

Fresh Oil Releases

Samson- Shedding Light

Part One - Weaving the Fabric of a Son

In studying Samson's life as a portrayal of God's dealings in forming a mature son, I had to first lay down the mindset I had held concerning him. Having heard Samson used many times as an example of someone who squandered his anointing and lived a fleshly life, it intrigued me that the Spirit was hinting that perhaps God did not view him the way man did. Herein was my first lesson - man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart. If the Holy Spirit saw fit to mention Samson amongst the list of faith heroes, then most certainly some of the deductions I had heard of him were not in line with God's opinion!

*Heb 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of **Samson**, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

Samson was set apart for the Lord from his mother's womb. The only other person besides Jesus who is mentioned in this way is John the Baptist. This signifies that God had a particular purpose in mind in bringing them into the world. Samson would fulfill some significant part in God's whole unfolding plan. Samson means 'like the sun' or 'light of the sun'. We know Jesus is called the Sun of Righteousness so Samson is a type of the sons of God, who are predestined to be just like the First-Born of many brethren.

Rom 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to **the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

God intends the image of the Son to be seen in us and we all know that this is a progressive process. When we are born again we become part of God's family:

Gal 3:26 *For you are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

Yet, there is also a difference between a child and a mature son. Both are part of God's family but only a mature son is equipped to handle his full inheritance. There is a process of maturing between being born of the Spirit and keeping in step with the Spirit.

Rom 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

This is the place God wants to bring us to - a place of being totally led by the Spirit. However, for this to be accomplished, we have to be trained not to walk by our natural senses. We have

to learn to walk by faith and not by sight. In Isaiah 11, there is a description of Jesus endowed with the seven Spirits of God. It says, 'and he shall not judge after the **sight of his eyes**, neither reprove after the **hearing of his ears**: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with justice for the meek of the earth'. So Jesus did not rely on his natural senses in order to manifest the Kingdom of God on earth.

The process of conforming us to the image of Christ involves training us to look on the unseen, so that we are able to do what we **see** the Father doing and say what we **hear** Him saying. In other words, we are using our spiritual senses and not our natural senses. This is important because it affects the judgments we make. We need to make spiritually righteous judgments, not carnal ones.

With this in mind, I have come to understand Samson's life as a journey in the training of a son of God in order to produce the image of Christ in him. Both John the Baptist and Samson were involved in preparation for the manifestation of the Son. We have understood John's role in this much more clearly. Now let's look at Samson with our spiritual eyes. Up to now we have mostly had an earthly understanding of his actions.

Samson was a Nazarite, set-apart for the Lord from conception and we are told that early on he experienced the leading of the Spirit AT TIMES:

Jdg 13:25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

So here we see a son of God who, having been born of an incorruptible seed by the Spirit, is learning to recognize the moving and dealing of the Holy Spirit. He has been set-apart for holy use. However, as we see from the very next verse, he is still largely led by his natural senses.

*Jdg 14:1 And Samson went down to Timnath, and **saw** a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that you go to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, get her for me; for she pleases me well. (literally 'pleasing to the eye')*

Samson's eyes fell upon a woman who appealed to him. The only problem was that she was part of the enemy camp. If we look at his choice using our natural understanding, we will have much the same reaction as his parents did! However 'Timnath' means 'assigned portion' and the writer also enlightens us as to God's opinion:

Jdg 14:4 But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

How this shakes our religious mindsets - Samson's measured portion is to wed himself to a daughter of the enemy - surely not!! What about God's previous instruction concerning taking brides from among His people? What about light and darkness yoking together? On the other hand, what about God telling Hosea to marry a prostitute? That must have challenged his understanding of His Father's ways too!

In the training and equipping of a son, God will allow that one's natural senses to lead him into situations which are painful because it is important for him to learn to discern between the leading of the Spirit and the leading of his own understanding. The Spirit of God also desires to bring this son into full freedom. He does not want the Philistines to have dominion over the sons of God! Samson in his immaturity wanted to join himself to something which appealed to his eyes. He judged by what he saw and thought was good - this is Eve all over again. However, as Romans 8 tells us, God causes all things, even the attacks of the enemy and our own fleshly decisions, to work together for our good and growth and maturity! What a comfort that is! Because we are predestined to be **CONFORMED** to the image of the Son, the Father in His wisdom, makes use of all sorts of positive and negative pressures to shape us into vessels of honour!

There is also a very interesting phrase inserted by the writer. He says God '*sought an occasion against the Philistines*'. They were ruling over Israel at that time. The word 'philistine' comes from a root word meaning 'to roll or wallow in the dust'. Dust is a type of the flesh so this situation is a picture of God's people being dominated and ruled by the flesh. God is looking for an opportunity to intervene and deliver His people. It seems that He allows this situation to unfold, knowing it will not work out well. Those who sow to the flesh will reap corruption - this is the unchanging Truth. Yet Samson is also a son being molded and the painful experience that follows his choice of a wife becomes a fiery trial that contributes to his perfecting.

There is a significant personal encounter that takes place in the vineyards of Timnath:

Jdg 14:5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

This son of God sees a young lion roaring against him. Importantly, it is young. In other words, this is not a full-scale attack of the enemy but an immature small assignment. There is only a roar - the enemy goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The Spirit of the Lord fills Samson and he deals with the enemy using weapons that are not carnal (no physical weapon was in his hand) but they are mighty for the pulling down of strongholds. This battle is fought alone. There is no witness to his victory and Samson does not share it with anyone. Once again, the battle was at Timnath - this encounter with the enemy was his 'assigned portion'. God allowed the young lion in Samson's life to teach him spiritual warfare!

At the time Samson thought no further about the incident. However, later he returned to win the woman:

***Jdg 14:8** and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.*

Honey represents revelation. Samson, a son of God in training, receives revelation as he returns and meditates on the battle. Beloved, out of the carcass of your private spiritual battles, the Holy Spirit will give you revelation to nourish and strengthen you. This revelation will be ongoing - Samson 'went on eating'. You will also be equipped to share with others. They will not know that this eye-opening revelation comes from your face-to-face encounter with the enemy. It is not necessary to tell people the gory details of your private spiritual battles. It is enough that they benefit from the wisdom you glean as a result. 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness'. God will use the enemy in your life to provide you with meat. The milk of the Word is easy to swallow. Meat is obtained by wrestling alone, going through trials that reveal to you the deeper treasure hidden in the Word - meat to nourish the mature.

Soon after this, the betrothal feast is taking place and the philistines bring thirty companions to be with Samson. It is not clear why Samson issued his challenge concerning the riddle. I can only assume that in the company of other young men, he was tempted to allude indirectly to his victory. Perhaps he was bragging concerning his revelation and the source of it. Whatever the motivation, Samson baits his companions with a lucrative offer, confident that they will not guess the answer. However, it soon emerges that he is vulnerable to manipulation. **God will always use the situation without to reveal the situation within.** Any area where a son of God has opened doors to the enemy without will reveal the areas of fleshly bondage within.

Beloved, sometimes we battle so hard against the enemy without, not understanding that God has sent him to reveal the weakness within. The encounter with the young lion and the encounter with the thirty companions and wife-to-be are all part of the same dealing of God, a dress rehearsal for a greater battle that would come his way in later years.

All of you have fought private spiritual battles, winning the victory with the help of the Spirit of the Lord. David fought a lion and a bear alone in the hills and these victories were preparations for his battle with Goliath. In the same way, the private battles you have fought and won by the power of the Spirit in earlier years were your dress rehearsals for what lies ahead. The same Spirit of Might that brought you victory then, will once again bring you victory as you fight in the armies of the Living God. The smaller battles familiarize you with the power and might of the God you belong to so that you possess faith and confidence in His power over the enemy. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world!

There is an amazing verse in Isaiah:

Isa 54:16 Behold, **I** have created the smith that blows the coals in the fire, and that bring forth an instrument for his work; and **I** have created the waster to destroy.

In order to forge an instrument or weapon for His purposes, God arranges a fire and a smith to rain blows upon you and iron out any unwanted dents in your character!! When you are led by the sight of your eyes and the hearing of your natural ears, you are vulnerable to being controlled from without. The sons of God should be led from within by the Spirit of God. Do you remember when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane and the soldiers came for him? He said 'satan has nothing in me'. Beloved, the Father wants us to grow to maturity and to reach a state where the enemy has no ground within that will give him leverage in our lives. Then we will be free to be truly led by the Spirit wherever God appoints us to go!

Many of us have been in situations that we really felt were God's 'assigned portion' for us, often within sectors of the Body of Christ; yet they turned out to be painful and heartbreaking experiences where we wrestled in our closets with young lions and faced loss and betrayal. Yet, looking back, we realize these very furnaces proved to be the places of spiritual equipping, the places where strength was imparted deep within and heavenly wisdom was harvested.

There are three areas where we need to gain victory within; three areas where the Spirit of God will deal with us if we desire to do the will of God. Jesus dealt with all three of these areas in the wilderness testing and then came out in the power of the Spirit. It is necessary for the sons of God to be tried in these same three areas if we are to operate in the same power.

1Jo 2:16 For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abides forever.

The three women in Samson's life represent God dealing with Samson in these three areas. The encounter with the first woman is his lesson in the destructive power of the **lust of the eyes**. Samson joined himself to something that appealed to his eyes. This tendency was a direct inheritance from his forefather Adam.

Jam 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.

Beloved, we need the Father to reveal to us our own vulnerability to the lust of the eyes. The trial that brings this to the surface in us is designed to bring us closer to being complete and mature. The word 'perfect' below means 'of full age, mature'.

Jam 1:2 *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.*

When Samson discovers the philistines have manipulated and deceived him into releasing the source of his revelation, the anointing of the Spirit comes upon him. The Spirit of Revelation reveals what is hidden and the Spirit of Wisdom shows him how to deal with the situation:

Jdg 14:19 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

Ashkelon means 'weighed'. Injustice had been done. By the power of the Spirit, the first fruits of justice are meted out. However, the trial is yet to fully run its course. Any blow that is dealt to the enemy camp stirs up the enemy against us. The battle is not over after the first skirmish. Samson discovers that he has been robbed of his promised wife and the battle rages back and forth with ever more effective blows being dealt on the enemy camp by an anointed and angry Samson. First, he destroys their complete harvest and then goes on to annihilate many philistines.

Jdg 15:8 And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter:

What a glorious picture of Christ in us rising up to deal with all that our fleshly ways are bringing to fruition in our lives. There is a holy anger of the Spirit that rises up towards anything that stands in the way of us becoming all we are destined to be in Christ. The harvest of all the enemy has sown must be destroyed so that it cannot reach full ripeness. We need to allow the anger of God to be unleashed in us in greater measure as we war and violently take the Kingdom by force.

Rom 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, you will die: but if you through the Spirit put to death the deeds of the flesh, you shall live forever.

This whole trial causes a change in Samson's dwelling place. He moves from living in his father's house to dwelling in a higher place:

*Jdg 15:8b...and he went down and dwelt in the **top** of the rock Etam.*

The word 'top' actually means 'cleft'. So we can see that when the lust of the eyes has been defeated in this son of God's life, he moves from dwelling amongst the general family of God to dwelling in the place of intimacy with the Beloved.

Son 2:13 ...Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see your countenance, let me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice, and your face is lovely.

Herein is the whole reason God has allowed this trial! He wants to bring you closer! No longer are this son's choices governed by the outward appearance alone for he has begun to see with the eyes of the Spirit. Revelation of the beauty of the Bridegroom is beginning to flow within and things in the world are progressively losing their power to keep him bound to earthly planes.

Oh, the mysterious weaning process of transferring our dependence from ourselves and other people to full dependence on the Spirit who dwells within! With hindsight we can rejoice at the way we have walked for as painful as it has been, it has caused us to decrease and Christ to increase in our lives. God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not ours - moreover, all His works are perfect and all His ways are just -we are living proof of this even when we don't realize it! Let's take a moment to thank Him for the hard lessons we have learned and the painful places that have been used to shape us!

(Part two follows in due course)