going to see, well, whatever you are, you're not a Nazirite, not anymore.

My strength will leave me now, we can be like any other man. Samson seems to understand that the complete severing of that Nazirite vow is the key to undoing his strength. So when Delilah notifies the Philistines, they show up, she lulls him to sleep, she calls for a man and he shaves off the seven locks of his head.

If you look at the scriptures regarding the Nazirite vow, it doesn't say seven plates or seven locks, seven braids, but this is the way Samson did it. And that is the number of perfection. They're gone now.

Then it says, she began to torment him and his strength left him. Remember previously, she said, Samson, the Philistines are upon you, and he jumps up and whatever the previous idea of binding him was would fall away. Evidently, she does this again, and that's what it means by, this is a summary statement.

In Hebrew, sometimes for effect, it will stop and give you a summary statement and then go back and give you the details. This happens in Genesis chapter 2 after Genesis chapter 1. In Genesis 1, you're given a summary statement on the sixth day God created man in his own image and after his likeness. Then in chapter 2, you get the details.

But the summary statement is given for the sixth day in chapter 1, and it's a commonplace of Hebrew storytelling and Hebrew literary style. Well, that's what happens here, because this is the important point of the story. This is the climax of the whole Samson versus the Philistines episode up to this point.

So it slows down, it backs up, and literally when it says, she began to torment him, it says, she began to humiliate him, or she began to threaten him. She began to persecute him, she vexed him, she caused stress upon him in some way. And why does she do this? Well, this is to see if he still strong or not.

And his strength left him. Now we're going to get a little bit more detail. She said, the Philistines are upon you, Samson.

So he awoke from his sleep and said, I will go out as before at other times and shake myself free. This is likely he said this to himself, or he says it to Delilah. But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

This tells us that the Lord has been with him up to this point. So the Philistines took him and put out his eyes. There was a practice followed, for example, by the Persians later on, where they would take hot iron, hot needles, and basically blind people with them.

So they put out his eyes, they gouged out his eyes, and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him in bronze chains. Gaza, of course, is the place where he had had a great demonstrable symbolic victory before. And so this is quite the humiliation.

The bronze fetters, they're taking no chances. And you remember, in all of the previous episodes, nobody's ever put metal chains on him. They've bound him with ropes.

But it's pretty tough to get him to sit still long enough to hammer shackles onto him. But now that he's weak, he can be overcome, he can be maneuvered, he can be forced to submit to have these shackles put upon him. And he became a grinder in the prison.

They say, in fact, there's sort of an allusion to this, if you've ever seen, and I don't know why I've seen it, but I've seen the beginning of this movie, Conan the Barbarian, and I think he's captured by people as a child. And in the early part of the movie, they make him a grinder. And he's just a little guy, and he's pushing this thing around, and there's a lot of other people.

They've got all of these spokes sticking out. And one by one, these slaves die, and it fades in and out, and time is passing, obviously. It's like the little calendar pages flipping off in the old black-and-white movies.

And each time it fades in and out, there's fewer people at the spokes, and Conan is bigger. And they don't show his face, you know, they just show his feet going around and around. And by the time they get to the last scene, all of the spokes are empty, and Conan is Arnold Schwarzenegger, and he's this huge guy, and he's turning it all by himself.

And this supposedly accounts for Conan's great strength. Well, this is derivative directly from this story. They made Samson a grinder in the prison, and this was the work of slaves and of women.

And they would put a lot of them on there, and they put him on one of the spokes. And he's just another guy. He has no particular strength.

He's not a great brawny guy, chained with shackles, and he's using his great strength to grind for the Philistines. He's like anybody else. He's just another slave.

He's degraded and humiliated as any slave would be. But you have this little clue given in verse 22. However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

Now, once again, you have to, you know, people who are woodenly literal with Scripture get themselves in trouble. When it says the hair of his head began to grow again, did it ever stop growing? This is an allusion to the fact that the hair of his head began to get long again. His hair has been growing all the time.

His hair has been growing ever since he was in the womb. His hair didn't stop growing and then suddenly start growing again. His hair began to grow long again after it had been shaven.

And you've got to sort of fault the Philistines for this. I mean, what were they thinking? Well, the secret to the guy's strength is his hair. Let's run him into the barbershop once a week and we've got nothing to worry about.

But the Philistines, for their part, seem to have forgotten this detail. So, obviously, many months later, the lords of the Philistines gather together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon, their god, and to rejoice. Now, just for fun, if you turn over to 1 Samuel chapter 4, I told you this is sort of contemporaneous.

And in that chapter, you remember this is Hophni and Phinehas, they go out with the Ark. This is the battle of Aphek, they are defeated. You have Ichabod and this whole thing going on.

And then turn to the next chapter, chapter 5. So, after this capture and Hophni and Phinehas are slain, Eli falls over and breaks his neck. Ichabod is named and so on. Then the Philistines, in chapter 5 of 1 Samuel, took the Ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

When the Philistines took the Ark of God, they brought it, where? To the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon fallen on his face to the earth before the Ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again.

When they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon fallen on his face before the Ark of the Lord. So, when they arose, let's see, I keep losing my place. How many times did they do this? They brought it in and they did it again.

And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were broken off from the threshold. Only Dagon's torso was left. Therefore, neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

They're all superstitious about the power of the threshold. But the hand of the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod. So, Dagon, the principal god of the Philistines, and he was often pictured as sort of a fish god.

He had the body of a man and the head of a fish. That's why he's got arms that can break off.

But you go back now to Judges.

The lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer great sacrifice to Dagon, their god. Dagon is getting it from both sides here. He's falling on the threshold up there in Ashdod.

And these men here in Gaza gathered together to worship him and to rejoice. And they said, Our God has delivered into our hands Samson, our enemy. When the people saw him, they praised their God.

For they said, Our God has delivered into our hands our enemy, the destroyer of our land, and the one who multiplied our dead. So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may perform for us. Now the fact that this is evidently the first great celebration of the defeat of Samson tells us that this is probably a period of time between his eyes being gouged out and being put to work grinding and this celebration.

This can't be more than a few months. It could be that maybe in the middle of the growing season this takes place and six weeks, eight weeks, ten weeks later they have a great festival and celebration. And the theme of the celebration, which they might have held in any case, but the theme of this one is, Boy aren't we glad that old Samson is gone.

So it's obviously enough time has passed that Samson's hair has visibly grown. Now if his hair is like mine, that wouldn't take too long. Some people's hair seems to grow really slowly, others grow very quickly.

I don't know that there's any supernatural growth taking place, but it has grown enough. How much is enough? I don't know. It would have to, I would think, be several inches.

How long does that take? I don't know. But something, not more than a season has gone by because this is not old news. Because the people are singing and making up songs and so on.

So it happened when their hearts were merry. And once again, alcohol is a part of these Philistine celebrations in which Samson used to participate. And there are so many culminating and bracketing events here.

Samson's contact with the Philistines begins with a feast. It begins with a celebration. It begins with poetry and revelry and merriment.

And this is how it's going to end. Call for Samson that he may perform for us. And they called for Samson from the prison and he performed for them.

Now, is he doing the old buck and wang or the soft shoe? Is he juggling? No. They basically parade him. They just want to see him clomping about in his chains.

He's not a performer per se. He's not an entertainer. They're not calling him back for an encore as time goes by or something.

They parade him. They humiliate him. Their chicken bones and things are flying at him from the chief seats.

They station him between the pillars. They just want to look at him and mock him and throw stuff at him and humiliate him. This is the entertainment that he provides.

He is the target of their abuse. Now, let me just remind you of some of the things we've talked about in the last few weeks about the foreshadowing of the first advent of Jesus Christ here, where he was tested three previous times by Satan at the beginning of his ministry. He was attacked for three years during his ministry by those who had animosity and enmity toward him.

The leadership in Israel tried to arrest him, tried to take him. People tried to throw him off of cliffs even near his hometown. Three temptations by Satan.

Three years of opposition from the leadership in Israel. Ultimately, he is betrayed by one close to him, and information about him is given to those who want to do him harm as we are studying right now in the Gospel of John. Judas hands him over, para didomi, to his enemies, and Samson is essentially handed over by this lady that he has taken into his confidence.

The one who has eaten my bread has lifted up his heel against me. Well, in this case, Samson's girlfriend has lifted up her heel against him. And so now he is humiliated, he is mocked, he is being despised.

And this, of course, the trials of the Lord Jesus. How many trials did Jesus have before he was crucified? He's got the trial before the Jews. He's got the trial before two different Romans, Pilate, and there's three.

There's three main trials. So this is not without its significance. And obviously there are limits to the comparison.

Samson is not a man after God's own heart. Samson is a man of impulse and of passions. The Lord Jesus Christ is the exact opposite of those things.

But in large figures, in general terms, the physical presence that Samson represents as the beginning of deliverance foreshadows the physical presence of Jesus Christ, who empties himself and takes on the form of a servant and comes in the likeness of men the first time. So Samson prefigures, in certain ways, the first advent of Christ in the same way that David is going to prefigure, in certain ways, the second advent of Christ. One is the beginning of deliverance, the other is the culmination of deliverance.

One is physical in nature. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. The other is going to be spiritual in nature.

And there's going to be the millennial reign of David on the throne, Christ with his bride, and so

on. So just in loose terms, there is food for thought here as far as God beginning deliverance in an unexpected way and the enemies of Israel are taken in. This is a version of the Trojan horse.

By the foreknowledge of God, they have taken into their bosom the agent of their destruction. And they think that they have accomplished a victory and that this is their trophy. I mean, if you think about it, there are a lot of similarities to the whole Trojan horse story here.

Look, here's a symbol of our great triumph. Let's bring it in and dance around it. And that is the means of their ruination.

Our God, small g, has delivered into our hands our enemy, the destroyer of our land and the one who multiplied our debt. There are a lot of people who were celebrating when the Lord Jesus was taken out of the picture. Ostensibly, this is going to be the end of the whole Jesus movement, because he's been captured and killed.

While their hearts were merry, call for Samson that he may perform for us, they stationed in between the pillars. Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them. Well, this is the temple of Dagon, the fish deity.

He's got the body of a fish. Sometimes he has the head of a fish. Sometimes he's a fish with the head and hands of a man.

It kind of depends on the time and the different versions of him, in the same way that you see different kinds of Buddhas and different kinds of portrayals of Indian gods and goddesses. He's a male deity. He was a symbol of water and all of the renewing and life-giving forces of nature.

And so he's the life-giver, the benefactor God, primarily associated with water. They are real happy and of course security is lax because they don't see any further threat in Samson. So there's an attendant or a keeper who is guiding him because of course he's blind.

You've seen Stevie Wonder or Ray Charles led to a piano, led on and off the stage so he doesn't trip. Samson is without sight and so somebody has to keep him from bumping into things and falling over and crushing people. So he says to this attendant, let me loose and let me touch the pillars upon which the house is built that I may lean upon it.

The house, the temple, was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there. About 3,000 men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.

So evidently there is a gallery type of construction here where you've seen this. I've been in libraries and things where in fact the library at Dallas Seminary is built this way. The ground floor of the library is as you would expect.

There's floor all over and it's sort of squarish. And then as you go up there are four sides and the book stacks down at one end but then there's this giant square hole and you can be on the

second floor, the third floor, or the fourth floor and you can look down on the ground floor. For those of us that aren't fond of heights, that's not a real comfortable feeling.

But you can be up there and so this is evidently some sort of square temple and if you think about it, because of the nature of its construction, it's got this giant hollow in the middle and there are people up on the roof who are looking down at Samson who is on the ground floor. So this gives us a clue as to how it is built. It's not a colonnaded structure.

If it were, any one or two pillars that Samson could push over would not collapse the entire building. But this is basically a hallway that's been bent four times to make a square and this hallway is supported at any given point by double pillars, inside pillar and outside pillar. And so probably in the middle on one side, Samson has been stationed.

And it's not super wide at that point because he can touch two pillars at the same time and they're close enough together that he can exert some force to push them apart. When he does this, there's going to be sort of a domino effect. And this thing, you can imagine that if you could hit the right two pillars, it would collapse in sort of a spiraling collapse and everybody below is going to be crushed, everybody above is going to fall and be messed up in the rubble because this thing could be several stories high.

And remember also, there are so many revelers on the top floor. There's a lot of weight up there, a lot of weight. There's 3,000 people on the roof.

And even modern buildings have collapsed in recent years with an overload. By the way, did you read, what was it here in Texas, one of the Texas universities, a bunch of cheerleaders got all happy and decided they were going to see how many of them could fit in an elevator. The maximum capacity elevator is 10.

And they got 25 cheerleaders in there, but they wedged them in so tight the doors wouldn't open. And a couple of them fainted and nobody could get out. They overloaded the elevator.

And of course, they had to call firemen. It was some time before they could get them all out. And the moral of that story is, pay attention to the signs that say maximum capacity 10.

What were they thinking? You can imagine college age kids, what are they thinking? It's not hard to imagine they weren't thinking. That's how it happened. Well, these Philistines aren't thinking.

They're married, they're celebrating. There's way too many people on the roof. The building is already overloaded.

So, Samson gets his hands on these pillars and we get these details. The temple is full of men and women. There's 3,000 men and women on the roof watching while Samson is displayed down below.

So Samson, for the first time in the account, for the first time in two and a half chapters, calls on the Lord. This is the first time we've ever seen Samson call on the Lord, ever, except for water. I take it back.

He did one other time when he was thirsty. But he called to the Lord saying, Oh Lord God, remember me, I pray. Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my nation Israel, for my people of the twelve tribes, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, these Philistines who have defied the Lord God of my fathers.

I mean, to the last. You've got to give Samson credit. The guy, if nothing else, is consistent.

Lord, strengthen me, because I want vengeance for my two eyes. He's not a lot different than the man that called out for water. Look, I've won this victory for you here.

Can't you give me some water? So strengthen me that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes. Now, if he is calling out for strength, what does that tell you about his current level of strength? Is he, like Chicago, feeling stronger every day? Every sixteenth of an inch that his hair grows, he's been feeling stronger every day? He knows he's not strong. And that's why he has to call out to the Lord.

He didn't call out to the Lord when he got bound to the loom or when he was bound with the new cords by the men of Judah. But he calls out now because he's not strong in and of himself. Even though his hair has begun to grow, his strength has not returned in its former degree.

So Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. Then Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he pushed with, it says, all his might in your new King James.

Notice all his is in italics because it's not his might that's going to do this. He pushed with power. Where did that power come from? God answered his prayer.

The temple fell on the Lord's and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life. And once again, when you think about the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in his first advent, his coming in the flesh, the fullness of deity in bodily form, his first instance of deliverance, which was more profound? Jesus' ministry in his life or his ministry in his death? He healed all who came to him.

He raised the dead. He fed the crowds. He stilled the waves in the water.

He cleansed the lepers. He did a lot of things in his life, but his main accomplishment in the first advent was in his death. And he did far more damage.

He did the ultimate damage to the enemies of sin and death and ultimately of Satan in his death than he ever did in his life. Samson prefigures. And remember, there have been seven

previous cycles in Judges.

There have been seven previous encounters with the Philistines in Samson's life, and it is the eighth. What does the eighth represent in the Hebrew mindset, in the law of Moses, in the culture of Israel? The first real prominent association with the number eight comes way back in Genesis 17 with the mark of the covenant with God. What is that? Circumcision.

You have it in Genesis. You have it in the New Testament with Paul. I'm a Hebrew.

The Hebrews circumcised on what day? The eighth day. Jesus Christ himself, as observant parents, Mary and Joseph, had him circumcised on the eighth day. It is a mark of the covenant.

You go to Leviticus 14 and the cleansing of the leper, and he is shaved and bathed and all of his hair is removed on the eighth day. He's like a newborn infant. He's born anew.

He's born again into the fellowship and the society and the environment of Israel. He's no longer outside the camp. The cleansed leper has been born anew.

And it's symbolized by taking away all of his hair, even though he's a man, making him look like a baby again. And he's washed just like you would wash a newborn babe. The eighth day, it is a day of renewal.

It is a day of a new beginning. It is a day of entrance into a new relationship with God. So this eighth encounter with the Philistines, this is when God is finally able to do something new with Samson.

Instead of killing 30 here and a couple of hundred there and making little mounds out of them with the jawbone of a donkey and so on, now he has done significant damage. This is what they try to do. Remember the briefcase that the guy brought in to try to blow up Adolf Hitler? And it nearly succeeded.

You want to try to cut the head off of a serpent. You want to find the leadership and eliminate them. You want to find the main general.

You want to blow up the high-ranking guys. All of the lords of the Philistines are here. All of their princes, all of their smart guys, all of their leadership is there.

This is going to be a huge blow. The Philistines are never going to be the same after this. God is dealing with them in Ashdod and God is dealing with them in Gaza.

And this is going to be the beginning of that deliverance. Pretty soon, a few decades hence, there's going to be problems for the people of Gath. And those five giant brothers are all going to be slain.

This is the beginning of deliverance. Now, one of the things to point out here, and I backtracked just a little bit, you remember that no matter what Samson did, he failed in a lot of ways, he was

apathetic and indifferent in a lot of ways, but God didn't leave him through his disobedience. God was still at work in him to will and to do for his good purpose.

And you remember, in him means among. God is at work among you. But in this case, God is working in and through Samson, even though Samson doesn't particularly know it.

And there is a principle of application there that if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, regardless of where you stand, if you have any interest, if you have any modicum of obedience, if you have faith as a grain of a mustard seed, the one thing Samson has always done is he's remembered that he has a commission from God, and he has observed his Nazarite vow with regard to his hair, the most obvious and visible symbol. The others are episodic. Did you touch a dead thing? Did you partake of the fruit of the vine? Those are episodes.

Those are things that come and go. You can get over that. A few days go by, and nobody looks at you and says, oh, look, he has touched something dead, or oh, look, he's partaken of graves.

But his daily appearance, that's an ongoing thing. It's the difference between committing a sin, which we do in our lives, and we can acknowledge and be cleansed and forgiven, and having a lifestyle pattern that is utterly separated from God. It's two different things.

Samson's hair reflects a basic connection to God that he has never before broken. And he himself does not shave his own hair off, does he? Through compromise and through indulgence and permitting something in his life that shouldn't be there, it is taken from him. And he could try to argue with God and say, well, you know, I didn't break my vow.

Someone else shaved my head. That doesn't cut it. He allowed Delilah into his life, and that removed his ongoing, daily, observable connection to God.

We have a responsibility. We may sin and we may fail. We may not be spiritual giants, but all of us as believers have an obligation before the Lord to walk in the light, to retain our daily, ongoing pattern of life that reflects awareness of God and our relationship with God.

And we can, by repetition and by getting impatient with pressure and contentious things in the world, we can compromise to the point that we finally sever that last connection. Samson is still a man of God. He doesn't have to get saved again.

He doesn't have to do anything other than return to God. And God honors the little bit of hair that has grown back out of his head, essentially. That's why Scripture makes a note that his hair began to grow.

Why would it say that when he calls out and God gives him strength that he clearly doesn't have when he first touches the pillars? He probably tests him and says, no, can't budge these things. Oh God, give me strength so that I can get vengeance for my two eyes. And then suddenly he has the strength.

So it's not directly connected to his hair, but it is as though God looks down and says, I'll give you credit for that inch and a half that has grown out. God is so merciful and God is so gracious. God is so willing to meet us more than halfway.

He honors Samson's prayer. Samson is a rascal. Samson is a disobedient, self-indulgent, self-centered, arrogant pain in the rear.

But he has a relationship with God. Samson has two prayers recorded in scripture and God answered them both. God is willing to respond any time Samson will turn to him.

And it's the same with us. People say, well, I've gotten too far from God. I'm way beyond help.

God doesn't want me. I could never come back and do that. I'm this, I'm that, I'm the other.

That's arrogant and it's self-centered. If you're alive and breathing air, the opportunity exists. God is merciful.

God reserves mercy for a thousand generations to those who will turn to him. It is never too late and it is never too soon to turn back to God. Well, God achieves his objective in dealing the Philistines a severe blow.

The leadership is taken out and Samson, it's a shame that it's only in Samson's death that he really accomplishes a great blow for God against the enemies of Israel. And he thinks, well, now I've got vengeance for my eyes, but this has far greater repercussions. God is going to use it in a much greater way.

Many times God works in our lives in ways beyond what we can ever see or understand. We think, well, God answered that prayer and provided it for me and I was able to get this done or that done. God has far grander plans and purposes that are being accomplished.

And we can hardly help being somewhat myopic and short-sighted. And we pray that God will grant us what we want in our lives. When God answers those prayers, many times he is doing things far beyond what we could ask or think.

But if there is a single lesson to remember from the life of Samson, it is that God is going to accomplish his purpose with us or without us. Do you want him to accomplish it on the positive side, where you're a man after God's own heart and you're a David? Or do you want to accomplish it almost in spite of yourself, trying to use what's available in the energy of the flesh? I think a lot of the evangelism and a lot of the ministry that takes place today, God is having to use the Samson mode to get things accomplished that he wants done. And people say, see, I'm doing God's will because look how God has blessed.

It's a Samson thing. Samson is not right with God. Samson is not personally blessed and doesn't get personal credit for any of these things.

It's in spite of him that God accomplishes what he wants to do. In so much of modern

Christianity, where there are results, it's the Samson mode and not the David mode. God will get his work done one way or the other.

But how much better to be David than to be Samson? Well, we'll pick up here next time and begin a very fascinating section of the book of Judges. The eight cycles here are now complete. And we're going to move into almost a book two of the book of Judges, beginning in chapter 17.

And that's where we'll start next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the graphic way that you illustrate those principles and those doctrines that pertain to the way we spend our time here on this earth.

We ask that God the Holy Spirit will remind us and convict us in the areas where we need to improve and to pursue our responsibilities before you, so that our lives will reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name, amen.