

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament
The Judges/Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson
Lesson 21

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JUDGES 12:8-15

X. IBZAN, 12:8-10

- A. Ibzan differs from Jephthah who had only one daughter.
- B. Whereas Jephthah offered his daughter unto God, Ibzan obtained husbands for his 30 daughters.
- C. He judged Israel 7 years.
- D. He died and was buried at Bethlehem.

XI. ELON, 12:11-12

- A. His name means oak.
- B. He judged Israel for 10 years.
- C. He died and was buried at Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

XII. ABDON, 12:13-15

- A. His name means service or servant.
- B. He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on 70 donkeys.
- C. He judged Israel for 8 years.
- D. He died and was buried at Pirathon in the land of Ephraim.

XIII. SAMSON (JUDGES 13 - 16)

- A. The repeated cycle:
 - 1. Israel at peace; Israel does "*evil in the sight of the Lord*"; the Lord delivers them into the hands of the Philistines for 40 years. (13:1)
- B. Summary of Samson's life:
 - 1. A judge of Israel for 20 years. Judges 16:31
 - 2. From the tribe of Dan, son of Manoah; miraculous birth; a Nazarite from his mother's womb; the mother forbidden to drink wine or strong drink, or to eat any unclean thing during her pregnancy. Judges 13:2-7; 13:24-25
 - a. The Nazarite vow. Numbers 6:2-21
 - 1) Separates himself to the LORD, v. 2
 - 2) Separates "*himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.*" vs. 3-4
 - 3) "*All the days of the vow of his separation "no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled.... Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow."* v. 5
 - 4) "*...he shall not go near a dead body. He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head.*" vs. 6-7
 - 5) "All the days of his separation... be holy to the LORD." v. 8

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- b. The Nazarite vow was usually for a short duration; in the case of Samson, it was for life.
- c. There is a difference between taking the Nazarite vow and being a Nazarene, a person from Nazareth, like Jesus was. Matthew 2:23
- 3. Desires a Philistine woman for his wife; slays a lion. Judges 14:1-7
- 4. His marriage feast and tells a riddle. Judges 14:8-19
- 5. Slays thirty Philistines. Judges 14:19
- 6. Kept away from his wife. Judges 14:20; Judges 15:1-2
- 7. Is avenged for being kept away from his wife. Judges 15:3-8
- 8. His great strength. Judges 15:7-14; Hebrews 11:32
- 9. Slays a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. Judges 15:13-17
- 10. Miraculously supplied with water. Judges 15:18-19
- 11. Lives with Delilah, a harlot; her plotting scheming with the Philistines to overcome him. Judges 16:1-20
- 12. Is blinded by the Philistines and confined to hard labor in prison; pulls down the pillars of the temple, meets his death and slays a multitude of the Philistines. Judges 16:21-31; Hebrews 11:32

C. LESSONS:

- 1. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO MARRY WISELY AND NOT LET OUR PHYSICAL DESIRES CONTROL OUR DECISIONS!** Judges 14:1-3
 - a. Samson took a wife of the Philistines.
 - 1) His parents did not approve.
 - 2) The law of Moses forbade marriage of Israelites to Philistines (**Deuteronomy 7:3**)
 - 3) However, God was able to use this situation for good (v.4)
 - 4) Ultimately, Samson's wife and father-in-law were murdered by the Philistines.
 - b. Samson allowed that which pleased him to make his choice for marriage. (Judges 14:7).
 - 1) Before marrying, one should reflect upon what God desires, not what is pleasing to them. (**Ephesians 5:15**).
 - 2) We must never forget marriage is a lifelong decision. (**Matthew 19:5, 6**)."
 - 3) A mate that will help you... **Colossians 3:5-10**.
- 2. **PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION!** Judges 16:4-21
 - a. Samson was taken with the beauty of a woman. The text says he loved her.
 - b. The Philistines convinced her to find out the secret to Samson's strength.
 - c. At first Samson tried to discourage her. He told her the secret was:
 - 1) to bind him with seven green twigs that were never dried.
 - 2) Then he told her to bind him with new ropes which had never been used.
 - 3) Next, to weave his hair with the web.
 - 4) Cut his hair.

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- d. Surely Samson must have known the Philistines were coming after him because in every test of what might have been his secret, Delilah would say, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!"
 - 1) Why did he tell Delilah about his hair?
 - 2) Possibly, he might have thought the Lord would be with him regardless what he said or did. **(16:20)**
- e. No one is too high that they are above God.
 - 1) **Proverbs 16:1; Obadiah 1:3,4**
- 3. **WHILE WE YET LIVE, IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO TURN TO GOD!**
 - a. First the Philistines put out Samson's eyes so that he could not see (16:21).
 - b. Then they put him into a mill to work as an animal (16:21).
 - c. The Philistines gave credit for Samson's capture to their god Dagon and made a celebration to honor their god.
 - d. During this celebration, they called for Samson to mock him.
 - e. It's at this time Samson called upon the Lord one last time (Judges 16:28).
 - f. The Lord returned Samson's strength to him.
 - g. Samson pushed against two of the support pillars in Dagon's temple.
 - h. It was said that Samson slew more in his death than he did in his life (Judges 16:30).
 - i. Samson's life was not entirely praiseworthy:
 - 1) He married outside of Israel against the law of Moses.
 - 2) He fraternized with harlots.
 - 3) He was not above telling an occasional lie from time to time for his own purposes.
 - 4) And he allowed the "pretty face" to control his life.
 - j. However, in the end, Samson gave himself over wholly to the Lord.
 - 1) Samson was made blind and treated like an animal which, no doubt, helped him to realize Who had given him his strength.
 - 2) How many times do we fall into this situation?
 - 3) Do we recognize from whom our true strength comes, everyday?
 - 4) Samson repented of his evil attitudes in the end and God granted him a blessing.
 - 5) And Samson's name went down into faith's hall of fame (Hebrews 11:32).
- K. God is a merciful and forgiving God.
 - 1) **Psalms 37:23-26; 103:8-18; Luke 6:36; Hebrews 8:12**

Lesson 22

Eli and Samuel

Read - 1 Samuel 1:1 - 7:17