

**Samson**  
(Excerpted from [Schoolmaster](#))  
By David Pyles

In the era of the Judges, there emerged the famous Samson (Jdg 13-16), an Israelite from the tribe of Dan, whose superhuman feats would become legendary over the world. The history of Israel would produce many warriors but Samson was the mightiest of them all. Samson was also named in Hebrews 11:32 among men and women of faith in the Old Testament era. This means that, though a very flawed man, Samson was an object of God's grace. All these facts should alert to the possibility that the Holy Spirit would order the events of Samson's life to tell a greater story. This story will prove to be an allegorical prophecy about the nation Israel in general, and it will foretell a period from Samson's times unto the end of the world. Samson himself will represent Israel in this story and this will be his primary role in the allegory. However, Israel was formed as a nation for the purpose of telling and fulfilling the story of Jesus Christ. Not surprisingly, there will be points in Samson's life where he will foreshadow Christ also. The imagery of the story is complex. Few Christians have completely grasped it. While I hope to do better, I definitely allow that my own interpretations could need correction.

Dual types such as Samson can occur elsewhere in the Bible but they always entail antitypes that have a sense of oneness. For example, Christ and His people are considered as one (Jn 17:20-26, Heb 2:11), so sometimes they can both be represented by a single type (e.g. Isaac). The Father and Son are one (Isa 9:6, 1Jn 5:7), so they can both be represented by a single type too (e.g. the king of Persia in Esther). Now Christ and Israel are one in the sense that the latter was created on account of the former. Paul implied this when he said, "*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ,*" (Gal 3:16). So the promises made to Abraham concerning the nation actually had a deeper meaning wherein they were ultimately about Jesus Christ. Accordingly, Paul added, "*And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise,*" (Gal 3:29). This says that Israel, when properly defined, is altogether in Christ. This is why Paul rejected the idea that anyone could be a true Israelite if outside of Christ (Rom 9:6-8). This explains why Samson, while mostly representing Israel, will foreshadow Christ at certain points. Such will also be done by other biblical types (e.g. Jonah).

Samson's life can be divided into three major allegorical sequences, all of which conveyed remarkable prophecies of things that were yet to come.

### **The Philistine Fiancée**

The parallels between Samson and Israel are especially apparent at the beginning of his story. This tells of his birth and his purpose to marry a certain Philistine woman. In particular:

1) Samson was miraculously born to a mother who had been barren. This was also true of Israel. The nation was distinguished as being called in Isaac, but Isaac was born of the barren Sarah.

2) The births of both Samson and Isaac were announced by heavenly revelation. The birth of Isaac was promised by God personally. The birth of Samson was foretold by an angel.

3) Samson was born under a covenant known as the “*vow of a Nazarite*” (Num 6:2), and compliance with this vow would be key to his power. Israel was also born as an organized nation under a covenant, namely, the law given through Moses, and compliance with this covenant was repeatedly presented as key to its strength.

4) The Nazarite vow could be taken either by man or woman and it entailed three major commitments (Num 6:1-21): The first was total abstinence from strong drink, including even wine. The Nazarite was also to abstain from grapes or anything made from them. While this would include many things, the statute curiously put express prohibition on vinegar (which is commonly made from grapes). The second commitment was that the hair of the head was never to be cut. The third commitment was the avoidance of all dead human bodies. The Nazarite could not exempt himself in this even for the sake of his deceased parents. These commitments could be made for a designated period or for life. Samson was to be a Nazarite from birth till death by the order of God Himself.

The motivation for the Nazarite vow would be indicated 1500 years later when Christ vowed at the Last Supper, “*But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom,*” (Mt 26:29, Mk 14:25, Lk 22:18). The importance of this statement may be inferred from the fact that all synoptic gospels recorded it. The Nazarite vow was evidently in imitation and honor of the Messiah as He would be from the time of His own vow until the time of His visible return and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:5-9). This includes especially the time of His invisible heavenly reign. The specific prohibition against vinegar was likely motivated by the fact that Jesus, in keeping with His own vow, refused vinegar while on the cross, even though it was mixed in a concoction that might have alleviated His pain (Mt 27:34). This interpretation also explains why the Nazarite was to avoid all dead bodies. The death of Christ will put an end to all corpses, and there are no dead bodies in heaven where He now lives and reigns. Obviously, the Nazarite vow was very incriminating to unbelieving Jews because it affirmed exactly what they deny. They do not deny that Jesus once was, nor will they deny Him at the time that “*every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him*” (Rev 1:7), but they deny almost everything about Him in the period of time contemplated by the vow.

Some think Jesus actually ingested vinegar on the cross in the final moments of His life, but I think this is unlikely. He was actually offered vinegar twice. The first time was evidently before He was nailed and elevated. This was in a mixture of vinegar and gall (Ps 69:21, Mt 27:33-34, Mk 15:23). Some have speculated this concoction was designed to alleviate pain. Whatever the case, it is clear that Jesus refused it after tasting it. The second time occurred at the very end after Jesus cried, “*I thirst,*” (Jn 19:28). This time, one of His crucifiers, likely a soldier (Lk 23:36), soaked vinegar in a sponge impaled on a hyssop stalk and elevated it to Jesus’ mouth. While John said Jesus “*received*” the vinegar (Jn 19:30), there is no reason to suppose this meant

anything more than contact with His mouth, as had happened in the earlier case. John also explained that Jesus expressed His thirst after nearly all scriptures had been fulfilled, and that His statement was purposed to finalize the remainder. So His real intent was not to mitigate His misery but to fulfill the word of God, especially Psalm 69:21. This means no purpose would have been served by Him actually ingesting the vinegar. It is also possible that the intent of the soldier was interrupted, because other crucifiers, likely among the Jews, objected to his action, cynically claiming that Jesus should be left to the deliverance of Elijah (Mt 27:47, Mk 15:36). The vow taken by Jesus in Mark 14:25 makes it improbable that vinegar was actually ingested.

5) But all familiar with the story of Samson will know that the most crucial condition of the Nazarite vow was that his hair be uncut. We need not speculate as to the symbolic meaning of this. Paul explained it in 1Corinthians 11 when he said that long hair is a symbol of allegiance to authority. In the case of the Nazarite vow, it was likely a symbol of allegiance to the heavenly Messiah being portended by the vow. This will do much to explain what will follow in the story of Samson. His life will fall far short of our expectations of a Nazarite, and he will seem to show much disregard for his vow, but God will extend him remarkable forbearance and continue to empower him on condition that his hair remain uncut. However, if the hair be cut, that is, if the authority of the Messiah be rejected or betrayed, then woeful consequences will follow.

This principle does of course hold for men in general. Though their sins may be many, they are assured of forgiveness if they believe on the Messiah and honor Him. However, if they deny or dishonor the Messiah, then scriptures threaten them with direst destruction. This principle is obviously true to the New Testament, but it was also communicated in the Old Testament inasmuch as harsh consequences always befell those who desecrated or mishandled types of Christ, even if they did it unwittingly.

6) Notwithstanding his greatness, Samson had a bewildering stupidity concerning women. While men commonly lack judgment in this respect, Samson was so indiscreet that he loved even women who were clearly bent on his destruction. Such was also the case with Israel. It loved the false gods and false religions of the very nations that were hell-bent on destroying it.

7) Given that he was a judge of Israel, Samson was a surprisingly impudent man. Accordingly, the nation he represented was charged by scripture as having exactly the same character. It was said to be "*impudent*" (Ezek 2:4) and "*hardhearted*" (Ezek 3:7) and was repeatedly described as being "*stiffnecked*" (Ex 32:9, Dt 9:6, Acts 7:51, etc.).

8) However, Samson was moved to penitence and piety in the final days of his life, even as Israel will be mightily moved to Jesus Christ in the final days of world history.

9) Samson was presented as a man who received the Spirit of the Lord from time to time, and it was at such times his power was great (Jdg 13:25, 14:6, 14:19, 15:14). Such was also the case with Israel, which experienced the extraordinary power of God at some times but not at others. This contrasted with Christ, who had the Spirit continuously and without measure (Jn 3:34).

The remainder of the story of Samson will be about his personal war with the Philistines. These were a people who had migrated to the land of Canaan from a place known as “Caphtor” (Jer 47:4, Am 9:7), which is commonly thought to be modern Crete. They were intruders upon a region properly belonging to Israel by divine promise. The Philistines sometimes subdued and oppressed the Israelites in other parts of Canaan. Such was the case in the times of Samson. These circumstances portended things to come. Israel was invaded and subdued by the Romans prior to the first coming of Christ, and will be invaded by the antichrist and his armies prior to the time He comes again. In both instances, God directed, or will direct, a successful counterattack against the invader. In the first case, the counterattack was spiritual, with the religion of the Romans and other Gentiles being defeated and displaced by Christianity. In the last case, the counterattack will be physical and final.

Samson desired to marry a certain Philistine girl, and though his parents objected, Samson insisted that they make the customary wedding arrangements. This marriage, though undesirable in Jewish culture, was technically in compliance with the law of God. God had prohibited marriage to the Canaanites, but the Philistines were no part of the Canaanite tribes. Also, while Samson would later consort with prostitutes, his courtship with this Philistine girl seems to have been honorable. Most importantly, scriptures state that the courtship was “*of the Lord.*” However, the actual divine intent was to use it for the purpose of provoking a conflict wherein the Philistines would endure great destruction. Now the marriage quickly ended in breakup, perhaps even before it was consummated, but the effort to make it happen did indeed provoke a conflict. This foreshadowed a far greater conflict that would rage for centuries, especially across Europe, to the decimation of the false gods and religions of the Romans and other Gentiles.

Of course, Christ and His church are united in a marital relationship, so our first impulse might be to interpret Samson's intended marriage as portending such, but the fact that it abruptly ended in malice shows that something in this interpretation is amiss. It is to be remembered that Samson is primarily a type of Israel, and is a type of Christ only in that Christ is the ultimate Israelite. Samson's marriage was therefore representative of a union that might have been, and should have been, between Israel and the church, but this union was to be broken to serve purposes in the profound plan of God.

While Samson and his parents were en route to the girl's home for purposes of making the wedding arrangements, Samson ventured alone into a vineyard where a young lion roared at him. Using his extraordinary strength, Samson killed the lion by ripping him with his bare hands. However, his parents were not witness to the event, nor did Samson inform them.

10) Accordingly, it would come to pass that the nation Israel would do what seemed to require inconceivable strength when it killed the “*Lion of the tribe of Judah*” (Rev 5:5), the very Son of God. Of course, Israel could have never done this without being empowered by divine permission, even as Samson was divinely empowered when he killed the lion.

11) Scriptures do not state that the young lion actually attacked Samson, even though this is what the reader would hastily assume. Rather, the lion was only described as roaring at Samson.

Accordingly, Jesus did not physically attack Israel, but they found His words to be very provocative and threatening (Jn 7:44-46).

12) This lion was killed at a vineyard, even as Jesus characterized His own death in the prophetic parable of Matthew 21:33-39.

13) However, the Israelites, like Samson's parents, were oblivious to the death of the Great Lion and its momentous implications.

At a later date, when Samson returned to take his betrothed wife, he found that a swarm of bees had nested in the lion's carcass. He took of the honey and ate, and also gave a portion to his parents, but remained reticent about his destruction of the lion and about the origin of the honey.

14) This foreshadowed the fact that the death of Christ would be accompanied by the sweet effect of securing eternal salvation for His people, yet,

15) Even in this, the Jews would generally remain oblivious.

Many have interpreted Samson as violating his Nazarite vow by making contact with the lion's carcass, but the statute only forbade contact with dead *human* bodies. Had it included animals, the Nazarite could not even eat a piece of chicken or wear a fur coat.

16) Upon arrival, Samson made a feast of seven days in celebration of the prospective wedding. This seven-day feast probably corresponded to a seven-year period wherein the gospel was sent almost exclusively to the Jews. The first 3.5 years of this were under the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus, and 3.5 years more were added under the ministries of the apostles after Jesus ascended to heaven. This latter interval ended around the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), at which time the gospel was revealed to the Gentiles. This extraordinary period was actually compared to a wedding feast by Jesus Christ (Mt 22:1-14).

17) Thirty companions were assigned to Samson to serve as a groom's party. The Bible does not state whether these companions were all Philistines or partly Israelites. They were representative of the earliest believers in Christ who witnessed His ministry and believed in His resurrection. While these were mostly Jews, they also included Gentiles (e.g. the Samaritan woman, the Syro-Phoenician woman and the centurion), and even the Jews in the group were, or would be, held in contempt for fellowshiping Gentiles. Now in the midst of the celebration, Samson put forth a riddle to his thirty companions, promising them each a change of sheet and raiment if they could solve it by the end of the seven-day feast. However, in the event they could not solve it, then they would owe thirty changes of the same to him. His riddle was, "*Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness,*" (Jdg 14:14). Obviously, this riddle was based on Samson's experience with the lion, but under the deeper meaning of the story, the riddle was a symbol of the Old Testament, and the solution to the riddle is Jesus Christ. He is an "*eater*" in the sense that He is the most terrible and destructive thing that will ever happen to the human race, yet He also provides the sweet manna and living bread that gives eternal life. This wonderful food derives from His deceased body, even as honey came from the body of the lion.

18) The reward for solving the riddle was a change of sheet and raiment, thus the recipient would have new covering for whether he was awake or asleep (1Thes 5:10). Now Jesus Christ is the answer to the riddle inasmuch as He is the solution to the mystery “*which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God*” (Eph 3:9). The blessing to all who apprehend this mystery and embrace it by faith is the assurance of a change of raiment wherein they are divested of the filthy garment of their own sinfulness and are clothed with the new raiment of Christ’s righteousness. The matter of the riddle therefore symbolized the gospel principle of justification by faith.

19) The solution of the riddle would be instantly obvious to anyone having knowledge of the lion, but utterly impossible to anyone without it. Such is also the case with the riddle of the Old Testament. It is senseless without knowledge of the Lion of Judah, but is both sensible and marvelous once the Lion is known.

20) But none could solve Samson’s riddle. Not even could Samson’s own parents solve it. This symbolized the fact that even faithful Jews of prior generations could not fully solve the riddle of the Old Testament. As Jesus once said to His disciples, “*For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them,*” (Mt 13:17). The only one who could solve Samson’s riddle was the very one who formulated it, that is, Samson himself. The same was true of the riddle of the Old Testament. It could only be solved by the one who inspired it, the Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul said:

*Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. – Rom 16:25-26*

So God prepared a great mystery that was revealed at the first coming of Jesus, but it was revealed by means of Jewish writings that had been in hand for hundreds of years. Those writings had been an unsolvable riddle until Christ came, and only He could reveal the solution. As He said:

*All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. – Mt 11:27*

21) So the wedding party, being in frustration, and seeing that the seven-day period was about to expire, threatened harm to Samson’s wife unless she found for them the meaning of the riddle by coaxing it from Samson himself. She promptly and successfully complied. The wedding party here represented first-generation Christians, and Samson’s wife represented the church, particularly as it would be among the Gentiles. Those first-generation Christians learned the meaning of the great riddle of the Old Testament from the church, which obtained

it from Jesus Christ Himself. The Gentiles discovered the answer to the riddle at or after the end of the seven-year, New Testament period in which God labored with the Jews.

22) The riddle became known to the wedding party because of Samson's relationship to his wife. Accordingly, the riddle of the Old Testament was made known to Christians because of Christ's relationship to His church.

23) The wedding party was in a state of malice toward both Samson and his betrothed wife before the riddle was revealed, thus showing that even believers are aliens to Christ and His church before God puts the truth in their hearts by grace.

24) The manner in which the wedding party found the solution to the riddle created a complex circumstance that is remarkably analogous to the scheme of redemption. In terms of what was *morally* right, the wedding party was indebted to Samson because they had not resolved the riddle under the terms assumed when the wager was made. Accordingly, the elect are morally indebted to God because they did not keep the law according to the terms assumed when it was given. On the other hand, Samson owed the wedding party only under *legal technicality*, and indeed, no fair-minded person would have faulted him for refusing payment.

25) The thing that the wedding party morally owed Samson was exactly the same as what He technically owed them. They owed Him sheet and raiment, symbols of righteousness, but this is what they received from him instead. Even so, we morally owe God righteousness, but in His wondrous scheme of redemption, He has given it to us instead.

Samson foreshadowed Christ in these last few points. In what follows, Samson will resume his role as a type of the nation in general. Now Samson was infuriated that his riddle had been revealed to these Gentiles, so he went to a nearby Philistine city and slew 30 Philistine men, taking their garments as spoils, and used them to pay his wager. Therefore,

26) Each of the men in the wedding party became clothed in a new garment that properly belonged to an innocent man who had forfeited it in death. Such is also the case with all of the elect of God. They are clothed in the righteousness of an innocent Christ who was killed for them. This also showed that Christ died for men individually and not in aggregate.

27) But Samson then returned to his father's house in anger without taking his bride. He later returned with the intent of taking her, but found that she had been given in marriage by her father to one who had been Samson's friend in the wedding party. This "*friend*" was likely analogous to what we would call the "best man" in our western culture. Now the kingdom of God had originally been put under the care of Israelites, but Jesus warned them, saying, "*The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,*" (Mt 21:43). The word here translated as "*nation*" can simply mean "people." Hence, the kingdom of God would be taken from Israel and given to another people. It was removed from the religious leadership of Israel and placed under the direction of the apostles, all of whom had formerly been dutiful members and friends of the Jewish religious system.

28) The father of the girl had given her to another because he assumed that Samson had been moved to hate her. This was a reasonable assumption. It was also reasonable to assume that Israel had similar hatred for the church, judging from its treatment of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and His disciples. But as a concession to Samson, the father offered a younger sister, whom he claimed was the prettier girl. Samson was not appeased, and besides, the law of God would not allow it so long as the older sister were alive (Lev 18:18). This younger sister likely portended the fact that certain Jews in New Testament times, being bent on making the church more appealing to Jewish culture, concocted a new religion by mixing true Christianity with features borrowed from their traditional religion. These attempts came to naught because they were vigorously opposed by the apostles and because most Jews eventually discarded Christianity altogether. The law and the gospel are sisters, and marriage must be made to one or the other. It cannot be made to both (Rom 7:1-4).

29) These events happened at the time of the wheat harvest when the fields were ripe or partially harvested with sheaves. Samson, being filled with rage, took 300 foxes and put them into pairs having their tails attached at torches. He sent them scurrying through the fields of the Philistines, everywhere igniting and burning with devastating effect. This is one of the bizarre events in the Bible that should arouse suspicion of deeper meaning. Now Jesus Christ set an important precedent when He sent seventy of His disciples in various directions to preach. He sent them out in pairs, even as with Samson's foxes (Lk 10:1). This practice would be imitated in the book of Acts and continued by many Christians to this day. God put fire in the mouths (Acts 2:3) of His early church members on the Day of Pentecost (which happened around the wheat harvest), and then the Jews unintentionally spread these fires everywhere by persecuting the Christian "foxes" and forcing them to flee to other countries. Their flight, and the fires they ignited while fleeing, had devastating effect on the false gods and religions of the Gentile world. These early Christians ignited their fires all across Europe, then to the British Isles, then to Scandinavia, and then to the Americas. When the conflagration was done, the long-entrenched idolatry and polytheism of these Gentile regions were burned into near extinction.

It is a great irony of history that the Jews accomplished little toward eradicating these false religions in all their concerted efforts to oppose them, yet these same religions would be decimated as the unintended effect of the estranged relationship between the Jews and the church. All this was brilliantly prophesied when the Philistine fields were ablaze as a result of the estrangement of Samson with his Philistine fiancée. This also explains why their courtship and subsequent breakup were of the Lord. It was symbolic of the means whereby He would displace religious lies with religious truth in great regions of the Gentile world (Rom 11).

30) The Philistines, in their perverted way of thinking, believed they could placate Samson by killing his former fiancée, so they burned her and her father with fire. Now Christians have been persecuted in countless ways, but one of the most infamous was in AD 64 when Nero of Rome bound them to stakes, coated them with combustibles, and then burned them as torches to illuminate his gardens. These events contributed to what historians commonly consider to be the



first great persecution of the church. Only six years later, the same Romans would burn Jerusalem and the temple, which were of course places where the Christian religion was begotten. Nero's cruel actions had unexpected consequences. He did not deter the spread of Christianity, but very likely fueled it, thus accelerating the destruction of the Pagan religions that Christianity displaced. As with many Roman emperors, Nero claimed himself to be incarnate deity, but after reinforcing the Roman people in such notions, many of them could readily see the stark contrast between the perversion and cruelty of their deified emperors and the incarnate God that was in the Merciful Messiah. The egotism and deceit of the emperors were therefore turned to their own ruin. Accordingly, the cruel actions of the Philistines against Samson's former fiancée did not have the expected effect. He reacted with fury and vengeance, slaughtering the Philistines in even greater numbers than before.

31) The Bible used a peculiar expression when describing this slaughter. It said that Samson smote them "*hip and thigh*," (Jdg 15:8). Many commentators interpret this expression as simply meaning "thoroughly," though they admit that the expression is of unknown origin. However, it is perhaps more than coincidental that in the timeline represented by the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dn 2), this slaughter of Pagan religion occurred in the hips and thighs.

This slaughter might also point to the second coming of Christ and to the peculiar roles the church and Israel will play in the plan of God at that time. Even though the church and Israel are estranged and adversarial, they have a complex relationship with a peculiar affinity. There are multiple reasons for this: They have intersecting destinies, as is believed by the church. They are both hated by the same devil. Most importantly, they are both loved by the same God, and both play leading roles in the execution of His plan for the world. However, these roles are very different. The true church is a nonviolent, harmless institution intending peace and good will. If it is not this, then it is a degenerate imposter. However, this is not the case with Israel. Rather, it is the "*battle axe*" of God (Jer 51:20), and is a "*flame*" among stubble and wood (Isa 10:17, Obad 18), and is a devouring "*lion*" in the midst of the forest (Mic 5:8). Israel is associated with violence from Abraham to Armageddon. These two roles are coordinated in the plan of God in that the destruction that will be dealt by and through Israel in the last days will be partly in retribution for abuses done to the church. Samson's slaughter of the Philistines possibly foreshadowed those times.

When Samson heard of the Philistines killing the woman he had purposed to marry, he said to them, "*Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease*," (Jdg 15:7). So he intended his attack to fulfill all vengeance for the injustice done him concerning the woman. The conflict would actually be far from done, but Samson's intents suggest that one allegorical sequence had been completed and that another was to commence.

### **The Jawbone Slaughter**

Thinking himself to be done taking vengeance, Samson travelled to Judah, distancing himself from the Philistine border, and dwelled atop a rock in a place called Etam. However, the

Philistines were bent on pressing their domination, so they foolishly sent a large force into Judah to abduct him, and this force spread itself over the land. These events would set the stage for yet another allegorical prophecy of Jesus Christ, and one that comprehended both His first and second comings. In this prophecy, Samson will represent Christ from beginning to end.

The men of Judah, being alarmed by the intrusion of this large invasion force, went to Samson with the intent of binding him and turning him over to the Philistines. However, these men approached Samson in fear and respect. Though there were 3000 of them, they made no attempt to overpower Samson, but besought him to surrender voluntarily. Samson agreed on terms that they would not kill him themselves but only bind and deliver him to the Philistines. They then bound him with two cords and delivered him as agreed. The Philistines shouted for joy upon seeing Samson captured and bound. However, he broke the two cords with ease, picked up a new jawbone of an ass, and slew 1000 Philistines using it as his weapon. This slaughter left their bodies in heaps. In all this, we have yet another amazing prophecy:

32) Approximately 1200 years later, the very men of Judah would deliver Jesus Christ bound to the Romans for crucifixion. They did this because they could not legally execute Him themselves. The Romans had deprived them of the right of capital punishment.

33) These same men of Judah were partly acting in fear of their Roman invaders, much like their counterparts in the days of Samson. The council of chief priests that condemned Christ to death had concluded: *“If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation,”* (Jn 11:48).

34) However, the Jewish armed force sent by the chief priests to abduct Jesus was intimidated much like the force that had been sent to abduct Samson. The reason was that when Jesus verbally identified Himself to them, they were mysteriously overpowered and sent falling backward to the ground (Jn 18:6). It was a unique moment to His first coming in that it gave a glimpse of the destructive power with which He will return. Moments later, Peter drew a sword and cut off the ear of one in the abduction party, but Jesus rebuked Peter and miraculously restored the ear with a mere touch (Lk 22:49-51). All this served as warning to His abductors that He was a man of extraordinary power and that they best approach Him cautiously.

35) While Jesus was literally bound with cords the same as Samson (Mt 27:2, Mk 15:1), the cords of Samson likely foreshadowed something far greater. This would be explained on the Day of Pentecost when Peter said to the Jews:

*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. – Acts 2:23-24*

Hence, the crucified body of Jesus appeared to be in the bonds of death, but He as easily broke these bonds as Samson broke his cords.

36) After breaking the bonds of death, the resurrected Jesus will return and destroy the wicked at His second coming, even as Samson destroyed the Philistines after breaking his bonds.

37) The jawbone is, of course, associated with speech, and such is also true of the destructive coming of Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:11-21 describes Him as returning to destroy the wicked with a sword in His mouth and with Him being called "*The Word of God.*" This means that the wicked will be destroyed exactly as foretold by His prophets and apostles, and that in such times, every inspired word of God will have proven to be true.

38) Of course, an ass cannot speak by nature, but there was a famous case of one doing it by the miraculous power of God (Num 22). This was Balaam's ass, which protested against the corrupt prophet's intent to curse the children of Israel. Accordingly, the prophets and apostles of Jesus Christ foretold what they could have never known or understood by nature. They were moved by the miraculous power of God to speak. As with Balaam's ass, their prophecies were filled with warnings to wicked men of the dangers of opposing the people of God.

39) This jawbone was of a deceased ass because all the great prophets and apostles will have died when their words are finally fulfilled.

### **The Destruction of Dagon's Temple**

This leads us to the last episode of Samson's illustrious life. In this he will resume his primary role as representative of Israel. The story began with him traveling to the Philistine city of Gaza to see a harlot. When the Philistines became privy to his presence, they purposed to ambush him at daylight. However, at midnight, Samson ripped out the gate of the city, dislodging the posts, and carried the gate and posts on his shoulders to Hebron where he cast them to the ground.

40) This part of Samson's story, as well as what is to follow, shows that Israel will be consorting with harlots, or false religions, in all but the very end of its history.

41) Notwithstanding, God's word to them will remain true. Now one of God's promises to Abraham was that his seed would possess the gate of his enemies (Gn 22:17). Abraham was actually buried at Hebron, the place where Samson left the gate. The other patriarchs were buried there as well. Samson's mighty action was a dire omen to the wicked of things to come.

Samson then fell in love with the infamous Delilah, who also appears to have been a harlot. Delilah was a symbol of all the false religions that will have deceived Israel when its history is done. Now the lords of the Philistines bribed Delilah with a great sum of silver to seduce Samson to divulge the secret of his strength. With her first attempt, Samson lied to Delilah and said his strength would be lost if he were bound with seven green withes. Delilah then tied him with such, but he effortlessly broke them. On her second attempt, Samson lied again and said his strength would be lost if he were bound with new ropes. Samson broke these also. On her third attempt, Samson lied yet again and said his strength would be lost if his hair were woven and bound to a beam. This attempt failed also because Samson simply ripped out the beam. After all

these demonstrations of Delilah's malicious intents, Samson continued to consort with the harlot. Even so, Israel was addicted to the false gods of nations that were bent on destroying it.

But on Delilah's fourth attempt, Samson told the truth, namely, that his strength would be lost if his hair were shaved. She shaved him in his sleep, and then called the Philistines to take him. Being helpless to resist them, the Philistines overcame Samson, put out his eyes, bound him, put him in prison and forced him to grind grain like an ox.

After Samson had endured a time of this oppression and humiliation, a multitude of Philistines were gathered in a temple of their god Dagon to celebrate their victory over Samson. They brought him out of the prison to make sport of him. They eventually set him between two pillars that upheld the house. By this time, his hair had begun to grow back. He then humbly prayed to God that His great strength be restored, only but once, that he might get vengeance for his two eyes. Samson then famously dislodged the pillars and brought the temple down on its wicked worshippers and himself, killing more men in his death than he had done in his entire life.

All this was a remarkable allegory prophesying the story of Israel as it would happen over most of its history, though almost none had happened at the time the allegory was enacted.

42) Many years later, the nation would be invaded and bound by the Assyrians, but these bonds would be broken when God sent an angel against the Assyrian army and destroyed 185,000 of them in one night. This was foreshadowed by the first binding of Samson.

43) Later, the Jews would be bound again by the Babylonians, who carried them away into captivity. However, after only 70 years, God sent King Cyrus of the Medes and Persians against the Babylonians and conquered them. Cyrus and subsequent kings then liberated the Jews and permitted them to return to their home. Thus the bonds of Babylon would be broken also.

44) Then Israel would be subdued by the Greeks and Seleucids, and would be grievously persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes of the latter, but the Jews tenaciously fought back, finally securing their freedom. For a third time would they break their bonds.

45) But the fourth binding would prove different from the previous three. This time they would be conquered and dispersed by the Romans, and would remain separated from their land for a longer period than the entire history wherein they had occupied it. The reason was that they had essentially cut their hair, the symbol of their allegiance to the Messiah, because they had betrayed their Messiah by crucifying Him at Calvary and denying Him after He was resurrected.

In all these cases, Israel was bound and oppressed because it had become deceived and corrupted under the seduction of religious harlots, the last being the Jewish priests themselves with their apostate Judaism.

46) The failure of the Jews to perceive the Messiah would partly be owing to blindness, but their blindness became even worse after they rejected Him. As Jesus warned, "*For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath,*" (Mk

4:25). The Israelites lost their spiritual eyes, even as Samson lost his natural eyes, and being in blindness, Israel could not understand the very book that it had been inspired to write.

47) This heinous betrayal of Samson was done by Delilah for the reward of silver. This was just retribution because Jesus too was betrayed for silver, paid by the Jewish priests to Judas Iscariot.

48) But in the midst of these very sorrowful circumstances, Samson's hair began to grow back. This portends the much-prophesied return of Israel to their Messiah in the final days of the earth (Isa 11:11-12, 55:3-13, Jer 32:37-40, 33:14-26, Ezek 34:23-24, 36:22-27, 37:24-25, Hos 3:4-5, Joel 2:28-32, Zeph 3:8-9, Zech 12:9-10, Mt 23:37-39, etc.). This will be brought to pass by God's sovereign grace and the outpouring of His Spirit.

49) Samson prayed to God for strength to avenge his eyes. In the mysterious workings of God, the Israelites had been blinded for the very sake of the Gentiles that the latter might see the glory of the Messiah (Mt 22:1-10, Rom 11). But the Gentiles will one day come to a generation that disregards and despises this precious gift, and hates the Israelites who had been deprived for their very benefit. These Gentiles will therefore be worthy of destruction, at which time, Samson's eyes will be avenged.

50) An unexpected part of the story is that Samson himself died when all these wicked Gentiles were destroyed. But the day will come in which the earthly, natural Israel will die and cease to exist. It will melt with a fervent heat like all the earth. It will be displaced by a heavenly regime where there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gal 3:28). But when natural Israel thus falls, multitudes of Gentile invaders will also meet their end, and indeed, the whole world will fall with it.

The story of Samson is the story of Israel, but the story makes no sense without Jesus Christ. He is the one who gives the story meaning and purpose, even to the parts that are otherwise bad and sad. The regrowth of Samson's hair portends a day in which Israel will acknowledge this fact, upon which the wicked world will fall and eternal glory will follow.

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