



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Judges 15:1-20

“God’s Provision and Deliverance from the Philistines”

TRANSCRIPT

[prayer removed from audio]

[Message] For our Scripture reading we are turning to Judges, chapter 15 and reading verses 1 through 20, Judges, chapter 15, verses 1 through 20. In our series of studies on Samson, this is the third and we have just recently studied the 13th chapter in which the angel of the Lord appeared to Samson’s mother and gave her the promise of the birth of Samson. And then in chapter 14 we saw some of the early exploits of Samson, especially his marriage and the events that rose out of that. And the end of the chapter ended with Samson’s wife given to his companion who had been his friend, or his best man at his wedding, after Samson had slain the men of Philistia in order to repay his debt as a result of his wager.

So now in chapter 15 we pick up the story of Samson at that point. And we read in verse 1,

“But after a while, in the time of the wheat harvest, (incidentally that was about the month of May) in the time of the wheat harvest, it came about that Samson visited his wife with a young goat, and said, "I will go in to my wife in her room." But her father did not let him

enter. And her father said, "I really thought that you hated her intensely; so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please let her be yours instead." Samson then said to them, "This time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm." And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes."

It is more likely, it seems to me, that this word fox is really the word jackal. The Hebrew word is a word that is derived from, rather, which is related to a Persian word from which we get the English word jackal, *sbugal*, and the Hebrew word *shual* probably has that force. The reason I think that it is probably a jackal instead of a fox, though they are related animals of course, is because the jackals particularly travel in packs. And it would have been relatively easy for Samson to capture or trap three hundred of them. But we read in verse 4,

“And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes (I will use the term jackals) and he took torches, and turned the jackals tail to tail and put one torch in the middle between two tails. When he had set fire to the torches, he released the jackals into the standing grain of the Philistines, thus burning up both the shocks and the standing grain, along with the vineyards and groves. Then the Philistines said, "Who did this?" And they said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he (that is the Timnite) took his wife and gave her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. And Samson said to them, "Since you act like this, I will surely take revenge on you, but after that I will quit." And he struck them ruthlessly (literally, leg on thigh) with a great slaughter; and he went down and lived in the cleft of the rock of Etam. Then the Philistines went up and camped in Judah, and spread out in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" And they said, "We have come up to bind Samson in order to do to him as he did to us." Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the

Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them." And they said to him, "We have come down to bind you so that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines." And Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me." So they said to him, "No, but we will bind you fast and give you into their hands; yet surely we will not kill you." Then they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands. And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it. (Samson was quite a man with the verse and so it's not surprising that he has a little word for the Philistines in poetic form) Then Samson said, "With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps,"

Now this is a very clever pun, which we don't understand if it's not properly translated in English. But the word for donkey is also the word for heap, and so it is literally, "with the jawbone of a heap," heap, two heaps. So he's playing on the fact that he took the jawbone of a donkey, or a heap, and he made a pile or a heap of Philistines with it [Laughter] he's rather clever with words,

"With the jawbone of a donkey, I have killed a thousand men." And it came about when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand; and he named that place Ramath-lehi. Then he became very thirsty, and he called to the Lord and said, "Thou hast given this great deliverance by the hand of Thy servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that water came out of it. When he drank, his strength returned and he

revived. Therefore he named it En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. So he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.”

May God bless this reading of his word. Our subject this morning is the exploits of Samson. We have been saying in our series of four studies on Samson, this is the third in the series, that Samson was a man with great potential but with incomplete realization. In fact, we have been also saying that we could say that that one word in chapter 13, verse 5, spoken by the angel of the Lord when he announced the birth of Samson to Samson’s mother, “begin” could be a kind of one word biography of Samson, “He shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.” We are all acquainted with men and women of great potential, who do not realize their potential in life.

This is the beginning of the football season. We are thinking about how do the draft choices do? There is many a first round draft choice, with great potential who never made it as a football player on a professional team. There are individuals in theatre with great potential, tremendous acting skills. Several biographies have been written in the last few years of some of these actor and actresses, but who because of personal problems and other things, were never able to realize the potential that seemed to exist in their life. There are men in politics today who have great potential, but who have never been able to realize the potential that seemed to be there. Some Christian men in politics who seem to have such great potential for good, have failed to use their Christian status before the Lord as a means for the blessing of the country.

Samson was a man with great potential but incomplete realization. Yet, Samson, in spite of all of his failures, and we shall read of further failures in the next chapter, was a man of faith. We cannot gainsay the word of God, and the word of God makes it very plain that Samson belongs amidst the faithful. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the 11th chapter after he has asked the rhetorical question, “What more shall I say in

describing the great men of faith?” adds, “Time would fail me if I should tell of Gideon of Barak, of Samson, of Jephtha, of David, and Samuel, and the prophets.”

Now you can see from this that Samson is a man who is put in very exalted company, in the company of David, the man after God’s own heart. He is put in the company of Samuel, the first of the prophets, a man of outstanding accomplishments. And he’s put in the company of Gideon, who accomplished that great victory for the Lord over the Midianites. And in spite of this, there existed in Samson’s unstable heart, in spite of this, Samson had an unstable heart, but there lived in this unstable heart a true trust in Jehovah.

I think that in Samson’s days, he is a Nazarite crystallized in his titanic figure, the idea of strength through faith in God. And as I mentioned last week when the children of Israel saw Samson bounding over the hills and through the valleys of his native land, and they saw his seven locks flowing in the breeze, they were immediately reminded of that great truth, this is the strength and power that comes from trust in God. It was well known that he was a Nazarite and that his life was given to the glorification of God. It’s not, to me, it would not be me surprising at all if when an Israelite looked at Samson, they should think about the glorification of God. And in the final analysis, that’s the one essential thing.

When I was growing up in Sunday school, one of the things that I had to do was to attempt to memorize the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The first question of which is, “What is the chief end of man?” and the answer was, as I remember, “To glorify God and enjoy him forever.” That’s a beautiful question, and it’s a beautiful answer. It’s very succinct. It’s very much to the point. Because that really is the chief end of man, it is to glorify God.

There is a well known story told by a Britisher, about an American Sunday school teacher, who was teaching his Sunday school class on Sunday morning. And speaking to them, he held up a watch in his hand and he said, “Boys, here is a watch, what’s it for?”

and the children said, “It’s to tell time.” He said, “Well, suppose my watch does not tell the time, what’s it good for?” and they answered, in concert, “It’s good for nothing, Sir.” Then he took out a pencil. He said, “What’s the pencil for?” “It’s to write with, Sir.” they said. “But suppose the pencil won’t make a mark, what’s it good for?” “Well, it’s good for nothing, Sir.” they said. Then he took out a pocket knife and he said, “What’s this for boys?” and the Britisher says, they were American boys and so they immediately replied, “To whittle with, Sir.” And then the Britisher felt necessary to explain what whittling was, “But suppose that it’s not sharp, and it cannot cut. What’s it good for?” “Well it’s good for nothing.” And then he asked the pupils, “What’s the chief end of man?” and they said, “To glorify God.” and he said, “Suppose a man does not glorify God, what’s he good for?” and they answered properly, “Well he’s good for nothing, Sir.”

The Lord Jesus made that point when he spoke about us, who are believers, being the salt of the earth. And he said if the salt has lost its savor, what is it good for? Why savorless salt is good for nothing, but to be trampled upon. Samson, I think, illustrates that very beautifully because, he was the kind of person and in the position of being a focal point of this important question, why are we here and what is our chief purpose? It’s to glorify God.

Incidentally, we talk a great deal in Believers Chapel, about the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. There are some who misunderstand that doctrine. They think that that doctrine means that once a person comes to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he lives a relatively holy life, a relatively blameless life. But the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints does not mean that. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints means essentially, that a person brought to faith in Jesus Christ will not apostatize from the faith. Now it does also mean that there will be a definitive change in his life. And the bent of his life will be different. There has to be a definitive change. It does not necessarily have to be seen by every one of us, but there must be a definitive change. There must be a vital transformation in the inmost being of the individual, so that he is no

longer happy in sin, that he is no longer happy in disobedience to God. It does not mean, however, that that man will have a flawless life thereafter.

Take Samson, he was a man who was a man of faith. And yet it is obvious he has disobeyed the Lord in marrying the Timnite woman. In the next chapter he shall stoop even lower. And also climb about as high as any other saint in the Old Testament climbed in his end. The New Testament makes it plain that this man of unstable heart was nevertheless one of the men of faith. And then there is Lot. Lot, a righteous man, but who lived his life as a worldly man, who ultimately committed a very heinous sin. And out of that particular sin came some troubles that Israel had to face down through the centuries.

So when we think of the perseverance of the saints, we should not think of a kind of life without any kind of flaw in it whatsoever. That kind of doctrine leads ultimately to pride and arrogance. And we do need to remember that while there must be a definitive change in our lives, the process of sanctification continues throughout our whole life. It may seem to suggest that God can save us very quickly, but it takes even more power to sanctify us, and a much longer time.

Now Samson then is a man who in his position, was to glorify God. Now in our last study we saw him going down to Timnath. Whenever you get out of the will of God, it is down. We saw him going down to Timnath to take a wife from the Philistines. There he picked a peach only to find that she really was a lemon. [Laughter] And we learn from this, the peril of ungodly alliances. And the result, as you know, was discord, in his own family, his relationship to his wife and to his father, there was discord and strife. And finally bloodshed as a result of the deception that was practiced against him when he gave the riddle at the marriage feast.

Now the story goes on and we must assume that several months have elapsed and in the meantime Samson’s anger has subsided a bit. And so he makes his decision to go back and to see his wife, not knowing that she had been given to another man by her

father. And he brings with him a typical husbandly peace offering. It was a young kid, a young goat.

There was a comic character who once advised husbands who were out of favor with their wives, to approach the door and to throw their hat in the door to see if the wife would throw it out. [Laughter] And if it was not thrown out, it was safe to go on in.

Well, Samson came with his kid, and the father of the bride threw Samson out. Now the father’s suggestion was wrong and evil, that Samson marry the second daughter, because the Law of Moses had spoken specifically against that, that one should not take two wives, sisters, while they were still living, both of them. It’s probable that he wanted a second dowry. And so he suggested that Samson marry the younger daughter. Well Samson, at this point, says, “This time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm.” There is a saying that some people do odd things to get even. And Samson certainly does a very odd thing, by our western standards, to get even with the Philistines because of the way that they have treated him. We read in the 4th verse, “And Samson went and caught three hundred jackals, and took torches, and turned the foxes tail to tail and put one torch in the middle between two tails. And he set fire to the torches, and he released the jackals into the standing grain of the Philistines, thus burning up both the shocks and the standing grain, along with the vineyards and groves.”

This may seem to us to be a rather unusual type of thing and it might seem also an incredible thing that one man could capture, trap, three hundred jackals. But Samson is a clever huntsman. That comes out in the account of his life, and he would have no difficulty in trapping three hundred jackals. Jackals traveled in packs and it was easy for a man like Samson, therefore, to trap a number of them. Furthermore, he knew exactly where to go because jackals, just like foxes, they love fruit, grapes particularly, and they will eat the grapes voraciously. So he knew that they would be around the vineyards. And so Samson took up his position there and he managed to trap three hundred of them.



Jackals are the rat-sphinx of the animal world in one sense. They are animals that travel in packs. They also are thought to be animals that really hunt for lions. And after they have killed their prey, they step aside and the lions eat the part that is best and leave the rest for the jackals. And so the term jackal has even come over into our English language, and has come to be used of individuals who act like jackals. It has, it refers to a person who cheats or swindles a man in an underhanded way.

So Samson took the three hundred jackals and he ties them together and puts a torch between their tails. You know this is remarkable ingenuity, by the way, and originality, we have no indication that this was ever done previously.

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus said that we should be wise as serpents. And it does seem to me that Samson has a great deal of that wisdom within him. By the way, Ovid, later on in Roman literature, Latin literature speaks of this same practice, and evidently the Romans learned it from the Phoenicians who were of course, related to the Philistines. And so evidently, what happened in Samson’s day became so well known among the Philistines, I can imagine how this story was carried down through the years, that finally, the Romans learned about it and they too practiced it. Incidentally, this was, this came to be known among the animals as “the hot tail.” [Laughter]

But you can see that when Samson, well after all Samson is a punner too [Laughter] and you can see what a sight this would have made. One hundred and fifty torches burning the flesh of the foxes and fires here and fires there and fires everywhere, bringing destruction and waste to this vital property of the Philistines. The smoke ascending in swirling circles as the howling animals race about in the midst of the shucks and the corn, and finally the corn is burnt up and the vineyards and the olive orchards all go up in smoke as a result of the work of Samson.

Now we read also in the 8th verse, “And he struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter; and he went down and lived in the cleft of the rock Etam.” The Philistines will not let the matter rest at this, and so they come looking for revenge. But they come to

the citizens of Judah rather than to Samson himself. And in the 9th and 10th verses we read of their visit to Judah, and then we read of the reaction of the Judaites to what has happened. Now I want you to notice particularly in verse 11,

“Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam and said to Samson, Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us? And he said to them, As they did to me, so I have done to them. And they said to Samson, We have come down to bind you so that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines.”

And we’ve read the rest of the story and you know how, that Samson finally agreed to be bound with the two new ropes and he was brought to, into the presence of the Philistines. But will you notice that there were three thousand men who have gone down to visit Samson, three thousand men who are afraid, in Israel, the people of God.

Some years ago I read an account of some Bible translation. It was in the year 1975, because that was Bible Year or The Year of the Bible, and some of the interesting things that are found in the various translations of the Bibles included this. Some peoples do not think of love coming from the heart, but rather as coming from the liver. So that we say “he loved her with all his heart,” but they say “he loved his with all his liver.” [Laughter] And as a matter of fact, the liver was thought also to be the place of fear. And so that when a person loved, he loved with his liver, and when he feared, he feared with all his liver. And that there is a particularly lyrical translation of fear in the language of one Indian tribe, “To fear is to shiver in your liver, [Laughter] and to forget is to lose from your liver.”

Well there are three thousand men in the land of Israel that are shivering in their liver because of the Philistines when they have the champion of God in their midst. It is a sad picture of the low estate of the nation Israel that they should prefer the control of

the enemy, the Philistines, to the hope of deliverance through the means of Samson. With three thousand men and Samson, why they could have easily blasted the Philistines and not only would Samson have begun to deliver Israel, he could have delivered them, no doubt.

But you know those that receive the greatest benefits from individuals and from peoples and from the Lord, are often the betrayers of their benefactors. Wallace, the great Scot, was betrayed by a Scot. Jesus Christ our Lord and savior, was betrayed, not by one of the Pharisees, not by one of the Gentiles, he was betrayed by one of his apostles. An apostle of Jesus Christ, Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus. The doctrines of the grace of God, Calvinism as we call them, betrayed by a Calvinist, whose name was James Arminius. It’s very reflective of human history, and you will see it repeated over and over and over again, that those who are often the greatest benefactors turn out to be the most effective traitors. And in this case, the three thousand are those who betray Samson, the champion of Israel and the champion of God.

I’ve often seen this work in the Lord’s work, that those who are doing the greatest for the Lord are often those that are betrayed by those who benefited from their services. A number of years ago when I was in North Carolina one summer, I went, attended a little church in this little town of Hendersonville, North Carolina. And at the church I met a man whom I knew, of whom I knew, and who knew of me and we were engaged in conversation. And he had just recently been defrocked by his particular church. And I knew him to be a very godly man who had preached the gospel with great effectiveness, and so I asked him what the charges were against him. And he said, “Well, first of all” he said “they laid five charges to my account. And the first was that I supported independent missions.” Well I think I can understand why the presbytery was disturbed over that. If a man is a member of a denomination then he should support the denominational enterprises, it seems to me.

But now as far as I’m concerned, when we look in the Bible we do not see anything about denominationalism in the Bible. And I would rather think myself that denominationalism by its very name is contrary to the doctrine of the oneness of the body of Christ. And so that is why for myself I could never be a member of a denomination. Even those that are sound in the faith, are in my sense, flawed by that very fact, that they affirm the oneness of the body of Christ but practice a kind of sectarianism that is a contradiction in terms. But if one should be in a denomination, it seems to me that he should support the denominational enterprises so I think that probably there was some justification from their standpoint for that charge.

But listen to the others. The second charge was he preached the Bible too much. The third charge was that he was too interested in the young people. The fourth charge was that he was too evangelistic in his preaching. And the fifth charge, and these were official charges, was that he brought into the church too many people from across the railroad tracks. [Laughter] Now in the midst of this presbytery meeting there was another evangelical man in the group of the presbytery and when this man was condemned, his friend, who had the same view points, stood up himself, and said to the presbytery, “I would like to say to you that you have condemned my friend here for these five charges and I would like to say that I am guilty also of each of the five.” Well they did nothing about him because he was not rocking the denominational or the ecclesiastical boat.

You know we often are accused of lack of love because we do stand for some principles, but it should be remembered that truth is far more important than amiability. And my friend, who was a godly man who had preached once in Texas incidentally, with great effectiveness in east Texas, finally was ousted from that particular group and became a very effective minister of the word in independent congregation. But it is so illustrative of the fact that often those who oppose the truth are those who are part of the company of the faithful, so called.

Well Samson had three thousand who were fearful, but who were really enemies of the truth of God. Well he agreed to be bound by the two new ropes. And so they brought him to the Philistines and we read in the 14th verse that when he came to the Philistine city of Lehi, “the Philistines shouted as they met him.” They thought at last, we got him in our grasp at last. And we read, “The Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands.” “The Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him,” the Hebrew text says, “rushed upon him,” and the impression that you get from this is a mighty power that comes from God. There is one thing that is true in the Bible, both spiritually and materially, external bonds cannot bind the servants of God. Even the world puts it this way, “Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage.” Samson was a man who never lost hope because he never lost his view of God, even in the midst of all of his unstable activities. He nevertheless kept his eyes upon God. We read in the 18th verse for example, that when he was thirsty he called to the Lord and said, “Shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”

So he never lost sight of God and as a Nazarite in the presence of the Philistines, those new ropes fall off just like flax that is burned with fire and looking about for a weapon, he chose the new jawbone of an ass. What a novel way to overthrow and defeat the Philistines. What an unusual way to kill one thousand men. It was novel, it was simple. It was very convenient. Most of all, I think it was ridiculous, to think that a man could, with a jawbone of an ass slay one thousand men. But the reason of course, that this took place is because it is God who is working through this mighty Nazarite and it is the might of God that is reflected in what happens. You know the battles of the Lord are not one with carnal weapons. The Apostle Paul states that very plainly in the 10th chapter of the second letter to the Corinthians. He states it so beautifully, I’m going to read these verses for you, if you don’t mind. The apostle says,

“Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! I ask that when I am present I may not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the (overthrowing or) destruction of fortresses.”

So it was a simple weapon by which Samson overcame the Philistines in order that the glory might be God’s. Ridiculous? No more ridiculous than preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and expecting that through the preaching of a suffering, atoning, resurrected savior men may be delivered from the throttleman of sin and sit on the solid rock with a new nature and headed toward heaven. It is the simple gospel, but it the means by which God shakes the world.

They laughed when the solitary Augustinian monk named Luther sought to reform the church. How is it possible for one man to stand against the entrenched ecclesiasticism and the political powers that stood behind the church in the 16th Century and expect to win? But he did. They smirked when that solemn theologian of the reformation John Calvin, aimed the weapons of biblical doctrine against the impregnable fortress of the sacramentarian system of the religious leaders of his day. But Calvin won the victory. They were enraged when that homely evangelist, who was so ugly that people commented about his ugliness, but who preached with the voice of thunder as he sought to bring repentance and faith to those who were already in the institutional church, but unsaved. And finally, they defrocked him. George Whitefield got word of his defrocking by the Anglican church in Charleston, my home town, in St. Philips church, one of the great historic churches of the United States. It probably is one of the things for which Charleston will be famous throughout eternity. It was the place where they tried to

defrock one of the great servants of God, George Whitefield, perhaps the greatest evangelist who has ever preached the word of God in this country.

But you know, when one man stands with God against the entrenched forces of evil, though they be great and mighty in the eyes of men, with the jawbone of an ass, with the simple gospel, God is sure to win the victory. The weapons of the servant of God are the weapons of the sovereign grace of the gospel and a church that is willing to lean in simplicity upon the teaching of holy Scripture, the principles of the local church found in holy Scripture. I fully believe that when a church is willing to stand upon what the Bible says, the principles of the word of God, and with the simple gospel in her hands, that church shall secure the victory that God intends for them to have, and he will work mightily through them.

I know that there are people who look at Believers Chapel and wonder about Believers Chapel. How is it possible for a church like Believers Chapel to exist? Preaching those old fashioned doctrines of the grace of God, even talking about election, and depravity, and salvation through the atoning work of Christ and the bodily resurrection, and calling upon men to repent and to believe this gospel, and meeting according to the simple principles of the New Testament with no pastor, no visible head of the church, ruled by a body of elders, having a free meeting every Sunday in which gifted men are free to teach the saints, in which the priests of God are free to exercise their priesthood. How is it possible for a church like this to exist? How is it possible for it to survive and actually glorify God? Why do you not know that this is the way by which we are to glorify God? It may seem like the jawbone of an ass, but it is by these ridiculous weapons that God wins his mighty victories.

Now finally, we read of the quenching of Samson’s thirst. After the victory he was very thirsty and he called to the Lord and he said, “Lord, you’ve given me a great deliverance but now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?” And so the Lord performed still another mighty miracle and split the hollow place that is

in Lehi so that water came out of it. It is rather interesting that this word that is translated “split”, in my version is the word that was used of the rock in Rephadim that Moses smote and out of which came water to assuage the thirst of the children of Israel. It’s often been commented upon that when Moses smote that rock in Exodus chapter 17 and the water came out of it, and those words which are used there are probably the words upon which our Lord depends when he speaks about the fact that when he is glorified the Holy Spirit shall come. It’s often been said that the smiting of the rock is a reference to the cross of the Lord Jesus and the out flowing of the water is a reference to the Holy Spirit who is given to all who believe. And it is interesting here that we have this mighty victory by Samson over the forces of evil suggesting to us the Lord Jesus as the one who overthrows Satan, who has the hold upon us by virtue of our sin, and as a mighty champion he has overcome Satan through the cross and through the simple gospel. And now we have the outpoured water suggestive of the fact that those of us who have come to know our Lord Jesus Christ do receive the Holy Spirit who is in the final analysis the test of whether we really are believers in Christ.

You know the world has lots of different tests. They ask, “Does he attend church on Sunday? Does he bow his head and pray occasionally to God in heaven? Does he acknowledge that there is a God? Is he a good man in the community? Is he a benevolent man? Does he pay his taxes? Is he on the roles of some particular church?” The Scriptures make it very plain that the test of Christianity is the possession of the Holy Spirit, “He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.” Because we are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying, “Abba Father.” So I ask you, as you sit in the audience, do you have the Holy Spirit? The presence of the Holy Spirit is the test of spiritual life. Do you have the Holy Spirit? The outpoured water may suggest that, because that is what happens when a person believes in Christ then there comes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which manifests itself in the outpoured water.



Now finally, the chapter concludes with a word about Samson’s judging. Judgeship comes after his separation from the Philistines. A work, a mighty work wrought by God. Just as Gideon learned that Baal must go before Midian can go, so Samson learns and Israel is taught again that they cannot expect to have the blessing of God as long as the Philistines are there. In the final analysis then, Samson is a beautiful illustration of strength through trust in God.

If you’re in the audience this morning and you have never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, your condition is desperate. You’re under guilt and condemnation. You have offended a holy God. If there is no change in your status you shall pass out of this earthly existence into an eternal separation from God. The Scriptures speak of this as the lake of fire. Your condition is desperate. You have fatal disease. It is a terminal illness that is yours. But the Scriptures also speak of our Lord Jesus Christ as one who has offered himself a sacrifice for sinners, and for those who have been convicted by the Holy Spirit of their sin and of their need of a savior, he stands as the way of deliverance. May God speak to your heart, may you come to him. May you put your trust in him, he is available for all in whose heart the Holy Spirit has wrought that great work of illumination, may you come. If you feel the burden of your sin, this burden shall be released as you come to Christ.

And for those of you who are believers, Samson is a beautiful illustration and admonition for us of the necessity of rearranging our priorities, so that we glorify him. What are you? Why you’re a man. What do you do with a man? You glorify God. Suppose a man does not glorify God? What’s he good for? He’s good for nothing. He’s good for nothing. What’s the chief end of man? To enjoy God, to glorify him forever. May God help us to understand why we’re here. May he enable us to realize our potential. Let’s bow together in prayer. Shall we stand for the benediction.

“God’s Provision and Deliverance from the Philistines” by S. Lewis Johnson  
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[Prayer] Again Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. We rejoice Lord, in all of the blessings that have come to us. And we pray that by Thy grace, the tremendous potential that exists within each one may be realized. For those who are lost, we pray that there may come conviction and conversion, through the savior whose blood was shed for our sins. And for those who are believers, oh God, may the potential that exists there be realized through a devotion to him who loved us and loosed us from our sins. Oh God, help us to glorify Thee, and enjoy Thee forever. May grace, mercy, and peace go with us as we part. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.