

Meditation on Judges 13-16

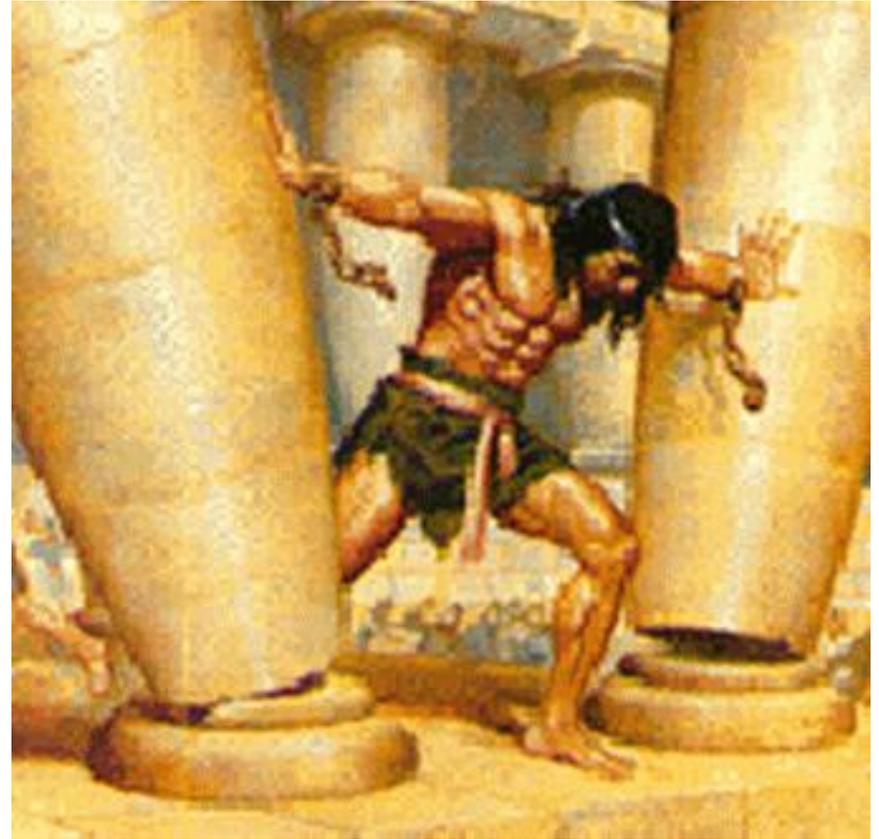
By Matt Olson

The book of Judges records the time before Saul, when the people of Israel had no king and did whatever was right in their own eyes. In the book we find the stories of a series of men and women who were raised up by God to deliver His people from oppression. During this time the people of God would wander into disobedience and find themselves persecuted by the very people they were supposed to have driven out of the Promised Land. When things became very difficult, the people would cry out to the Lord, He would then appoint a judge to help them overcome their adversaries. All too soon, however, the people would turn away from God once more and the cycle would start anew. This happened at least a dozen times in the book of Judges.

Perhaps the most famous of those judges was Samson. Samson was promised to Manoah's wife (we are never told her name). He was sent by God to deliver the people from the Philistines. In order for this to happen, Samson was to be raised a Nazirite, a word derived from the Hebrew word *nazir*, which means to be separated or consecrated. This vow is usually voluntary and required that the person taking the vow not drink wine, cut his or her hair, or approach a dead body.



A careful reading of his story, however, reveals that in the twenty years that Samson served Israel as a judge, he did relatively little to help their situation. Although Samson was given tremendous strength, he used it for his own advantage more so than the advantage of the people he was appointed to lead.



Samson was an ineffectual leader because his heart was set on himself rather than the Lord and the people of God. Samson was a powerful man, but he was no match for his powerful appetites. If something looked good to Samson, whether it was honey in the carcass of a lion or a beautiful Philistine woman, he reached took what he wanted. Thus Samson, like the rest of God's people, did what was right in his own eyes rather than following the will of God. He was blind to God's will, and eventually this spiritual blindness led to his physical blindness. One day, as he slept on the knees of Delilah, his head was shaved by his enemies and Samson lost his strength. Those same men gouged out his eyes and put him in prison. Eventually Samson's hair grew back and he had his revenge, but his story is one of missed opportunities through the misuse of God's gifts, serving as a warning to those called by the Lord to serve Him rather than an inspiration.

Meditation on Judges 13-16

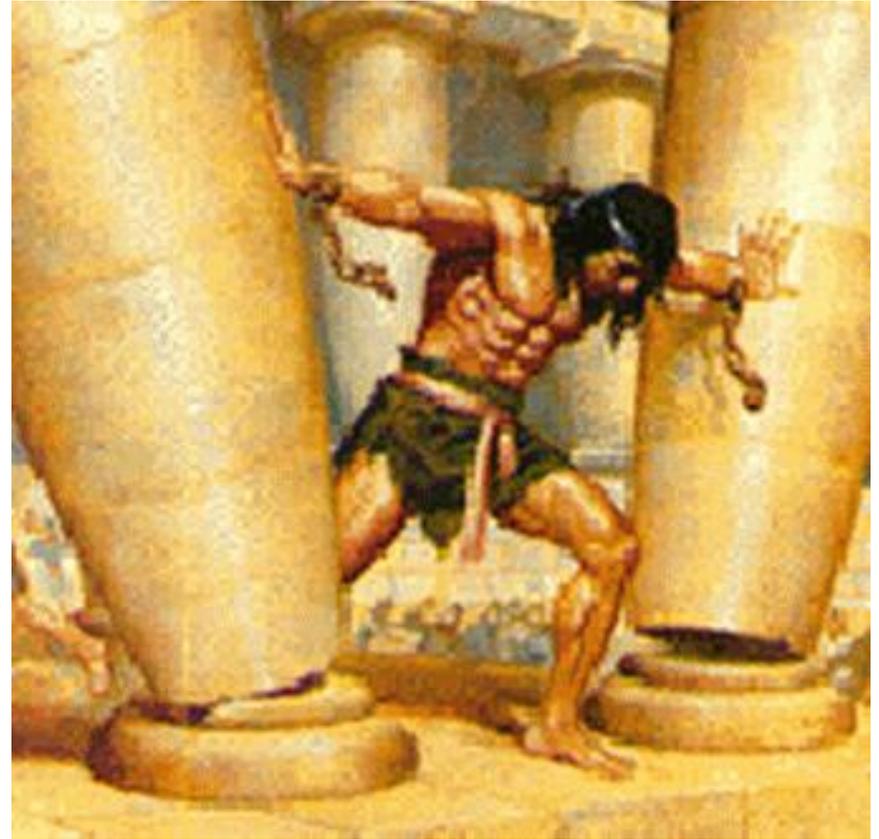
By Matt Olson

The book of Judges records the time before Saul, when the people of Israel had no king and did whatever was right in their own eyes. In the book we find the stories of a series of men and women who were raised up by God to deliver His people from oppression. During this time the people of God would wander into disobedience and find themselves persecuted by the very people they were supposed to have driven out of the Promised Land. When things became very difficult, the people would cry out to the Lord, He would then appoint a judge to help them overcome their adversaries. All too soon, however, the people would turn away from God once more and the cycle would start anew. This happened at least a dozen times in the book of Judges.

Perhaps the most famous of those judges was Samson. Samson was promised to Manoah's wife (we are never told her name). He was sent by God to deliver the people from the Philistines. In order for this to happen, Samson was to be raised a Nazirite, a word derived from the Hebrew word *nazir*, which means to be separated or consecrated. This vow is usually voluntary and required that the person taking the vow not drink wine, cut his or her hair, or approach a dead body.



A careful reading of his story, however, reveals that in the twenty years that Samson served Israel as a judge, he did relatively little to help their situation. Although Samson was given tremendous strength, he used it for his own advantage more so than the advantage of the people he was appointed to lead.



Samson was an ineffectual leader because his heart was set on himself rather than the Lord and the people of God. Samson was a powerful man, but he was no match for his powerful appetites. If something looked good to Samson, whether it was honey in the carcass of a lion or a beautiful Philistine woman, he reached took what he wanted. Thus Samson, like the rest of God's people, did what was right in his own eyes rather than following the will of God. He was blind to God's will, and eventually this spiritual blindness led to his physical blindness. One day, as he slept on the knees of Delilah, his head was shaved by his enemies and Samson lost his strength. Those same men gouged out his eyes and put him in prison. Eventually Samson's hair grew back and he had his revenge, but his story is one of missed opportunities through the misuse of God's gifts, serving as a warning to those called by the Lord to serve Him rather than an inspiration.