

## Judges Chapter 16 Part 1

Wednesday's sermon by Herman was particularly powerful. I encourage you to give a listen if you haven't already.

There is something from that sermon that struck me as applicable to the study of Judges or any Old Testament text for that matter. In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, Paul is explaining things that happened in the Exodus due to unbelief that are documented in the books of the Torah. These things were written for our benefit as Paul says:

**1 Corinthians 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.**

Paul is talking to Church Age believers, in other words, to us when he says that these Old Testament examples were written for our instruction. The word for instruction is perhaps a little stronger in the Hebrew than just instruction. It comes with a warning (so the NIV translation). In the examples given by Paul, those who did not walk by faith ended up being disciplined many with the sin unto death.

The point here is that the Old Testament Scriptures were written for us. As one Hebrew scholar once quipped, (I am paraphrasing) "The Old Testament was written to the Jews but it is now for us." Since the Old Testament prophets did not know anything about the Church Age, this means the Holy Spirit, being all-knowing (omniscient) intended the writings in the Old Testament to provide instruction for the Church Age. The Old Testament Scriptures are the basis of the New Testament and often quoted to support doctrinal points. The word translated "example" is the Greek word for "type." It means there are principles illustrated in

**Judges Chapter 16 Part 1**  
**Judges 16:1-**

the narrative of the Old Testament that apply to the Church Age. In this case, there is a typology (example) that applies.

As an aside, I feel burdened to teach the four methods of dealing with “it is fulfilled” in the New Testament. One of those methods is typology. I am working on that lesson. God has laid that burden upon my heart.

One other excerpt from Wednesday’s lesson are warnings about threats to the believer’s life, in other words, his daily walk. Don’t abandon your daily study of the Word of God.

Hebrews 3:12 Warning to Every Believer

Warnings, Warnings all through the word of God (perhaps originated with W.H. Griffith Thomas)

***Five Dangers/Warnings that Threaten Our Walk With Christ  
(from the book of Hebrews)***

1. Drifting from the Word of God. Hebrews 2:1-4.
2. Doubting the Word of God. Hebrews Hebrews 3:7-4:13.
3. Dullness (or Deformity) Toward the Word of God. Hebrews 5:11-6:20.
4. Despising the Word of God. Hebrews 10:26-29.
5. Defying (or Denying) the Word of God. Hebrews 12:14-29.

These same kinds of things are happening in the book of Judges. However, in the Old Testament, rather than list or identify a concept the text may describe an action that embodies the concept.

Here are some samples from the book of Judges. I am not going to try to match these up with the categories given above. Perhaps another time for that.

Judges Chapter 16 Part 1  
Judges 16:1-

**Judges 2:2 and as for you, you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done?**

As Christians we have a necessary obedience:

**Romans 1:5 through whom (Jesus Christ) we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith (or obedience that is faith) among all the Gentiles for His name’s sake,**

**Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,**

**Romans 6:13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

**Romans 6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

Judges Chapter 16 Part 1  
Judges 16:1-

**Judges 2:10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.**

**Judges 2:11 Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals,**

**Judges 2:12 and they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the Lord to anger.**

**Judges 2:13 So they forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.**

Judges 2:10 Is perhaps the result of drifting from the Torah. When we get to verse 13, they abandon the Lord and deny His sovereignty and worship gods of wood and stone.

Today in the USA, a country that started out with a Judeo-Christian culture, we have abandoned the Lord and serve who knows what.

**Judges Chapter 16 Part 1**  
**Judges 16:1-**

This week we start on chapter 16.

**Judges 16:1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.**

**Now.** This is just the familiar Hebrew “and.” When the NIV translates it as “one day,” it is trying to smooth over the break between chapter 15 and chapter 16. There is no “one day.” Because chapter 16 includes Samson’s death and chapter 15 seems to be the beginning of Samson’s deliverance from the Philistines, it is likely that there is a span of 20 years between the two chapters. What happened in between these two chapters is not recorded for us. At some point, Samson “judged” Israel.

**Went.** This is the word for walk. Remember, this word has a double meaning: a) physically walking somewhere and b) ordering one’s life. Here Samson is walking to Gaza at the southern end of Israel. He is also ordering his life such that he will engage in an overt sin.

**Gaza.** This is the southern city of the Philistines “Pentapolis.” (Gaza, Ashekon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath). Why Samson goes to Gaza for sex is not narrated in the text. Remember, Samson is from the tribe of Dan which is at the northern end of the Philistine territory. To the east of the Philistines are the tribe of Judah. That is why they interact with the Philistines later on in this chapter. Somehow God got Samson right where he needed to be.

From:<https://practicalarchive.weebly.com/news/samson-and-the-philistine-gate>

“Gaza was the Philistine’s chief city and was fortified with high walls and a large gate at least 10 feet high and 10 feet wide that was strong enough to withstand an attacking army.”

<https://practicalarchive.weebly.com/news/samson-and-the-philistine-gate>

## Judges Chapter 16 Part 1 Judges 16:1-



Map from biblestudy.org

**Saw.** Seeing is also doing double duty. Samson physically sees a woman. But in his mind he lusts after her. The last woman Samson was involved with “looked good in his own eyes.” There is a story somewhere that some of the Pharisees would wear veils so that they could not see everything around them and be tempted to sin. We live in the real world yet we are not of the world. We have to deal with temptation. We can ask God to take temptation away from our sight. We can also use Bible promises, focusing on the person of Jesus Christ and what He did for us. If we succumb to temptation and sin, we need to acknowledge sin as David did.

**Harlot.** A prostitute. This is the second of Samson’s three women.

## Judges Chapter 16 Part 1

### Judges 16:1-

#### Samson's Three Women

Woman	Relationship	Attraction	Blindness/Unclean	Vengeance/Strategic Objective
Unnamed Philistine 14:1-15:20	Wife, Not Consummated, Given to Another	<b>Looks</b> (Right in his own eyes)	<b>Ritual/Ceremonial Unclean/Blind</b> Ambush using wife	Destroys grain harvest, vineyards & olive groves <b>ECONOMIC Destruction</b>
Prostitute 16:1-3	Prostitute	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Morally/Spiritually Blind</b> Ambush using prostitute	Destroys city gate <b>DEFENSE Destruction</b>
Delilah Delicate, Dainty, Petite or perhaps "brought low" 16:4-31	"Mistress"	<b>Love</b>	<b>Physically Blind</b> Ambush using mistress	Destroys Temple <b>RELIGIOUS Destruction</b>
The narrative starts with Samson doing what was right in his own eyes. He was "brought low" by Delilah. God wanted him to learn that he should have done what was right in God's eyes. He finally learned that lesson after he lost his physical eyes and gained spiritual vision. He learned that his strength came from God and not from his hair.				

Perhaps there is another category that comes into play: the sin nature. In this case, the first woman "looked good in his eyes." Legalism. She met a certain standard. The second woman's attraction was based upon lust. When we get there, the third woman's attraction is based upon an emotion.

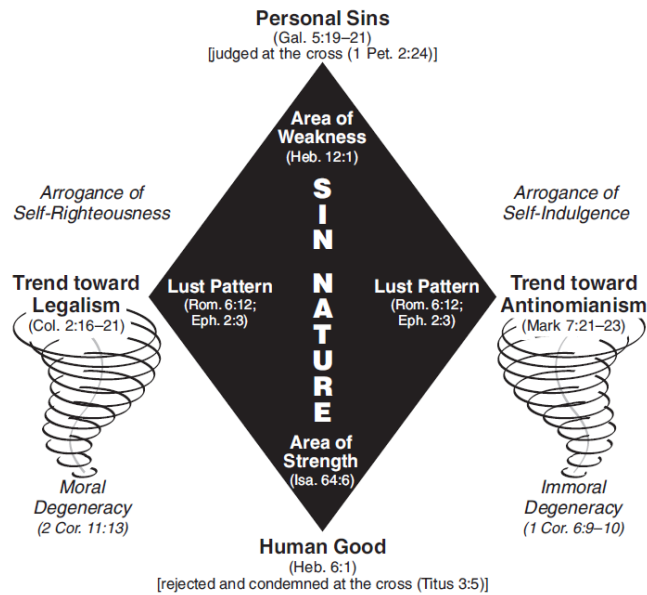
The operation of Samson's sin nature is captured in the text. We know that there are anti-nomian (anti-law) trends, there are legalistic trends in the sin nature. Here special emphasis is given later in this chapter to the revolt of the emotion. Samson let his emotion guide him rather than walking by faith. As a result, God will discipline him to the point of death. But in that death, Samson returns to faith.

Here is an illustration from R. B. Thieme's teaching:

# Judges Chapter 16 Part 1

## Judges 16:1-

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIN NATURE



A rabbi teaching his teenage class might use Samson to illustrate the operation of the sin nature through his interaction with three women. Remember, anything from the Old Sin Nature will lead to sin.

In the illustration, there is a lust pattern with a trend toward legalism. There is another pattern that trends toward “antinomianism.” That is lawlessness. There is an area of weakness which leads straight to sin. Then there is the so called “area of strength” that produces human good. But as we know, human good apart from the work of the Holy Spirit is despised by God. Just to ensure you are familiar with this read Isaiah

**Isaiah 64:6a For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment (in today’s language, this might be closer to “used toilet paper, that is what God thinks of our righteous deeds produced by the sin nature);**



## Judges Chapter 16 Part 1

### Judges 16:1-

**Samson's Legalism.** The first woman, his unnamed wife was chosen because she looked good in his eyes. He has norms and standards in his soul. They are based upon human viewpoint. The woman looked good to him. Although Samson cheated by using a riddle the Philistines had no chance of solving, he cheated legally. It was based upon a real life occurrence. But when the Philistines cheated, they turned his wife against him, threatening to burn her and her father to death. That violated Samson's norms and standards. That was wrong. It was not legal. Samson engaged in vengeance which aligned with his norms and standards. But the Philistines wouldn't let it go. So they again engaged in illegal activity by threatening the tribe of Judah with destruction if they didn't hand Samson over. Then Samson again engaged in vengeance with against the Philistines. Apparently after 1,000 Philistines were killed by one man, Samson, the Philistine let it go. Samson's legalistic trend of his old sin nature is on display.

**Samson's Antinomianism (Lawlessness).** When Samson goes to a prostitute, there is no need on the part of the author to explain what happened. Samson engaged in lawless behavior which went against the Torah. But he did it anyway. His area of weakness leading to sin was on display. The exact reason Samson tore up the city gate is not explained. Yes, the Philistines were laying an ambush for him, but it doesn't seem to have come to fruition. Perhaps this is yet another display of Samson's lawless behavior. He preemptively attacked the Philistines fortifications destroying the city gate carrying it away.

**Samson's Emotion/Human Good.** Samson fell in love. I doubt it was a case of right man right woman. His emotion left him open to being exploited by a vicious wicked woman. You have perhaps seen such a woman. She finds a naive man being driven by his emotion. She exploits it for her gain and then leaves him. Now to be fair, I have seen the same

**Judges Chapter 16 Part 1**  
**Judges 16:1-**

in men, but our story has a conniving woman exploiting Samson's weakness.

Three women. Three perspectives of Samson's sin nature. The old rabbi would dismiss class at this point if the teenagers got the lesson. Everyone has a sin nature including believers. It has an area of weakness, an area of strength and an area of human good. All lead to behaviors that are abhorrent to God.

I wish I knew at the beginning of the study of the book of Judges what I know now. The book contains many topics of instruction. There is military strategy woven into the fabric of the deliverer's actions. There is the operation of the Holy Spirit for God's purpose. Here is an illustration of the Old Sin Nature in operation. And there are other topics as well.

**He went in to her.** This is an apparent euphemism for having sex that is used here and in other places in the Bible. This word may have been used intentionally to match up with the word used when Samson goes to Gaza in verse 2. He went to Gaza in order to go into the prostitute.

**Judges 16:2 When it was told to the Gazites, saying, "Samson has come here," they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, "Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him."**

**When it was told.** Another one of those phrases that conveys they received information but how they received the information is not given and not important. The point is that the alert went out that trouble had arrived. Everywhere Samson goes he causes trouble. Kind of like a Dirty Harry movie. Everywhere he goes, people die.

**Judges Chapter 16 Part 1**  
**Judges 16:1-**

**They surrounded the place and lay in wait for him.** They were setting up an ambush.

**At the gate of the city.** From gotquestions.com, “Besides being part of a city’s protection against invaders, city gates were places of central activity in biblical times. It was at the city gates that important business transactions were made, court was convened, and public announcements were heralded.”

Here, gate is in the singular. Question then is, was there only a single gate for entrance into the city? Or was this the “main” entrance gate?

**Judges 16:3 Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.**

“The Gaza gate would have consisted of two thick doors that could be barred, and the side posts probably turned in stone sockets. Many of the ancient gates were also covered with metal or at least reinforced with metal bands. Samson pulled up the barred gate with the side posts attached and carried the whole thing off. It was as if he pulled a flower out of the ground, yet Dr. William Barrick computed the weight of the gate and posts to have been between five and ten tons (“Samson’s Removal of Gaza’s Gates,” drbarrick.org, n.d.) And Samson carried the gate to Hebron, which was 36 miles away and 3,200 feet higher in altitude!” <https://practicalarchive.weebly.com/news/samson-and-the-philistine-gate>

**Judges Chapter 16 Part 1**  
**Judges 16:1-**

From Trent Butler:

“Perhaps Samson suspected that the Philistines would try to trap him, or maybe he just had his fill of the prostitute’s charms. At any rate, he decided to leave the city in the middle of the night. Moving past the unsuspecting guards at the gate, he tore loose the doors, posts, and bar of the gate, lifted them to his shoulders, and carried them all the way to a hill near distant Hebron, close to forty miles away. His removal of the city gate, a symbol of security, foreshadows the widespread death that would overtake this same city by the end of the chapter.”

This feat of strength, without mention of the Holy Spirit, is indeed a wonder. The text does not explain how he did it. Here is another comment from Trent Butler:

“Based on archaeological and biblical evidence, Barrick estimates the gates would have weighed anywhere from 5,350 to 10,700 pounds. If one includes the bar and bronze plating, the weight would have been doubled. The distance from Gaza to Hebron is 36 miles as the crow flies and the ascent in elevation about 3200 feet. To move 5,350 pounds a distance of 36 miles in 18 hours would take about 28.5 horsepower. It is not clear why Samson took the gate to Hebron.”

Something similar in reverse happens in 1 Samuel when the Philistines capture the Ark of the Covenant. But that is a story for another time.