

**I. An Enemy Enraged & Determined (9-11)**

**A. Intentional advance (9) – “Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi.”**

This verse signals a clear escalation in the hostilities between the Philistines and Samson. We need to remember that the prophecy over Samson involved his destiny to be used of God to begin to bring about the defeating of the Philistines who had been oppressing Israel for a long time. Up to this point, Samson had been an irritant to them as he single-handedly killed a handful of their men. After the destruction of the Philistines' harvest, the fury of the enemy came against Samson. We should remember that, when we are fulfilling our God-ordained purposes in the Kingdom, our enemy will be angry against us and begin to proactively resist us. This is the essence of spiritual warfare.

**B. Clear agenda (10) – “And the men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?” They said, “We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us.”**

This verse illustrates again the repeated principle from Samson's life: flesh births flesh. Samson came against them in the flesh and now the wicked Philistines are retaliating against him in the energy of their flesh “to do to him as he did to us”.

**C. Discouraging accusation (11) – “Then 3,000 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 have I done to them.”**

How sad it is to observe the men of Israel being willing to organize and go against Samson in a display of force when they refused to do the same thing against the Philistines who were the enemies of God. The men declared without any sense of shame that the Philistines were the rulers over Israel. They were upset with Samson for disturbing the enforced peace that came to the land by their submission unto the oppressive Philistines. Samson was being used of God to “buck the system” for the widescale benefit of these men and the rest of the nation. Instead of gathering together and asking Samson to lead them in a battle against the enemy, they turned on their leader. Believers should take note that one of

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the most proven strategies of Satan is to turn Christians against one another. How many leaders have tasted the sting of rejection and betrayal from those whom they had hoped to serve and lead? Samson was not perfect, but at least he had not given in to the idea that the Philistines were going to rule over Israel forever. Samson was a fighter in the midst of a generation of cowards who only wanted peace – even if it cost them their freedom.

**II. A Strategy of Humility & Shrewdness (12-14a)**

**A. Samson trusts God with adversity (12) – “And they said to him, “We have come down to bind you, that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines.” And Samson said to them, “Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves.”**

We are not certain that Samson understood at this point what God was soon to do. All we can say for certain is that he willingly submitted to his countrymen, asking only that they not physically attack him. It may be that he would have killed these men if they had tried to end his life. For their benefit, he made them swear to do no harm. This is an amazing picture of the high call upon us to endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. We endure adversity while keeping our hearts fixed on God as we wait for Him to make a way of escape.

**B. The men agreed to the plan (13a) – “They said to him, “No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands. We will surely not kill you.”**

Wisely, his fellow Israelites agreed to do him no harm themselves. Notice that, in their pitiful desire not to irritate the Philistines, they sold out one of their own. Those in the Church who choose the path of least resistance will eventually find themselves compromised and aligned with the strategies of the enemy. They didn't kill Samson, but they certainly betrayed him.

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**C. Outwardly, Samson looked doomed (13b-14a) – “So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. 14a When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him.”**

The Philistines were so joyful to see Samson bound and brought to them as a defeated foe. Their thirst for revenge, they wrongly assumed, would now be quenched. This illustrates the glee of Satan and his demons when Jesus was bound to a cross, hands and feet impaled, hanging between the earth and sky, presumably defeated and killed. How Hell must have rejoiced at the death of the Messiah. They thought they had won. Three days later, terror filled the evil heart of every demon when Jesus emerged from the tomb. The Philistines did not yet know it, but they were about to experience the same horror that those demons experienced on Resurrection morning.

**III. An Anointing That Meets the Need (14b-17)**

**A. God came to Samson (14b) – “Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands.”**

The Scriptures are very clear: the Holy Spirit comes quickly upon Samson. The fire and heat of the Holy Spirit melted the things that had chained him. We see here again that God remained faithful to Samson even when Samson had not been faithful to God. When the Lord declared that Samson was His choice to begin to defeat the Philistines, He knew that Samson was deeply flawed. Yet, the weakness of Samson could not thwart the divine plans of God. When the ropes melted off Samson’s hands, the Philistines were about to experience the fury of God through the hands of Samson.

**B. God uses the ordinary & unimpressive (15) – “And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men.”**

Samson did not have a sword, a bow, a knife, a tank, a gun or a torpedo. He had only the Holy spirit anointing for the battle. Looking down, he saw a jawbone of a donkey and seized it to be used as his weapon. What an unlikely instrument for God to harness to kill 1,000 enemies. We can apply this verse as a reminder that God does not use the impressive things of the world to get His missions

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accomplished. God uses the weak, the foolish and the unlikeliest tools to do great things. Samson picked up a donkey bone to kill all of the enemies who had gathered. God picks up you and me when He aims to get His works accomplished in our day.

**C. The moment became a memorial (16-17) – “And Samson said, “With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey have I struck down a thousand men.” 17 As soon as he had finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone out of his hand. And that place was called Ramath-lehi {elevation of the jawbone}.”**

Exhausted and victorious, Samson memorializes the victory with a simple little poem about what God had used him to accomplish. With every enemy killed, Samson throws the jawbone aside and moves on. The people in that area would forever recognize that particular location as Ramath-lehi which means “the elevation of the jawbone”.

**IV. An Opportunity to Leave the Glory with God (18-20)**

**A. Apart from God, Samson knew his weakness (18) – “And he was very thirsty, and he called upon the Lord and said, “You have granted this great salvation by the hand of Your servant, and shall I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”**

Samson, after a supernatural victory, finds his physical resources gone and his body exhausted. We are not told how long he fought those men, but it is clear that he did not have time to stop and refresh himself with any water. Feeling like he was close to death, he offers up a feeble prayer which requested that God provide him something to drink so he did not die in the desert with his body becoming the property of other Philistines in the area. God’s work can be exhausting and we repeatedly commanded in Scripture to approach the King and His Kingdom with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength. Samson left it all on the field and had come to the end of himself. This is the first time we see him weak. It will not be the last time.

**B. God brought refreshment to Samson’s weariness (19) – “And God split open the hollow place that is at Lehi, and water came out from**

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it. And when he drank, his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore, the name of it was called En-hakkore {fountain of the crier}; it is at Lehi to this day."

God supernaturally provides the sustenance and refreshment that Samson needed to go further in his journey. This is a beautiful illustration of God's last-minute miracle for His children when we have nowhere else to turn.

**C. Scripture records Samson as an honored servant (20) – "And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years."**

This section closes with a historical footnote. After this great victory, the reader is reminded that God did not memorialize Samson's temper, lust or self-will as the defining elements of his life. God gives us a summary that He records Samson as His servant who judged the nation of Israel for two decades. This is grace, friends. Samson is memorialized with other heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11. God is so gracious to refuse to define us by our faults. He is an awesome Father who emphasizes what His enduring children did right, not what we did wrong.