

SAMSOM - THE PRODIGAL SON

By Ray DeCarlo

RECOMMENDED READING

- PATRIARCHS & PROPHETS, CHAPTER 54 - SAMSON, PG. 560-568
- JUDGES 13-16
- SDA BIBLE COMMENTARY, VOL.2, PG. 381-400
- SIGNS OF THE TIMES, JULY 1, 1903 - WORLDLINESS & LICENTIOUSNESS / LESSONS FROM THE PAST
- SIGNS OF THE TIMES:
 - 1) SEPT. 15, 1881 - A LESSON FOR MOTHERS
 - 2) SEPT. 22, 1881 - TEMPERANCE IN THE FAMILY
 - 3) SEPT. 29, 1881 - THE MOTHER A MISSIONARY
 - 4) OCT. 6, 1881 - AN UNWISE MARRIAGE
 - 5) OCT. 13, 1881 - IN THE DOWNWARD PATH

ANALYSIS OF JUDGES 13-16

JUDGES 13

- VS.1 - PRELUDE - ISRAEL IN BONDAGE TO THE PHILISTINES FOR 40 YEARS

MINGLING WITH IDOLATERS

"For a period of forty years the children of Israel were constantly harassed, and at times completely subjugated, by this cruel and warlike nation. They had mingled with these idolaters, united with them in commerce, in pleasure, and even in worship, until they seemed to be identified with them in spirit and interest. Then these professed friends of Israel became their bitterest enemies, and sought by every means to accomplish their destruction.

"There is still, as with ancient Israel, a constant tendency among the professed people of God to depart from the Lord's instructions, and to imitate the customs and practices of worldlings. The people of the world have given themselves to the service of Satan; and their hearts are opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ. They may profess to acknowledge him as their Redeemer, but they have the same hostility as did the heathen of old, to that religion which calls for self-denial and self-sacrifice. The spirit of the world today is the same that prompted the rejection and crucifixion of the Prince of Life; the same that has consigned his followers to imprisonment, exile, and death. The Christianity which will yield to the influence of the world, and conform itself to their principles and customs, is looked upon with favor by men who are the enemies of God. But when the necessity for holiness of heart and life is presented, then the world feels that its rights are endangered. When the church rebukes fashionable follies, demoralizing amusements, extravagance, and self-indulgence; when Christianity is spiritual, positive, earnest, and aggressive,--then the opposition of the world will be excited." - *ST, Sept. 15, 1881*

GODLY FATHERS & MOTHERS

"There were still in Israel true-hearted ones whose souls were filled with anguish because of the condition of their people. Their prayers of confession, penitence, and faith, went up without ceasing before God. He was not indifferent to their cries, but while there was apparently no response, his providence was preparing for them help suited to their condition. There was not to be found in all Israel a man through whom the Lord could work for the deliverance of his people. The erroneous education given to children, indulgence of appetite, and conformity to the practices of heathenism, had greatly lessened both physical and moral power.

"Godly fathers and mothers looked with gloomy forebodings to the future. Many a mother had secretly cherished the hope that she might give to God and to Israel a son who should deliver his people from the oppressor's power. But as parents saw their children coming up with perverted appetites and uncontrolled passions, the inquiry arose, What will the end be? What part will these youth and children act in the great drama of life? In the hearts of many mothers, hope battled against fear; but in other hearts reigned only discouragement

and despair. What could the mother do to avert the threatened evils? How could she train her children for God? How banish the nameless terror which oppressed her soul? 'Spare us, O God, spare us!' was the oft-repeated prayer. 'Let not thy people perish; let us not see our children a prey of the enemy.' - *ST, Sept. 15, 1881*

- ▶ VS.2-7 - "THE ANGEL OF THE LORD" APPEARS TO MANOAH'S WIFE WITH A MESSAGE:
1) SHE SHALL HAVE A SON, A DELIVERER
2) INSTRUCTION CONCERNING HER OWN HABITS & THE TREATMENT OF THE CHILD
- ▶ VS.8-14 - MANOAH ENTREATS THE LORD
- ▶ VS.15-23 - MANOAH OFFERS A BURNT OFFERING UNTO "THE ANGEL OF THE LORD" & DISCOVERS THE "ANGEL" IS GOD
- ▶ VS.24-25 - SAMSON IS BORN
- ▶ READ - PP 561-562 / PP 562; ST, SEPT. 15, 22, 29, 1881

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

"God had an important work for the promised child of Manoah to do, and it was to secure for him the qualifications necessary for this work that the habits of both the mother and the child were to be carefully regulated....The child will be affected for good or for evil by the habits of the mother. She must herself be controlled by principle and must practice temperance and self-denial, if she would seek the welfare of her child. Unwise advisers will urge upon the mother the necessity of gratifying every wish and impulse, but such teaching is false and mischievous. The mother is by the command of God Himself placed under the most solemn obligation to exercise self-control.

"And fathers as well as mothers are involved in this responsibility. Both parents transmit their own characteristics, mental and physical, their dispositions and appetites, to their children. As the result of parental intemperance children often lack physical strength and mental and moral power. Liquor drinkers and tobacco users may, and do, transmit their insatiable craving, their inflamed blood and irritable nerves, to their children. The licentious often bequeath their unholy desires, and even loathsome diseases, as a legacy to their offspring. And as the children have less power to resist temptation than had the parents, the tendency is for each generation to fall lower and lower. To a great degree parents are responsible not only for the violent passions and perverted appetites of their children but for the infirmities of the thousands born deaf, blind, diseased, or idiotic.

"The inquiry of every father and mother should be, 'What shall we do unto the child that shall be born unto us?' The effect of prenatal influences has been by many lightly regarded; but the instruction sent from heaven to those Hebrew parents, and twice repeated in the most explicit and solemn manner, shows how this matter is looked upon by our Creator.

"And it was not enough that the promised child should receive a good legacy from the parents. This must be followed by careful training and the formation of right habits. God directed that the future judge and deliverer of Israel should be trained to strict temperance from infancy. He was to be a Nazarite from his birth, thus being placed under a perpetual prohibition against the use of wine or strong drink. The lessons of temperance, self-denial, and self-control are to be taught to children even from babyhood." - *PP 561,562*

TRUE TEMPERANCE

"True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful. There are few who realize as they should how much their habits of diet have to do with their health, their character, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny. The appetite should ever be in subjection to the moral and intellectual powers. The body should be servant to the mind, and not the mind to the body." - *PP 562*

PRENATAL CARE

"The words uttered by the angel convey an important truth. Our Creator himself declares that the mother's habits prior to the birth of her child will affect its character and destiny. In speaking to this one mother, the Lord spoke to all the anxious, sorrowing mothers of that time, and to all the mothers of succeeding generations. Yes, every mother may now understand her duty. She may know that the character of her children will depend vastly more upon her own habits before their birth, and her personal efforts after their birth, than upon external advantages or disadvantages.

"If the mother would be a fit teacher for her children, she must form habits of self-denial and self-control before their birth. She imparts to them her own qualities of blood, her own strong or weak traits of character. If her ways are established in God, if she heeds the admonitions which he gives, she will do her part to give right character, right temper, and right appetites, to her offspring.

"Said the angel, 'Let her beware;' that is, be prepared to resist temptation, and stand firmly at her post. Let principle control her appetites and her passions. Of every mother it may be said, 'Let her beware.' There is something to shun, a necessity of guarding herself if she would seek eminence for the gift of God in her child. If she is unstable, double-minded, unprincipled, she will in most cases cause the future ruin of her child. Her fixed principles of action, her unbending purpose to adhere to right rules, as the wisdom of God dictates, will give these same traits of character to her child. The Lord has spoken, and his words are not to be disregarded.

"The divine command was very explicit, prohibiting the use of the fruit of the vine. Every drop of stimulant taken by the mother as a gratification of the appetite, endangers the physical, mental, and moral health of her offspring, and is a direct sin against her Creator. The accumulated misery and wickedness in our world exists in consequence of disregarding the express commands of God. The restrictions are given by the One who made man, who instituted the laws controlling his physical being, and who knows what is for his good. Dare any regard the lesson with indifference?" - *ST, Sept. 15, 1881*

A VAST LAZAR HOUSE

"Fathers and mothers who gratify inclination and perverted appetite, at the expense of health, are not only working against their own physical life and moral advancement, but they leave their perverted appetite and their enfeebled moral power, to their children....In consequence of the sinful habits of men, the world has become a vast lazar house. (Leper Colony)....Society is demoralized, the church is cursed, and God is dishonored." - *ST, Sept. 22, 1881*

THE FOUNDATION OF ALL MISERY

"The violation of God's law lies at the foundation of all the misery that flesh is heir to....Parents are not only responsible in most cases for the violent passions and perverted appetites of their children, but for the infirmities of the thousands born deaf and blind and idiotic. Sins of omission and of commission have brought the sure result." - *ST, Sept. 22, 1881*

A POWERFUL INFLUENCE

"Parents who indulge appetite by eating to excess even of wholesome food, place a needless tax upon the system, and their children will be disposed to self-indulgence and gluttony....The thoughts and feelings of the mother will have a powerful influence upon the legacy she gives her child. If she allows her mind to dwell upon her own feelings, if she indulges in selfishness, if she is peevish and exacting, the disposition of her child will testify to the fact. Thus many have received as a birthright almost unconquerable tendencies to evil." - *ST, Sept. 22, 1881*

DOES GOD CARE?

"Many make the subject of temperance a matter of jest. They claim that the Lord does not concern himself with such minor matters as our eating and drinking. But if the Lord had no care for these things, he would not have revealed himself to the wife of Manoah, giving her definite instructions, and twice enjoining upon her to beware lest she disregard them. Is not this sufficient evidence that he does care for these things?" - *ST, Sept. 22, 1881*

THE WANT OF MORAL WORTH

"We are responsible for the good we might have done, but failed to perform, because by sinful indulgence we placed ourselves in a condition of physical and mental inefficiency. The cause of reform today is suffering from want of men and women of integrity and moral worth." - *ST, Sept. 22, 1881*

AN IMPORTANT MISSIONARY FIELD

"An important missionary field is opened before the mother. The humble round of duties which women have learned to regard as a wearisome task, should be looked upon as a grand and noble work. It is the mother's

privilege to bless the world by her influence....Society is molded by the influence of the mother." - *ST, Sept. 29, 1881*

JUDGES 14

- VS.1-4 - SAMSON'S REQUEST FOR A WIFE

UNGODLY MARRIAGES

"How many are pursuing the same course as did Samson! How often marriages are formed between the godly and the ungodly, because inclination governs in the selection of husband or wife! The parties do not ask counsel of God, nor have His glory in view. Christianity ought to have a controlling influence upon the marriage relation, but it is too often the case that the motives which lead to this union are not in keeping with Christian principles. Satan is constantly seeking to strengthen his power over the people of God by inducing them to enter into alliance with his subjects; and in order to accomplish this he endeavors to arouse unsanctified passions in the heart. But the Lord has in His word plainly instructed His people not to unite themselves with those who have not His love abiding in them. (Quotes 2 Corinthians 6:15, 16)" - *PP 563*

SELDOM SATISFIED

"The Lord has in his word plainly instructed his people not to unite themselves with those who have not his love and fear before them. Such companions will seldom be satisfied with the love and respect which are justly theirs. They will constantly seek to gain from the God-fearing wife or husband some favor which shall involve a disregard of the divine requirements." - *ST, Oct. 6, 1881*

IT IS NOT SAFE

"It is not safe for Christians to imitate the example of the ungodly, or to yield to their influence. The wisest counsels of the wicked are not to be relied upon. If accepted, they may bring trouble and sorrow upon the child of God. The Lord would not have his people take ungodly persons into their confidence." - *ST, Oct. 6, 1881*

THE NECESSITY TO CONFORM

"At his marriage feast Samson was brought into familiar association with those who hated the God of Israel. Whoever voluntarily enters into such relations will feel it necessary to conform, to some degree, to the habits and customs of his companions. The time thus spent is worse than wasted. Thoughts are entertained and words are spoken that tend to break down the strongholds of principle and to weaken the citadel of the soul." - *PP 563*

- VS.5-7 - SAMSON SLAYS A LION
- VS.8-9 - SAMSON EATS UNCLEAR HONEY
- VS.10-14 - SAMSON'S MARRIAGE FEAST & RIDDLE
- VS.15-20 - SAMSON IS DECEIVED & SLAYS 30

JUDGES 15

- VS.1-2 - SAMSON RETURNS, HIS WIFE IS GIVEN TO ANOTHER
- VS.3-5 - SAMSON'S REVENGE
- VS.6 - THE PHILISTINES KILL SAMSON'S WIFE
- VS.7-8 - SAMSON'S GREAT SLAUGHTER
- VS.9-13 - SAMSON IS PURSUED & DELIVERED TO THE PHILISTINES
- VS.14-17 - A THOUSAND ARE SLAIN

DISPIRITED & COWARDLY

"Had the Israelites been ready to unite with Samson and follow up the victory, they might at this time have freed themselves from the power of their oppressors. But they had become dispirited and cowardly. They had neglected the work which God commanded them to perform, in dispossessing the heathen, and had united with them in their degrading practices, tolerating their cruelty, and, so long as it was not directed against themselves, even countenancing their injustice. When themselves brought under the power of the oppressor, they tamely

submitted to the degradation which they might have escaped, had they only obeyed God. Even when the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, they would, not infrequently, desert him and unite with their enemies." - *PP 564*

- VS.18-20 - SAMSON'S THIRST / HE IS MADE A JUDGE OVER ISRAEL

SAMSON'S THIRST

"Thousands of Israelites witnessed Samson's defeat of the Philistines, yet no voice was raised in triumph, till the hero, elated at this marvelous success, celebrated his own victory. But he praised himself, instead of ascribing the glory to God. No sooner had he ceased than he was reminded of his weakness by a most intense and painful thirst. He had become exhausted by his prodigious labors, and no means of supplying his need was at hand. He began to feel his utter dependence upon God, and to be convinced that he had not triumphed by his own power, but in the strength of the Omnipotent One.

"He then gave God the praise for his deliverance, and offered an earnest prayer for relief from his present suffering. The Lord hearkened to his petition and opened for him a spring of water. In token of his gratitude Samson called the name of the place En-hakkore, or 'the well of him that cried.'

"After this victory the Israelites made Samson judge over them, and he ruled Israel for twenty years." - *ST, Oct. 6, 1881*

JUDGES 16

- VS.1-3 - SAMSON'S UNLAWFUL PASSION

SAMSON'S DOWNWARD PATH

"One wrong step prepares the way for another. Samson had transgressed the command of God by taking a wife from the daughters of the Philistines, and ere long he ventured again among that people--now his deadly enemies--in the indulgence of his unlawful passions. Trusting confidently to his great strength, which had inspired the Philistines with such terror, he boldly entered Gaza, one of their largest and most powerful cities, and visited a harlot of that place.

"The disgraceful fact was soon made known to the inhabitants of the city, who were eager to be avenged upon their dreaded foe. Fearing to attack him, however, they sent for reinforcements, and kept a vigilant watch at the gate of the city, determined by some means to put him to death in the morning.

"At midnight Samson was aroused. The accusing voice of conscience filled him with remorse, as he remembered that he had broken his vow as a Nazarite. But despite his sin, God's mercy had not forsaken him. His great strength again served to deliver him. Wrenching the city gate from its place, he took it entire, with its posts and bars, and carried it several miles, to the top of a hill on the way to Hebron; the guards meanwhile, being too much surprised and terrified to intercept or pursue him.

"But even this narrow escape did not serve to stay him in his evil course. The third step downward soon followed the second." - *ST, Oct. 13, 1881*

- VS.4-5 - SAMSON MEETS DELILAH

SENSUOUS PLEASURES

"He did not again venture into the territory of the Philistines, but sought at home those sensuous pleasures that were luring him on to ruin. 'He loved a woman in the vale of Serek.' Her name was Delilah, which fitly signifies consuming, or wasting. In the society of this enchantress, the judge of Israel squandered precious hours that should have been sacredly devoted to the welfare of his people. But the blinding passions which make even the strongest weak, had gained control of reason and of conscience. The vale of Serek, a little valley not far from his own birthplace, was celebrated for its vineyards. These also had a temptation for the wavering Nazarite, who had already indulged in the use of wine, thus breaking another tie that bound him to temperance, to purity, and to God." - *ST, Oct. 13, 1881*

A BEWITCHING POWER

"The Philistines were well acquainted with the divine law, and its condemnation of sensual indulgence. They kept a vigilant watch over all the movements of their enemy, and when he degraded himself by this new attachment, and they saw the bewitching power of the enchantress, they determined, through her, to accomplish his ruin." - *ST, Oct. 13, 1881*

- VS.6-14 - DELILAH IS BRIBED TO DISCOVER SAMSON'S STRENGTH

▶ **NOTE: SAMSON DECEIVES DELILAH**

1) VS.6-10a - SEVEN GREEN CORDS

2) VS.10b-12 - NEW ROPES NEVER USED

3) VS. 13-14 - WEAVE SEVEN LOCKS OF HAIR

▶ **SAMSON'S INFATUATION**

"Samson's infatuation seems almost incredible. At first he was not so wholly enthralled as to reveal the secret; but he had deliberately walked into the net of the betrayer of souls, and its meshes were drawing closer about him at every step. Three times he had the clearest evidence that the Philistines had leagued with his charmer to destroy him; but when her purpose failed and his strength returned, she had treated the matter as a jest, and he blindly banished all fear of danger.

"Day by day Delilah pressed and urged him, until 'his soul was vexed unto death,' yet a subtle power kept him by her side. Her heart was set upon the tempting bribe, and she exerted all her blandishments to secure it. Overcome at last by the bewitching spell which he seemed to have no power to break, Samson made known the secret." - *ST, Oct. 13, 1881*

▶ **VS.15-22 - SAMSON REVEALS THE SECRET OF HIS STRENGTH**

LITTLE BY LITTLE

"What a change to him that had been the judge and champion of Israel! --now weak, blind, imprisoned, degraded to the most menial service! Little by little he had violated the conditions of his sacred calling. God had borne long with him, but when he had so yielded himself to the power of sin as to betray his secret, that moment God departed from him. There was no virtue in the length of his hair, in itself, but it was a token of his loyalty to God, and when the symbol was sacrificed in the indulgence of lustful passion, the blessings of which it was a token were also forfeited. Had Samson's head been shaven without fault on his part, his strength would have remained. But his course had shown contempt for the favor and authority of God as much as if he had in disdain himself severed his locks from his head. Therefore God left him to endure the results of his own folly.

"In his sufferings and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson had opportunity for reflection, and he learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before. As his afflictions led him to repentance, his hair began gradually to grow, indicating the return of his extraordinary powers, but his enemies, regarding him only as a fettered and helpless prisoner, felt no apprehensions." - *ST, Oct. 13, 1881*

▶ **VS.23-31 - SAMSON'S FINAL REVENGE, THE DESTRUCTION OF DAGON'S TEMPLE**

▶ **JEHOVAH VS DAGON**

"As the Philistines exulted over their great victory, they ascribed the honor to their gods, praising them as superior to the God of Israel. The contest, instead of being between Samson and the Philistines, was now between Jehovah and Dagon, and thus the Lord was moved to assert his almighty power and his supreme authority. A favorable opportunity for this was soon presented. The Philistines held a feast in honor of their God Dagon. A vast company was assembled, and in the height of their sacrilegious festivities, they ordered the captive to be produced, that the people might have a new source of amusement. The multitude greeted his appearance with shouts of triumph, and praised their god who had thus subdued the 'destroyer of their country.' Samson had been made the sport of the people before; But now even the rulers of the nation mocked at his misery.

"The immense building was thronged with the brave and the fair. Even the roof was crowded with thousands of spectators. After a time, as if weary, Samson asked permission to rest against the two central pillars which supported the temple roof. Then he breathed the prayer, 'O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.' With these words he seized the pillars in his mighty arms, and with the cry, 'Let me die with the Philistines,' he bowed himself and the roof fell, destroying at one dread crash, all that vast company. 'So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.' " - *ST, Oct. 13, 1881*

NONE NEED BE OVERCOME

"God's promise that through Samson He would 'begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines' was fulfilled; but how dark and terrible the record of that life which might have been a praise to God and a glory to the nation! Had Samson been true to his divine calling, the purpose of God could have been accomplished in his

honor and exaltation. But he yielded to temptation and proved untrue to his trust, and his mission was fulfilled in defeat, bondage, and death.

"Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest of men. Many mistake strong passions for a strong character, but the truth is that he who is mastered by his passions is a weak man. The real greatness of the man is measured by the power of the feelings that he controls, not by those that control him.

"God's providential care had been over Samson, that he might be prepared to accomplish the work which he was called to do. At the very outset of life he was surrounded with favorable conditions for physical strength, intellectual vigor, and moral purity. But under the influence of wicked associates he let go that hold upon God which is man's only safeguard, and he was swept away by the tide of evil. Those who in the way of duty are brought into trial may be sure that God will preserve them; but if men willfully place themselves under the power of temptation, they will fall, sooner or later.

"The very ones whom God purposes to use as His instruments for a special work, Satan employs his utmost power to lead astray. He attacks us at our weak points, working through defects in the character to gain control of the whole man; and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. But none need be overcome. Man is not left alone to conquer the power of evil by his own feeble efforts. Help is at hand and will be given to every soul who really desires it. Angels of God, that ascend and descend the ladder which Jacob saw in vision, will help every soul who will, to climb even to the highest heaven." - *PP 567-568*