

“UNTO US A SUN IS BORN”:

THE CHURCH’S SPIRIT-EMPOWERED WARRIOR

JUDGES 14

REV. CHARLES R. BIGGS

- I. SAMSON: CHOSEN BY GOD BEFORE HIS MOTHER’S WOMB
- II. SAMSON: SET APART AND CONSECRATED TO GOD AS SAVIOR-WARRIOR
- III. SAMSON: EQUIPPED WITH THE POWER OF GOD’S SPIRIT

SAMSON LIKE ISRAEL

How does the Spirit of God make a difference in the life of the Church? He empowers and gifts His people to walk before God faithfully by God’s enabling power and grace.

The Spirit of God enables believers to realize by God’s power their consecrated-ness; their separated-ness; their identity in Jesus.

Christ’s people are to know who they are before God and to walk by the Spirit as those who are empowered to overcome indwelling sin. Samson is set-apart, Spirit-filled, and at the same time sinful; Samson is a true representative of the church.

The Church struggles too with being empowered by God’s Spirit and compromised by sin. Samson like the Church at this time in redemptive-history struggles with his identity of being God’s chosen man, and so does what is right in his own eyes.

Samson will experience many times the empowered presence of God’s Spirit (Judges 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14), only to walk like a common sinful man with no special identity or mission.

Samson experiences the Spirit of God to know and realize his identity as one consecrated to God for service. We as the Church also experience God’s empowerment so that we too might resist sin, the world, the flesh and the devil, as we should.

Samson was called to be a “holy man”; Israel was called to be a “holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). Samson desired to live life like the nations in doing what was right in his own eyes; Israel desired to live life like the nations in doing what was right in her own eyes. Samson desired foreign women; Israel desired foreign gods. The Samson story mirrors the covenantal story of Israel (adapted from Barry Webb’s book on *Judges*).

ESV Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

ESV Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

ESV Judges 14:3 But his father and mother said to him, "Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes."

SAMSON SET APART: SAMSON'S IDENTITY

The Angel of YHWH informs Manaoh's wife (who is never named interestingly) that this son whom she will conceive will be a Nazarite from birth (vv. 4-5; Again, I think the author does not tell us Mrs. Manaoh's name because like Israel she is insignificant in the eyes of the world, but that's another sermon, see 1 Cor. 1:24-31).

Simply put, this important son whom she will conceive by God's grace and power will be set apart, sanctified from the womb.

Samson was set apart to accomplish God's will even before he was in his mother's womb. This again shows to us the sovereign grace of God. God calls us and knows his own before they are ever even born; the elect are *known by God* (Eph. 1:3-14). God sovereignly ordains the mission of his people before they are born as we learn in Romans 9 of Jacob and Esau (Rom. 9:8ff).

But what specifically was a Nazarite? From the Hebrew *nazar* which means "to separate" or "to consecrate". A Nazirite was a person who was wholly separated or consecrated to God in the Old Covenant period and took special vows (Numbers 6). These vows were voluntary and usually for a limited time (Webb, *New Bible Commentary*, pg. 279).

We learn how a Nazarite was to live from Numbers 6. Three specific things a Nazarite was to observe so as to display his consecrated identify before the world and the church:

1) No drinking wine or strong drink; 2) No razor to cut his hair; and 3) No touching dead things or carcasses (and implicit with this, no intermarrying of foreign women; if Israel was not to intermarry, how much more a specially consecrated, set apart man!). As we will see in our passage, Samson will specifically break all of these vows.

Samson was made a Nazirite by God involuntarily. Samson was set apart and consecrated by God not merely for a limited time, but until the day of his death (13:7). Samson was to be dedicated, devoted and consecrated to God from within his mother's womb until the day of his death; from womb to tomb, he was to be God's chosen instrument of salvation and deliverance.

Samson was NOT to be his own, but to understand himself as belonging to God!

This Nazarite would "begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines (v. 5b). We should note that what he will perform will not be fully accomplished, but will be a partial accomplishment of redemption. This would have taught the people of Israel to look to Samson to deliver them, but to ultimately anticipate and wait upon another who would

come in the future fully to deliver them. This means the people of God would still ultimately live between promise and fulfillment-deliverance.

Although Samson was set apart from birth and although he was granted to the people through supernatural birth, he was still tainted with original sin. ***Samson's birth was supernatural, but it was not the birth of one without sin- - and there is a great and WONDERFUL difference.***

So Samson was like Israel, and we could say that Samson was “too close” or too much like Israel to save her completely as we shall see as we proceed in our story. Israel needed a Savior who was like her, but who was unlike her in that He was not tainted by sin himself. Israel needed a Savior from sin.

ESV Judges 13:24-25: And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the LORD blessed him. ²⁵ And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson's name is from the Hebrew for “sun”. His name means “little sun” or “sunny boy”. This could be an indication of the syncretism in Israel and in particular in Manaoh's household. It is rather strange to name a son after the sun if you don't dabble at worshipping it now and then like the pagans (who else in believing Israel had this kind of name)!?

From his youngest years, the Samson grew and the LORD blessed him. The Spirit of the LORD began to stir him from his very home at *The Camp of Dan*. Yet before our very eyes, we will be shown a man who is distracted by the temptations of this world.

Samson has been set apart to be a Spirit-filled-warrior-judge, has many gifts given to him, but his sinfulness will get the best of him.

Samson begins fix his eyes on wrong things and to lose identity

Our text at the beginning of chapter 14 begins with Samson going down to Timnah. We are told there that Samson saw one of the daughters of the Philistines and he told his father and mother that he wanted her for a wife (14:1-2).

The first thing that occurs in the narrative is that Samson "sees" the woman in Timnah (v.1). Samson explains to his parents that he desires this woman because he "saw" her (v.2). ***The focus of the author is on Samson's EYES. What has Samson fixed his eyes upon?***

The Philistines were Israel's enemies, physically and especially spiritually. Philistines were uncircumcised idolaters and to marry an idolater was to commit oneself eventually to the wife's idols (see Deuteronomy 7; not to mention the effect this will have on the children's catechism lessons).

Samson's father Manoah rebukes him for such a thought. Yet Samson does not listen to his father's admonition and rebuke to choose a wife among his own people. In fact the Bible says that Samson said specifically in his lustful response: **"Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes"** (14:3).

Now we should remember that Israel has been sinning against God and "doing what is right in her own eyes" rather than doing God's will.

Samson as the strongest representative judge of Israel is also wanting to do what is right in his own eyes even if it means possibly becoming an idolater and forfeiting his work as redeemer-judge on Israel's behalf.

Samson is a "little Israel," a microcosm of what Israel does in disobedience to the covenant and the words of Moses recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy. That is, marrying foreign women and seeking after foreign gods but also developing a blindness, an inability to remember "what their eyes had seen" and doing what is "right in their own eyes."

In Deuteronomy 4 (part of the covenantal backdrop for this passage), Moses told the people of Israel numerous times NOT to forget the great salvation-deliverance of the Exodus that ***THEIR EYES HAD SEEN!***

ESV Deuteronomy 4:9 "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children..."

Acting sinfully in the same way as Israel, Samson "sees" a foreign woman and is taken captive by her, as Israel has been taken captive in the Book of Judges by forgetting what their eyes had seen (Dt. 4).

Israel has forgotten what their eyes have seen and are following after foreign women and being seduced by their gods (Dt. 7:3ff). Israel does what is right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6), and does evil in the sight of the LORD (Judges 2:11; 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1).

Samson just wants this Philistine woman and as Woody Allen put it so honestly and inappropriately when he was caught in an act of fornication with his wife's daughter: ***"The heart wants what the heart wants."*** So true; problem is that it is sinful to God.

This is Israel's problem represented in Samson; this is the Church's problem. This is the ongoing problem of indwelling sin that must be eradicated and resisted by God's grace.

Now we should notice that it was not that Samson did not have the Spirit of God- -we are told that he did. He just chose not to follow the Spirit's guidance and leading, which is how all of us can be as sinners.

As Samson begins to lose his identity and to lose sight of His Savior; his Savior does not lose sight of him! This is all of God's grace to His people!

Samson's Savior

What can be hard for us to understand is how man's sinfulness and God's sovereignty is worked out in real history. We see this in verse 4. We are told that Samson's sin of desiring the Philistine woman was particularly *Samson's sin*. Nevertheless, in God's sovereignty, God was going to use this situation to defeat Israel's enemies.

In Judges 14:4, YHWH is "seeking an occasion against the Philistines." The author tells us some "behind the scenes" information: YHWH is at work providentially! (I realize some translators and commentators think this reveals "too much" about God, something that doesn't seem right, and so they want to say that Samson was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines; however, it is clear in the Hebrew that the One seeking the opportunity was none other than YHWH).

In this context, let us remember that the Israelites are content with living with and among the Philistines. Yes, they make prejudicial ethnic distinctions between circumcised folks and uncircumcised folks (14:3), but these are not for covenantal reasons from God designed to drive the people out of the Promised Land as they were commanded to do.

No, Israel has grown accustomed to living in the world *like the nations, doing what the nations do*. Israel has lost her identity in many ways. Even the Tribe of Judah who in the beginning led the fight against the Canaanites and were strong in driving out many of the foreign peoples, now Judah is content to live among them and will oppose Samson who is one of their own people later:

ESV Judges 15:9-11: Then the Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a raid on Lehi. 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." 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."

So, if Israel is going to be saved, she will have to be sought out and delivered by God alone. If Israel is to be saved, then it will be the sovereign initiative of God taking an occasion against God's and Israel's enemies in spite of Israel's complacency, apathy and laziness spiritually. God will be glorified as the One who seeks and saves the lost who are not seeking God or his salvation!

This is the truth of Psalm 53 and Romans 3 as well: "No one seeks after God, no not one."

Let us understand that though God is using a sinful man's disobedience to bring salvation, we are not to think that we should sin against God knowingly expecting good to come because of God's sovereignty.

This in no way means that we are to go on sinning so that grace may increase as the Apostle Paul says in Romans ; this is NOT what we are to learn from this passage. We are to understand as believers that we have been freed from the slavery of sin, and act like Spirit-filled people in reliance upon God's grace.

However, even in our sins, God accomplishes his purposes. Our stubbornness and resistance to God can be the means through which our Sovereign and Powerful God can work his wonders, strangely enough! Although we should not seek to be stubborn and resistant; this revelation of God should cause us to repent and live gratefully before God's face!

This is something that the sinful human mind cannot fathom. Yes, our sins are our sins and not God's sins. Yes, we are responsible for our sins, and they have real consequences that hurt ourselves and others while dishonoring God (as we will see with Samson). Yet God will glorify himself even through our mistakes.

This is reminder of the great grace of God to us all. God saved us in Jesus Christ by using sinful men and His enemies to accomplish his purposes. The salvation of God's people was accomplished through the sinful acts of willful and treacherous men:

Acts 4:26-28: The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed^{1- 27} for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Nothing can frustrate God's purposes; including our sins. In fact, our sins are part of God's decree and this is mysterious and I cannot fully explain it, but the Bible teaches this.

This is the truth being revealed in this important passage in Judges. One of the truths about God revealed in the entire *Book of Judges* is that SALVATION IS OF THE LORD. Salvation is by grace alone through faith. God will accomplish his sovereign purposes and will be glorified through them!

Let us not try to fully grasp and comprehend this truth of Scripture, but let us worship God who deserves the glory and praise for his wonderful acts on behalf of the undeserving.

Let parents who have instructed their children and yet their children have shown no signs of spirituality not to lose hope, to still hope in the LORD, Maker of Heaven and Earth who holds all mankind in His Sovereign hands.

You might have noticed something that is going on in the text with repetition by now. We are told over and over by the author of Judges that Samson *went down* (יָרַד/yarad). This "went down" is important for the overall story of Samson; he literally will go down,

even into the depths in a Philistine prison that represented for the Philistines and underworld.

The “going down” is also a literary way the author describes Samson’s plunge and declension into sin and spiritual darkness. Samson forgets his true identity and the power of God’s Spirit that accompanies this as he plunges **down**.

The Hebrew verb *yarad* is the verb also used to describe the prophet Jonah as he goes down away from God’s will, to the boat, to the bottom of the boat, to the bottom of the sea, to the bottom of the whale...descending down to the underworld away from the will and presence of God.

This is also what Samson is doing; he is *yarad-ing*. The author of Judges is rhetorically teaching us how to read and interpret the story of Samson.

Samson’s strength from God

The story continues as Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother. Here Samson’s great superhuman strength is revealed to us.

In v. 5, we are told "behold" or "surprise" as a young lion rushes onto the stage to attack Samson.

This is irony being revealed in Samson’s life. Samson can tear a ferocious lion to pieces like a young goat with his bare hands, but he cannot control his indwelling sin and lust. The beast unexpectedly comes out from nowhere and Samson kills the lion easily by the Spirit of YHWH.

We are told that Samson performed this act of almost superhuman strength, and yet he cannot resist his own temptation. Verse 7 immediately following says: “Then [Samson] went down and talked with the woman, and ***she was right in Samson’s eyes***.”

Samson was to recognize that God’s power revealed in the mangled lion was what the LORD would and could do for him if he believed by faith. Samson’s life could be characterized by power and blessing rather than the agony and pain that would tragically mark his life. In contrast to Samson, later in Redemptive-History, David understood the preview of strength God had granted him in order to stand strong against the Philistines:

ESV 1 Samuel 17:37 And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

Samson was to understand this great act of strength, as a great act of God so that he could not only begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines, but to also to resist his sins that so easily overcome him. The devil roars around like a roaring lion, and we as the Church also can live many times as if we have no strength, power or grace to resist him.

Samson should have used his superhuman strength to resist this tempting woman; he should have known that the woman was a counterfeit illusion, but he did not have the eyes to see the truth.

One of the most important narrative analogies in Judges 14:1-10 is Samson being compared to David: he slays the lion in the strength of the Spirit of YHWH and he is also distracted by "seeing" a foreign woman which causes him to sin (cf. 2 Sam. 11:1ff).

Samson's sinful slipping and drifting

ESV Judges 14:8-10: After some days he returned to take her. And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. ⁹ He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went. And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion.

As Samson is now being driven by lusts for this Philistine woman, he returns to her after the display of God's power and strength. As he is walking he sees a swarm of bees in the body of the mangled body of the lion. Samson approaches the carcass to scoop out the honey for food.

Now Samson has not only forgotten his identity because of this woman, but now he is slipping; Samson is drifting further away from his purpose of beginning to deliver Israel from the Philistines; his is continuing to *yarad* or "to go down" (even when he goes back up). Samson dishonors his father and mother as well, not telling them that he has touched the unclean carcass of the lion, and making them also unclean (Leviticus 5; 11).

Secrets are being kept, but the greatest secret of them all is that God is working through this stubbornness and sinful folly! (v. 4).

Remember that Samson was a Nazarite and had been set apart by God to serve God. Samson's commitment to God's grace is unraveling before our very eyes. First, Samson sought a woman from the uncircumcised Philistines, and secondly, he will break his Nazarite vow more specifically by going near and touching the carcass of a dead animal (read 14:8-9).

A Nazarite was not to touch the carcass of the dead; they were not to go near them. So Samson's sins are being compounded now. Samson's heart is moving farther away from God, and so his actions are more disobedient to God's clear revelation.

Isn't this how it happens to all of us? Our hearts begin to want something so bad that we are tempted to even forsake God. Our love for someone or something wrong becomes stronger than our love for God. We forsake God a bit in our hearts, then we become more disobedient.

The problem of indwelling sin again; we must resist temptation as it confronts us. We must remember that the devil seeks to devour us as a roaring lion:

ESV 1 Peter 5:8-9: Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

The Apostle Paul speaks of our giving into sinful acts as lawlessness that can get more lawless in Romans 6. Paul tells us to remember our identity as those who have been consecrated and set apart NOT as slaves to sin, but as sons; we are no longer slaves to sin but to righteousness:

ESV Romans 6:19-22: I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ²⁰ When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

We are to remember our identity as those who have been set free from sin in our consecration to God in Jesus Christ. We should be sober to the reality of our depravity, and the remaining sinful corruption that still taints our words, thoughts and deeds.

Sin and giving into temptation causes us to move, to drift from God. We begin to fix our eyes on the wrong things. We take our eyes off God and look around and we see the illusion of all these other things that seem right in our own eyes but that are forbidden by God clearly in His Word.

Think about yourself. What do you easily tend to fix your eyes upon (whether you're male or female, young or more mature)? What tempts you to lose your focus on God's empowering grace? What this week in particular has caused you to fix your eyes on someone or something other than God?

Potential drifting, or proneness to drifting is another characteristic of indwelling sin. Our hearts in some manner forsake God, then we end up drifting with regard to being sober and watchful in our effort to be faithful to God in reliance upon His grace.

Illustration: You've been to the beach in the summer, and you're playing in the water, and you've marked your place in front of your hotel, or in the sight of your umbrella and/or cooler. You play around in the water without looking up much to notice where are at. Then you suddenly realize you have drifted much further down the beachfront than you imagined.

That's how drifting is; that's what the author of the Book of Hebrews warns us all about:

ESV Hebrews 2:1-3: Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ² For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

Think about how we know that we have grace in Christ, and yet we do not rely upon it in certain situations as we should; and our hearts drift from God; our hearts grow cold toward God and others who might stand in the way of what seems good in our own eyes.

Until we repent of the fact that we are hard-of-seeing; we are not able to see clearly enough to act in order to please God by His grace. In the Apostle Peter's second letter he reminds the Churches in Christ to resist sin and put on righteousness enabled by God's grace. Those who do not practice this are like they have lost their identity and have become nearsighted and blind:

ESV 2 Peter 1:8-9: For if these qualities¹ are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Let us lift up our eyes to the throne of God:

ESV Psalm 123:1-4: A SONG OF ASCENTS. To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! ² Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he has mercy upon us. ³ Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. ⁴ Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.

Part of the drifting that happens when our eyes are not fixed on Christ, is revealed further in our story. After we have begun to drift, we then begin to deceive, and the things that were important to us before, become less important.

Have you become apathetic to God and His Word? Have you become lazy in your walk for Christ? If you have, then you have fixed your eyes on something or someone other than God. You are doing what is right in your own eyes and you must repent, ask for mercy, and lift your eyes to your Merciful God who will cleanse and renew you by the power of His Spirit!

LIFT UP YOUR EYES TO THE LORD; CALL UP HIM; HE WILL HAVE MERCY UPON YOU!

Your strength from God comes as the Holy Spirit works in you, and you realize your true identity with God. Who you are, and knowing who you are determines what is important to you. What is important to you is what you will fix your eyes upon.

If you understand yourself as one set apart and consecrated to God, and one who has been redeemed by God's love and grace, then you will be empowered to resist sin and temptation by the Holy Spirit.

Samson is one who possessed saving faith (Heb. 11:32-34). He was set apart as a chosen vessel of God's saving power from before his birth or conception, and was empowered by God's Spirit; ***yet he liked sin too much.***

He gave in too easily to sin and temptation; he gave in to being a person ***he was not*** in reality by God's grace.

So did Israel; so do we. John Milton was right when he referred to Samson in this way: ***"O mirror of our fickle state."***

Would Samson be one greater than Moses? No.

But Samson would be recipient of God's grace, and one day one who was Spirit-filled and strong, not affected by indwelling sin would come to redeem God's people.

One would come who was Greater than Moses.

JESUS CHRIST: CHOSEN BY GOD BEFORE HIS MOTHER'S WOMB

JESUS CHRIST: SET APART AND CONSECRATED TO GOD AS SAVIOR-WARRIOR

JESUS CHRIST: EQUIPPED WITH THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE

JESUS CHRIST: DOES WHAT IS RIGHT IN GOD'S EYES *FOR US!*

Jesus would keep his covenantal eyes fixed on God's mission to save His people. Jesus would also approach a dead carcass; the dead carcass he approached at Bethany was to raise Lazarus from the dead and foreshadow his own death and resurrection in power and glory- - including the eschatological resurrection of all his people.

Jesus remembered the covenant and fulfilled the Law and the prophets. Jesus was God's only faithfully perfect Spirit-Filled Warrior who defeated death, hell and the devil on our behalf. Christ possessed the Spirit without measure so that His people might be equipped to serve him as sons and daughters of the Living God!

For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.³⁵ ***The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.***³⁶ ***Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*** – John 3:34-36

Jesus in love for us performed as our Great Spirit-Filled Warrior so that we might take part in the perfection of his life, be relieved from God's curse in His death, take part in the power of His resurrection, and have a King who will lovingly rule and reign over his people!

In our identity in union with Christ, let us never forget that we have died to sin. In our regeneration by God's powerful Spirit we have been enabled to see clearly what is right and wrong from God's Word. We have been enabled by God's power to realize who we are in Jesus Christ.

In light of this as God's people, we should never forget to daily lay aside every sin that so easily besets and fix our eyes on Jesus YHWH, the Pioneer and Perfector of our faith (Heb. 12:1-2).

ESV Hebrews 12:1-2: Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

What is your "weight"; what is your "sin" that tempts you to fix your eyes upon; the weight and sin that weighs you down and keeps you from running the race of the Christian life as you should?

Christ in the Sermon on the Mount tells the people to avoid sin and covenant breaking at all costs- - even to the point of "gouging out one's eyes" if they cause us to sin and break God's commandments. Unfortunately, this will happen as a temporal judgment to Samson later in our story.

This passage in Matthew 5 from the Sermon on the Mount reveals that our Lord Jesus wants us to take great care and focus to keep our eyes on him. This teaches us that our Lord Jesus understands that where we fix our eyes reveals our hearts. Where are your eyes fixed?

Are you going to keep doing what is right in your own eyes or become the people that God has set you apart to be in Jesus Christ? Are you going to keep doing what is right in your own eyes or become the Spirit-Filled Warriors in Jesus Christ who are more than overcomers through Him who loved us?

ESV Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons¹ of God.

CRB

www.aplacefortruth.org

Bibliography for Further Reading

Arnold and Williamson, editors. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books* (IVP, 2005).

Block, Daniel. *Judges: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (The New American Commentary, NAC, B&H, 1999).

Cundall, Arthur E. and Morris, Leon. *Judges and Ruth* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, IVP, 1968).

Davis, Dale Ralph. *Judges: Such a Great Salvation* (Focus on the Bible Series, Christian Focus Books, 2007).

Fausset, Andrew R. *Judges* (Geneva Series of Commentaries, Banner of Truth Trust, 1999).

Webb, Barry G. *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*.

Wilcock, Michael. *The Message of Judges* (The Bible Speaks Today, IVP, 1992).

Scripture Lesson

^{ESV} **Numbers 6:1-8:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite,¹ to separate himself to the LORD, ³ he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. ⁴ All the days of his separation¹ he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins. ⁵ "All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long. ⁶ "All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. ⁷ Not even for his father or for his mother, for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself unclean, because his separation to God is on his head. ⁸ All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.

^{ESV} **Exodus 34:10-17:** And he said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. ¹¹ "Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ¹² Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. ¹³ You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you

take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods. ¹⁷ "You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal.

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 7:1-8:** "When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than yourselves, ² and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. ¹ You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. ³ You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. ⁵ But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire. ⁶ "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

^{ESV} **Jeremiah 2:20:20-26:** "For long ago I broke your yoke and burst your bonds; but you said, 'I will not serve.' yes, on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down like a whore. ²¹ Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine? ²² Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord GOD. ²³ How can you say, 'I am not unclean, I have not gone after the Baals'? Look at your way in the valley; know what you have done- a restless young camel running here and there, ²⁴ a wild donkey used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind! Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her. ²⁵ Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst. But you said, 'It is hopeless, for I have loved foreigners, and after them I will go.' ²⁶ "As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed: they, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their prophets....

Ezra 9:10-15: "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments, ¹¹ which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land that you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land impure with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations that have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. ¹² Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.' ¹³ And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt,

seeing that you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved and have given us such a remnant as this, ¹⁴ shall we break your commandments again and intermarry with the peoples who practice these abominations? Would you not be angry with us until you consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape? ¹⁵ O LORD the God of Israel, you are just, for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is today. Behold, we are before you in our guilt, for none can stand before you because of this."

Romans 6:14-23: For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. ¹⁵ What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, ¹ you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ²⁰ When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

^{ESV} **2 Peter 1:3-11:** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to ¹ his own glory and excellence, ² ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, ¹ and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities ¹ are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, ¹ be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.