

Recap of 8/13/17 (Judges 15:1-11):

1. The times in which Samson lived were times of spiritual lethargy and apostasy (a falling away from God). The word that would best characterize the times is “compromise.” The Israelites were content to “go along to get along,” with the Philistines and their false worship. There was no sense of their distance from God, no desire for freedom, and no crying out for God’s deliverance as in earlier days. “This was the last and evidently the deepest apostasy” (Merrill F. Unger). These are the times into which God thrusts Samson, one person who would confront the Philistines. Samson’s revenge is not just personal, but he is a representative of Israel.
2. “When God contemplates some great work, He begins it by the hand of some poor, weak human creature, to whom He afterwards gives aid, so that the enemies who seek to obstruct it are overcome” (Martin Luther).
3. When Samson burns the wheat fields (both the standing grain and the harvested grain, 15:1), the vineyards, and the olive groves, he destroys the three main crops of the area. It would be a devastating blow to the Philistine economy. More than that though it was an affront to the main Philistine “god,” Dagon (represented as half fish, half man). Since Dagon was a grain and fertility “god,” Samson’s action showed Israel’s God to be superior to the false gods of the land.
4. Unfortunately, Israel was infected by the false gods of the land, embracing them instead of worshipping YHWH alone. Of idolatry in the human heart, whether in Samson’s times or our times, Spurgeon writes: “The heart has been occupied with something else, more than with God; the affections have been set on the things of the earth, instead of the things of heaven. A jealous God will not be content with a divided heart, He must be loved first and best.”
5. The Israelites were so compromised that when the Philistines came to them seeking Samson, they upbraided Samson for upsetting the status quo. As a result they wound up fighting on the side of the enemies of God; they compromised their own values, abandoning them for the Philistine’s values; and they preferred fighting against God rather than for God. The question for believers of all ages is: “Have we today accommodated ourselves to the world’s lifestyle, philosophies, and morality and compromised our beliefs and commitment to God?” What are we as Christians willing to give up so as not to rock the boat—so as not to be seen as narrow or intolerant; but keeping in mind that our enemies are not people but the destructive ideas, philosophies and moralities they embrace (Ephesians 6:10ff). “...; but when you come to personal dealing with your fellow men, remember who you are—not a special being made up in Heaven, but a sinner saved by grace” (Oswald Chambers).