

## Judges Chapter 15 Part 3

Last week we covered the first two verses of chapter 15.

**Judges 15:15 He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it.**

**Judges 15:16 Then Samson said, “With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have killed a thousand men.”**

There is another reference similar to this one. Both could be considered “boasts.”

**1 Samuel 18:7 The women sang as they played, and said, “Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.”**

But here, unnamed women are boasting of what David did which made King Saul angry. Perhaps the Samson narrative is a preparation for Saul and David. Both boasts are of killing Philistines.

**Judges 15:17 When he had finished speaking, he threw the jawbone from his hand; and he named that place Ramath-lehi (literally, Jawbone Hill).**

Some of our most spiritually vulnerable situations arrive just as we have had some great victory. Like Samson, we begin to think that we did it! And then we forget about God and become enamored with some aspect of ourselves. Danger signals start flashing. If we catch them and make

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the necessary corrections, like acknowledge our sin and get back into walking by faith, in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit then we are in the right place. But if we stay out of fellowship we can be in for a rocky ride.

**Judges 15:18 Then he became very thirsty, and he called to the Lord and said, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”**

This had an impact on me. This caused me to stop and reflect on what is happening to Samson. What happened to Samson was what some might call “enforced humility.” Samson was thinking so highly of himself that God had to remind him where Samson’s strength came from. Samson gets the message. That is the point. Instead of continuing to operate outside of faith in arrogant boasting, he gets the tap on the shoulder from God. I love to see in the Bible a believer react when faced with enforced humility. Some day we will study Hezekiah and Isaiah chapters 36-39. It is interesting that God has opened their lives so we can see spirituality in progress from different aspects. But do you know, that is happening right now with our lives? The angelic creation “is watching you, every move you make, every breath you take, they are watching you.” That is part of the intensified phase of the Angelic Conflict.

Here is a comment from Dale Ralph Davis

“Yet now the punster is desperate; he fears the victor may become victim. Samson is so weakened by thirst that he calls to Yahweh for help. This is the first time we read of Samson explicitly seeking Yahweh: ‘You [emphatic] have given this great salvation by the hand of your servant, and now I am going to die because of thirst and fall into uncircumcised hands’(v.18). Here is Samson dependent on Yahweh; here is the savior

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confessing that he needs saved. We have repeatedly heard that Samson's power comes from Yahweh's Spirit (14:6, 19; 15:14), but, in case these failed to register, we surely cannot miss this picture. Samson is anything but self-sufficient."

"In response to Samson's cry God split open the *maktesh* at Lehi (a hollowed-out depression in the rock formation perhaps) and made water flow out of it, an act that calls to mind Yahweh's provisions for Israel on the wilderness journey (Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:8, 11)."

Read Numbers 20:2-13, the waters of Meribah.

The situation is similar. The people fear they are going to die of thirst. So Moses and Aaron go to God asking for water. But, Moses does not obey God's instructions. Instead of hitting the rock with Aaron's rod, he is supposed to just speak to it. In our passage in Judges, Samson calls out (speaks) to God/Yahweh. Interestingly, God/Elohim splits open the hollow place to make water spring.

Back to the text of verse 18:

**You.** Samson includes the pronoun. In Hebrew, the pronoun is not needed when accompanied by the verb. The pronoun is assumed with the conjugation. When the pronoun is included, it is a way to emphasize or increase the intensity of what is being said. Samson's father-in-law who had just given his wife to someone else making him no longer Samson's father-in-law tried to talk his way out of a Samson beating, his speech got very intense. So now it is Samson's turn. OK, God, it wasn't me that accomplished the great slaughter of the enemy, it was you.

**Great deliverance.** This is the only place in the book of Judges that this particular noun is used. But other words from this root are used in many places in the book. They are used for the judge delivering in battle. There is an added adjective. Great! Samson understands that what just

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happened, no ordinary man could accomplish apart from God's provision. I am making the assumption that Samson is being genuine here and not just trying to butter up God to get what he wants, some water.

**By the hand of your servant.** Samson knows that it was the Spirit of God that enabled him to effect the deliverance. Yet, this deliverance "only" killed 1,000 Philistine. It did not deliver the nation Israel from the rule of the Philistines (we will see that in verse 20). Neither did the nation of Israel want to fight to free themselves from the rule of the Philistines. As the Angel of the Lord said in chapter 13, this is only the beginning. Actually, the beginning of the beginning. We get to the end of the beginning at the end of chapter 16. The word "servant" can mean slave, servant or subject. But in all cases, there is a sense of humility being expressed. God is almighty. What Samson did was a small thing to God. Samson got a taste. And it was sweeter than honey.

**Fall into the hands of the uncircumcised.** Oh, so now Samson is concerned about associating with the uncircumcised Philistines! He could have just said "Philistines." But he said uncircumcised instead. The TDOT says, "During Israel's conflicts with the Philistines, "uncircumcised" became a term of opprobrium (i.e. scorn) for the enemy." Any man not circumcised was not considered to be in the covenants with God.

**Die of thirst.** Which is it Samson? Are you going to die of thirst or die at the hands of the Philistines? Or it is possible that as he is dying, he is rescued by the Philistines who then make sport of him. But he has an attitude similar to the Israelites in the desert. Did you bring me out into the desert to die? We can get into a similar spot. Something bad happens in our lives and we want to blame God. "You, God, could have prevented this. Why didn't you?" That is not necessarily a bad question. But, a

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better question might be, “What is it that I need to learn? And by the way, please comfort me in my suffering.”

**Judges 15:19 But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that water came out of it. When he drank, his strength returned and he revived. Therefore he named it En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.**

**Hollow place.** A word that is not used very often in the Old Testament. Just a piece of trivia. The word for hollow place can also mean mortar. A word from the same root is used in Zephaniah 1:11

**Zephaniah 1:11 “Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar, For all the people of Canaan will be silenced; All who weigh out silver will be cut off.**

**En-hakkore.** Literally “spring of the caller.” The word for spring has the same consonants for “eye.”

**To this day.** Here is a historical marker. “If you don’t believe me,” says the author, “then go to Lehi and you will find this spring which didn’t previously exist but upon Samson’s request, God created it suddenly.” It is a memorial to grace. This is also a challenge to someone who doesn’t believe this happened. When there are references to tombs or markers like this spring, it is to say, this really happened. This even left a mark on the landscape. And today, archaeologists are picking their way through Israel digging up these markers. And they say “Look!” Or as some Bible translations have it, “Behold!” I still like “Look!” better.

**He drank.** A picture of faith.

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**His strength returned and he revived.** Perhaps, if we continue with the faith analogy of drinking water, fellowship recovery is expressed here.

I would like to take this opportunity to speak briefly on the topic of humility. I am not going to go into depth with lots of points. I just want you to see how humility is illustrated and explained in the Bible. A more detailed analysis based upon R. B. Thieme Jr. teaching can be found at: [http://ncbiblechurch.org/doctrines/Doctrine\\_of\\_Humility.pdf](http://ncbiblechurch.org/doctrines/Doctrine_of_Humility.pdf) I will draw on that to some extent.

I. Humility Illustrated.

Moses started out being raised by Pharaoh's daughter as one of her own. He apparently thought he was judge, jury and executioner when he killed one of the Egyptians guards (Exodus 2:11-13). It took years for Moses to become humble. The narrative in Numbers assures us:

**Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)**

That is high praise. It is in the narration meaning that since Scripture is inerrant, then even in God's eyes, Moses was the epitome of humility. Moses may have written these words, but they were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The great Bible heroes all had humility as we saw in the quote about Moses. In some cases, like Samson and even Paul, God enforces humility by some situation. You see the situation of Samson. What about Paul?

**2 Corinthians 12:7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of**

**Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!**

**2 Corinthians 12:8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.**

**2 Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.**

**2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

These words of Paul we should take to heart. If we do not walk by faith motivated by a humble attitude, then God may enforce humility on us by circumstances. He is trying to bless us. We need to be constantly learning God’s way. Notice that grace is associated with the enforced humility. So is the power of God.

Humility is associated with grace.

**Proverbs 3:34 If the scorners He doth scorn, Yet to the humble He doth give grace. (This is an important passage quoted twice in the New Testament – see below)**

**Matthew 23:12 Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; (like Johnny Cash sang, “Sooner or later God’ll cut you down.) and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.**

**1 Peter 5:5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble (from Proverbs 3:34).**

**1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,**

**1 Peter 5:7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.**

**Ephesians 4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,**

**Ephesians 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,**

**Ephesians 4:3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**



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Here are some notes on the Greek word for humility used in Ephesians 4:2 from Harold Hoehner from his commentary on Ephesians:

“It conveys “lowliness of mind” or, better, “humility.” Since humility is not considered a virtue by human beings, it is understandable why this word did not exist before NT times. In fact, Epictetus (A.D. 50-130) listed ταπεινοφροσυνη first among the qualities not to be commended. On the other hand, Paul used this term when he mentioned to the Ephesians elders that he had served the Lord in Asia with all “humility” (Acts 20:19). He was their example. In other passages believers are warned to avoid false humility, but rather to be cognizant of who they are in God’s program (cf. John 3:30; Rom 12:3).”

**James 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?**

**James 4:6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (from Proverbs 3:34)”**

**James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

**James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

**James 4:9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.**

**James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.**

The point is, humility is grace orientation. It is depending upon who and what God is as opposed to depending upon ourselves and our sin nature. And grace is everything God is able to do based upon the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Consider

1. You must have humility to be saved. You have to realize that you cannot save yourself. Only God provides salvation.
2. Walking in the Christian life requires humility. You have to depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit. Listening to L. S. Chafer on mp3 this week, I heard him talk about the perfect prayer: You pray a) to the Father b) in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son c) by the power of the Holy Spirit.

From Daniel Inghram: “The mandate of James 4:10 to “Humble yourselves in the presence/sight of the Lord and He will exalt you” is a mandate to be oriented to divine authority and occupied with Christ so that you depend or rely on Him (not self) in every circumstance of life.”

“Biblical humility, as an expression of Bible doctrine in the soul, is an understanding of our own helplessness and an appreciating of what God in His grace has done for us.”

“Biblical humility is the very core of Christian integrity and virtue.”

3. God can enforce humility either to teach us something we would not otherwise learn or to get our attention when we are out of fellowship.

**Judges 15:20 So he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.**

This may seem like just a factual statement. It is factual. But because of the wording and subject matter of this sentence, it needs to be compared to other judges:

**Othniel:**

**Judges 3:11 Then the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.**

**Ehud:**

**Judges 3:30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land was undisturbed for eighty years.**

**Barak:**

**Judges 4:31 And the land was undisturbed for forty years.**

**Gideon:**

**Judges 8:28 So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads anymore. And the land was undisturbed for forty years in the days of Gideon.**

**Jephthah:**

**Judges 12:7 Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.**

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Remember that in the introduction to the Jephthah narrative, Israel had two enemies that needed to be taken care of: Ammon and Philistia. Jephthah only took care of Ammon.

**Samson:**

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in the days of the Philistines.**

In the Samson narrative, the Philistines are not defeated. That will take David as king to do that. And look at this text: “in the days of the Philistines.” Samson was judging Israel while the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

We have chapter 16 yet to study. In that chapter we have the narrative of Samson’s death.