

Judges 15

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[0 : 00] I was going to the book of Judges, Judges chapter 15, Judges chapter 15 is where we are at this evening, Judges chapter 15. If you remember, last week we were gathered together and we, for the sake of time, separated the 14th and 15th chapter.

We had our business meeting last week, so we didn't want to get into it too long. But the events of Judges 15 are directly connected with Judges 14 because it's really just one great series of events, but we can break it apart a little bit.

And then we get into the occurrence of Judges 16, which is a very similar event, but it is a second episode.

So you have the two great episodes of Samson's life, 14 and 15, and then Judges 16. Both of them surrounding a lady and both of them surrounding people he really had no right to be involved in. But both of them, as we looked at last time, God overruled for his purposes and God used it to bring about what he desired to happen.

[1 : 20] Now, we approach this with some caution when we come to the text because Samson is far from the model judge. As a matter of fact, the further we get to the book of Judges, and I know we've said this before, but it bears repeating, the further we get into the book or the further we get into the text, the least we want to model or the less we want to model the people we encounter there.

Because the deeper we go into the book of Judges, the worse man gets. There's this downward spiral, and a man is doing what is right in his own eyes, and he is not worrying about what God would have him do.

So, we're not looking at people who are faithful and righteous and true. But yet, when we open up the book of Hebrews, we know that Samson is recorded in Hebrews chapter 11.

That by faith, he did a number of things. We can say that at the end of his life, by faith, he sue more than he did his entire life.

Because that one last call, we'll get to there in the 16th chapter, that by faith, he trusted that God could take an impossible situation and make something very possible.

[2 : 29] But where we're at now in his account, we don't hold up as a model saying, oh, that's how we want to live. Right? Because in the book of Judges in particular, man is never the model.

Man seems to be the exception. He is not the one we want to follow. It's not what amazes us in the book of Judges.

It's not the great feats of man. I say this in particular with Samson because, I mean, when it comes to strong men, I mean, he's a bad dude. I mean, just no better way of saying it.

He does some pretty cool stuff, right? He takes the gates of a city and rips them down just to go set them on the top of a hill. He takes the jawbone of a donkey. We'll see that in just a moment.

He can't be held back. He has this amazing strength in these, all of these things. And then some. We understand. I'm sure he's got failures and all this. He's a child of promise.

[3 : 26] The angel of the Lord announced his coming. But man is not what we're looking at in the book of Judges. We want to see beyond man and see what God is doing. Because, as is often the case in history, God is working in spite of man.

And we don't want to degrade man's position because he is the apple of God's eye. He is the pinnacle of creation. He is dearly loved.

But in his own worth and his own righteousness, there is none, right? But yet God's still moving and God's still working and God's still redeeming. And God is still using this fallen creature called mankind.

And we see it clearly in the book of Judges. God can deliver in any way, right? We need to affirm that. God does not have to use Samson in this account in particular.

God can do anything in any way. He can deliver however he sees fit. Yet he chooses to use Samson. And we're amazed by the power of God, not the strength and the ability of man.
[4 : 41] So I say all that before we read our text as we look at Judges 15. And then we'll dive into it a little further. But after a while now, we have to go back and see what happened in the 14th chapter.

Remember what happened in the 14th chapter? Samson saw this woman of the Philistines and he wanted that woman to be his wife. And he told his father and mother, go get that woman to be my wife. And they said, enter someone of your own country.
Anyway, so he goes there. He does the wedding ceremony. He never initiated the wedding, if you will, or christened the wedding, right? Because there's this feast that happens before that. The two had never become one. So there's this feast that takes place. And he gives this riddle about the lion and the honey, right? Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet.

And then the man plow with his own heifer. Remember that great encouraging word he says about his wife, his new bride there? And they get the answer to his riddle. So he gets mad.
[5 : 38] He goes and kills 30 Philistines. And he gives them the change of garments. And then he goes home. He's mad. He's angry. Right? So he goes home to his parents' house and he leaves his new bride over there. Wedding's never christened.

It's never made official because they never reached the end day, that seventh day. He went to his house. Here we pick it up. But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat and said, I will go into my wife in her room.
But her father did not let him enter. Her father said, I really thought that you hated her intensely. So I gave her to your companion. That's a nice way of saying your best man. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she?

Please let her be yours instead. Samson then said to them, This time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm. And Samson went and caught 300 foxes and took torches and turned the foxes tail to tail and put one torch in the middle between two tails.
And when he had set fire to the torches, he released the foxes into the standing grain of the Philistines, thus burning up both the shocks and the standing grain along with the vineyards and the groves. Then the Philistines said, Who did this?

[6 : 49] And they said, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to his companion. So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. And Samson said to them, Since you act like this, I will surely take revenge on you, but after that I will quit.

And he struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter, and he went down and lived in the cleft of the rock of Edom. Then the Philistines went up and camped in Judah and spread out in Lehi.
The men of Judah said, Why have you come up against us? And they said, We have come up to bind Samson in order to do to him as he did to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Edom 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 I have done to them. They said to him, We have come down to bind you so that we may give you into the hand of the Philistines.

And Samson said to them, Swear to me that you will not kill me. So they said to him, No, but we will bind you fast and give you into their hands, yet surely we will not kill you. Then they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

[7 : 57] And when he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands.

And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it. Then Samson said, With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey, I have killed a thousand men.

When he had finished speaking, he threw the jawbone from his hand, and he named that place Ramoth-Lehi. 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.

Now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised. 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 Enhachor, which is in Lehi to this day. So he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines. What a great account we have, right?

[9 : 01] One of those well-known stories. Lehi means jawbone. Evidently this place was named after this event, and it was such a remarkable event that they named the place Jawbone.

And in memory of the reality of what Samson did here, we see clearly again that he breaks his Nazarite vow because he grabs the fresh jawbone of a donkey. Remember, it was a Nazarite. He wasn't supposed to touch anything dead, but he does. Anyway, this is the thing he finds in hand, and he grabs it literally with his hand and has this great slaughter. The further extended name, Ramoth-Lehi, means pile of jawbone or jawbone heaps.

And it is in reference to the heaps of people that he killed with that jawbone. We have this real remarkable account of what takes place following the botched wedding, if you will, that really was never God's intention.

Now, in order to see what's happening, we have to go back to the beginning, not to the beginning of the 14th chapter, but we have to go back to the beginning of the account of Samson. If you remember, when the angel of the Lord showed up to Manoah's wife, Samson's mother, we don't know her name.

[10 : 08] We know his father's name is Manoah. That when the angel of the Lord showed up, he came with a very clear, clear message. He told her that she would conceive and give birth to a child and that that child would be a Nazarite at his birth, right?

And she had to be careful what she would eat because he would be set apart for the purposes and plans of God. That God had a reason for this coming child. That she wasn't just going to give birth to a child and that's what was happening.

One of the most amazing accounts in all of this account of Samson is that they are under the rulership or the suppression of the Philistines. And yet God's people never call out.

This is the only time in the book of Judges that we find a judge or a deliverer, it's the same word, being raised up for God's people in which they're not even asking to be delivered. They had gotten so comfortable being ruled over something they were supposed to be ruling.

God's people have been called to take possession of the promised land and rule over the inhabitants by casting them out. And yet they got comfortable. And we remember all the way back in the book of Judges, the beginning of the book of Judges, they began to be a little complacent here and a little complacent there and make a little compromise here and a little compromise there.

[11 : 18] Until all of a sudden now they're living where they were supposed to be but they're not living as they should have been. Just because they are where they should be doesn't mean that they are who they should have been.

Because they are living in the right place but they're not living in the right standing. Because rather than being the rulers of that land they are being ruled over in that land. And they have allowed sin or the Philistines to have dominion over them.

Thus making it appear that the God of the Philistines was greater than the God of the nation of Israel. Which we know to be false. They never cry out for deliverance and yet God initiates this deliverance because he goes to Samson's mother and makes this declaration.

You're going to give birth to a child. It'll be a male child. He's going to be a Nazarite. He's going to be set apart for God's purposes. And remember this clear statement. He says it twice. He says it again when Manoah questions him.

What will be the occupation of this child? He will begin to deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. Don't ever separate the account of Samson from the declared purpose of God.

[12 : 22] God's purpose in bringing Samson into life was to begin to deliver his people from the hand of the Philistines. Samson did not deliver God's people from the hand of the Philistines.

He began the deliverance. David finished it. Okay. If you move forward, not too much longer after Samson, there's a man who comes up named Samuel.

Samuel anoints a king named Saul. Saul was to be charged with removing the Philistines. Saul failed to do that. David finishes the job. Right. Man after God's own heart. But yet we see that Samson has a very specific purpose and calling on his life.

Okay. Don't lose the fact of that. God has a reason for bringing Samson to life. He had a calling upon his life. He had a purpose for his life. What's amazing, and we'll see it in our text here, is that that's not really what matters so much to Samson.

So you see from our text, move towards his, that is God's, move towards his intended purpose. God has a way of overruling and supremely ordaining events to move his people according to his calling and his purposes in spite of them, sometimes because of them.

[13:42] God moves Samson to his purposes for Samson's life rather than Samson's desires for his life. Samson, make no mistakes about it.

Samson is operating by desire, not by calling. All right. God did not call him to go marry a Philistine woman. Samson desired to marry a Philistine woman.

You say, well, wait a minute. The 14th chapter says that his parents did not know that this was of the Lord, that God was going to use this to bring about the destruction of the Philistines. Right. That that was of the Lord, but that does not mean that God had commanded them to do that because we also know in the Old Testament God said they should not intermarry. God never contradicts himself. So it's a clear breaking of God's clear teaching to go and intermarry with the Philistines here.

So Samson is not operating by calling. We know that he's not really concerned about his Nazarite vow. He's already killed a lion. He's such an jawbone of a donkey. He's walked through. He met the lion in the vineyard. Remember that?

[14:42] It was just not a good place to be hanging out if you're a Nazarite because you're not supposed to eat grapes. You're not supposed to drink wine, not supposed to have anything to do with the fruit of the vine. So I don't know why he's in the vineyard meeting a lion. And then he touches the lion again later.

And there's all these things that we know he's not really so concerned about his consecration here to the Lord. He's just concerned about what it is he wants to do. But yet in spite of all this, God moves him to his intended purposes.

God is going to bring about what he desires. And we kind of concluded last time we were together that we have a choice to make. Either we will submit and follow the Lord and allow him to use us, or he will overrule our actions and still use us.

And it's much better to be submitted to him and faithfully following him and allowing him to use us. Because what God intends will bring about. God had made a promise.

God's promise was, Samson is the man who's going to begin to deliver my people. If you and I had met Samson, we would have thought, no, there's no way. I mean, yeah, sure, he's got the build for it.

[15:45] He seems to have the reputation for it. But he has no desire to do that. He's not looking for it. So the first thing we see from our text is this unlikely start.

Okay? How God uses this series of events to start what he had planned all alone. What he had desired. Because it says after a while, Samson's temper calms down.

And he decides, you know what? You know, I've done my deeds. I've made my peace. I've, you know, paid the garments. Now I've got home. I've regathered my composure. I'm going to go back to my wife.

So he goes back. It was only about three miles, three to four miles from where he grew up. So he goes back to his wife. And he brings a young goat with him, which is Jewish custom. You know, he's going to go in. He's going to officially, you know, coordinate the marriage there.

He comes with this young goat. He's going to go in. And her dad says, no, you can't do that. I actually thought you hated her. I thought you wanted nothing to do with her. I mean, you know, you called her a heifer. And you wanted nothing to do with her. You got so mad. So I gave her to your best man.

[16:44] Which, by the way, probably wasn't a friend anyway. It was someone that was appointed to be with him to be his best man. So I gave her to someone else because we had a feast. So we were going to have a wedding. And so Samson's a little infuriated here.

He's a little mad. He says, then this time, which is kind of astounding because he's almost like saying that when I killed 30 people, okay, I'm guilty of that. But this time I will not be guilty of the harm that I caused to the Philistines.

Again, Samson's not looking at this. Don't think, don't make him overly righteous. Samson's not looking at this going, oh, now God's given me the opportunity. No, Samson's mad. He has a temporal problem.

I don't know if you've caught that or not. Samson has a little bit of a temper issue. So this time he says, right now, I'm just going to take care of this and then I'm going to be done. So he goes out and he catches 300 foxes. Some people say the wording there should be jackals.

And you go either way. The foxes are jackals. It really doesn't matter. He caught a bunch of them. The reasoning behind that is jackals run in packs. Foxes run singles. So most people think that it was probably jackals. And they're a little calmer.

[17:40] So anyway, he got 300, tied them tail to tail. And he put a torch in between them and lit them. But notice when God allowed Samson to do this because God overrules all things, right?

He is the grand scheme. When Samson had calmed down and decided now's a good time to go back, the text tells us it was the time of the wheat harvest. It was the time of the wheat harvest.

Everything falls in line with God's calling, right?

Everything does. So it just so happens at this particular time, God allows these events to take place so that when Samson lights the torches and sends them in the field, he destroys their three major crops.

At any other time, it wouldn't have been as destructive. But at that time, all three of them are destroyed. And as far as Samson's concerned, hey, it's over. Okay?

I didn't get my bride. I paid you back. It's over. And he's ready to walk away. But what happens is the Philistines get a little upset about this. And they say, well, who did this?

[18:42] This is why we know Samson has a reputation. They say, well, it was Samson. His father-in-law, the Timnite, gave his wife to somebody else. So the Philistines go and burn his wife and father-in-law up. They burn them.

They don't do anything to Samson. They burn them. And what we have here is this unlikely start because Samson never intended to go fight the Philistines.

He intended to go marry a lady. He never intended to start a battle. He intended to just kind of settle the score. He was just having fun with a riddle.

See, Samson's intentions were never, God has called me to go deliver his people, so I'm going to go do it. No, Samson's intentions were, ha, there's a lady over there. It looks good to me.

I'm going to go marry her. But yet in all of this, what we see, even in the most unlikely of matters, God is working things according to his purpose, which leads us to the second thing, an unavoidable conflict.

[19:41] Because now they've poked the bear, so to say. Samson has burned their fields. They've went and burned his wife and father-in-law, even though she wasn't really his wife anymore.

Samson gets upset. And then Samson makes this declaration. He says, okay. He says, since you act like this, verse 7, I will surely take revenge on you.

Okay? Still Samson's thinking singular here. I will take revenge on you, but look at what he says. But after that, I'll quit. I'll stop. Again, Samson's not starting a battle.

He's just trying to fulfill his own vengeance. He said, after this, I'll quit. And this is where we have that wording. So he struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter.

Some translations say hip and thigh. The wording is a wrestling term, which means that he did it in a grotesque manner. He was mad. We think of wrestling, you think of either two things.

[20:42] When we say wrestling, and today you think of WWE or WWF, whatever it's called. You know, the fake stuff, the great stunts. And I don't mean to blow anybody's bubble. It's not real. You know, it's a good show and all this stuff. And you get all that stuff.

And at the end, you know, they have already determined who's going to win. And then, you know, whatever. Everybody walks out. Or you think of like Greco-Roman style wrestling, which you have like collegiate sports and high school sports.

And, you know, people are wrestlers. But no, during these days, you know how you won the battle is you killed your opponent. But the way you did it is you start with breaking his thumb.

And then maybe you'd break his arm. And then you would maybe break his leg. And then you'd dislocate his hip. And you'd finally get him to the point where he couldn't do anything. And then you killed him. That's the same word that Paul used when we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the powers and principalities of the air.

Pretty gross, right? So I'm going to use wrestling terminology. You only won when your opponent was dead. And there was a certain way in which you did it. That's what Samson did.

[21 : 44] He decided in such a ruthless manner that he was going to fulfill his revenge. And he's going to get it to the fullest. And he's going to be done. He's just going to stop.

Again, I'm amazed at the reality here. Samson still has no desire to do what God had called. Do you think that his mom and dad had probably told him, you know, the Lord told us that he was going to use you to begin to deliver people from the hand of the Philistines.

Samson's desire is not to do that. Samson's not even thinking about being a judge. As a matter of fact, Samson's never declared a judge until the end of the 15th chapter. Here, Samson is just concerned about himself.

Right? I wanted a wife. You took that away from me. I burned your field. So now you're going to go do something like this. So I'm going to ruthlessly kill those who took part in that. And then I'm done. As a matter of fact, he's done. And then he goes to the Rock of Edom. And the Rock of Edom is in Judah's territory. So now he's no longer in Philistine land. He's just hanging out there. And he's content to go live in a rock somewhere. And, you know, he's done what he had to do.

[22 : 48] Yet we find this unavoidable conflict because the Philistines aren't just going to let that lie. They're not going to let that go. So they go to Lehi looking for him. And now all of a sudden God has set the stage perfectly for the very thing God had called Samson to do.

See, the application in this, before we get to the final thing, is that God has a way of orchestrating our lives and even our actions to put us in the place where we have to do what it is he's called us to do.

He has a way of doing that. It tells us in the New Testament that God called us before we knew him. As a matter of fact, it says before the foundations of the earth were laid, God created us for good works.

Right? He created us for good works. How do I know he created me for good works? If you have accepted Christ, if you're redeemed, if you're forgiven, if you know that you're his and he's called you and he's shown you his love, he's called you and appointed you for good works, which he ordained before the foundations of the world were laid.

Which means God had something in mind for you and something in mind for me, not before I was born, but before he laid the foundations of the earth.

[24 : 22] You say, oh, well, I need to find out what the will of God is. Henry Blackaby did a whole study on that. Henry Blackaby and Claude King, later Richard Blackaby, knowing and doing the will of God.

I know War Trace Baptist went through that many years ago, and the reason I know it is because I think Brother Ronnie led a group of you through it because I lent Brother Ronnie the study, and he brought it back and did it with you guys.

Where I was at, we went through it too, and so I let him borrow it, and the guys went through it here, and then, you know, it would be good to do it again. It's an old study, but knowing and doing the will of God. But do you know what you do when you, you know, Henry Blackaby wrote this whole study, and it's a 13-week study.

You know what the whole premise is behind knowing and doing the will of God is? Getting in the Bible. That's it. Getting in the Bible. Because God has a way of orchestrating your events that he is going to put you in the place to do what he's created you to do.

And Samson's life is a literal living testimony of that. Samson was not seeking God's will. Samson was seeking his desires, and yet now God has brought him to the place where it is unavoidable, unavoidable, and he is going to do what God had called him to do.

[25 : 41] To me, that's grace and mercy. It's amazing. We're not amazed at Samson, right? We shouldn't be. We're amazed that God never failed to stay true to what he had created Samson to do.

At any given time, God could have said, well, I thought that he was going to be this, and I had raised him, but since he doesn't want to do it, I'm not going to use him. No. God made a promise. He's going to do this. And God is working, sometimes seen, sometimes unseen, in such a manner that Samson is about to have to do what God had called him to do.

God has a way of overruling and ruling over our lives. He will put us into that position. It's up to us to respond to that.

We see this third and final thing, because since this was an unlikely start, which led to an unavoidable conflict, now we get to this unfailing power of the Lord that's present, this unfailing power.

[26 : 48] Three thousand men of Judah go up to the rock of Edom, and they find Samson. And they talk to him, and notice what they said, do you not know that the Philistines rule over us?

So they're afraid, right? Do you not know that they rule over us? Everybody knows it. Nobody's crying out for a deliverer here. Nobody's crying out for a redeemer. And Samson says, what are you going to do?

And they said, well, we're going to hand you over. He says, promise me you're not going to kill me. Now, he's asking this because he doesn't want to raise his hand against his countrymen. Right? And they say, no, we're just going to tie you up.

We're going to bind you tight, hold you fast. We kind of laugh because we know how these things go, right? And we're going to bring you down there. Okay. So they tie him up, and the 3,000 men lean down there.

Notice this. This is what stands out to me in the text, though. By the way, when we get to the 16th chapter, no longer do we see the spirit of the Lord moving. Okay? We only see it in the 14th and 15th chapter, the early parts of Samson's life.

[27 : 48] Then he begins to operate in his own strength. And as a matter of fact, by the time we get to the end of the 16th chapter, it says the Lord had departed from him. Okay? So here we're still in this time where God is working with him.

The 16th chapter is not showing that God's power had failed. It shows that God's power had left. And that's when Samson falls. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. But here they lead him.

They have him bound tight and have these two new ropes on him. And they bring him to Lehi. And as soon as they get to Lehi, the Philistines begin to shout. They've got their warrior, right? They're going to do to him what he's done to them.

They're going to bind him hip and bone and hip and joint and ruthlessly slay him the way he did some of the Philistines there. And they're crying out. Notice what the text says.

As soon as he got in the presence of the Philistines, it says the spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily. Why?

[28 : 50] What had God called him to do? Begin to deliver his people from the hand of the Philistines. The power and presence of God is found when Samson can do what God had called him to do to begin with.

As soon as he is in the place where he is now bound to do what God had called him to do, then the power and presence of God is evident. It comes upon him.

The reason we have so much powerless Christianity is because so many Christians are not doing what God had called them to do. Because the power and the presence of the Lord only manifest itself when we're in the position of fulfilling what it is he's called us to do.

And that's just a reality. You read your church history, you stand amazed at the events that transpire. And sometimes you look at these things, you say, oh, that's so miraculous.

And you see all these things that just blow your mind. And you're like, oh, I thought those things were confined to scripture. But each and every one of them, when God's people are doing what he had called them to do, his presence never fails to show up.

[30 : 06] Never. It doesn't mean they're always supernaturally delivered, but it means he's always supernaturally there and present. And his power is there. And as soon as he's before the Philistines, God had called him to fight the Philistines.

He had just been trying to settle the score and leave it alone. Now there's all these Philistines in front of him. And the spirit of the Lord comes upon him mildly because this is what God had called him to do. This was his purpose.

This was his calling. In today's modern world, we call this the sweet spot of the ministry, right? God called each and every one of us to follow him in a specific manner, not all the same.

And I'm, thank God, it's not all the same, but in a unique way. And when you get to that place where he's empowered you and called you, at that point in your life, wherever you're at, that's the sweet spot. That's where you know he's present and he's power.

And it's there. And he can use you because you're now really ready. And we see this. He comes upon him. He looks down. He sees the jawbone of a donkey.

[31 : 07] We know he's broke the Nazarite vow. At this point, it really doesn't matter because he's already broken that vow. Okay? So the vow, the Nazarite vow has already been broken. He hasn't went and reinstated himself.

So at this point, he's using what is on hand, which, you know, is amazing because God can use anything. So he grabs the jawbone of a donkey, breaks the ropes, grabs it, and he slays a thousand men.

And he sings this song that makes no sense to us, but I think it rhymes in its original language. You know, it has a pattern to it. You know, with the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey, I've killed a thousand men.

And he renames the place. The place is named Lehi. In our text, it has to be after it because it literally means jawbone. But he names that place Remath-Lehi, which means heaps and jawbone. He made a heap with the jawbone. And he threw it from his hand. Right? Here's the power of the Lord being manifest. It's this unfailing power that God, when he got to the place to fulfill what God had called him to do, the power shows up.

[32 : 12] But then he's thirsty, right? I mean, he's got to be. He's killed a thousand men with a jawbone. That's hand-to-hand combat. That's a lot of hand-to-hand combat. And it's a lot. It wears you out. And so he's sitting here. And so he cries out. There's only two prayers of Samson recorded in Scripture.

This one and the one at the end of his life. And he says, Lord, I'm thirsty. Would you allow your servant, he calls himself God's servant, to have so great a victory, but yet die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

And the text says, so God split the place at Lehi. That he split the hollow place that is in Lehi. Water came out of it. And when he drank, he was refreshed.

The power of God is present to both perform and provide. God did not fail to empower him to defeat the enemy, but he also did not fail to provide for him the necessities to sustain him.

And then we are told Samson judges Israel for 20 years. Then his judgeship is initiated.

[33 : 18] We don't know everything that transpires during his judgeship because there's only one more account. There's one with Delilah that we find in the 16th chapter. And then we know what happens at the end of his life. But for 20 years, he is at least doing what God called him to do.

We know he's not fighting a bunch of battles because he kills 1,000 here, right? He's already killed 30 elsewhere. So that's 1,030. We don't know how many he killed when he took vengeance because of the burning of his wife and father-in-law.

But evidently, it's not that many. But over that 20-year period, we are told that he killed more at his death than he did the entire time he was alive. And at his death, he killed 3,000. We do know that. So evidently, he's not going on these big military campaigns. But now, finally, God has him to the place. At least for most of the time, there's nothing but silence. We don't have recorded for us what transpires those whole 20 years.

Unfortunately for Samson, we only have two great accounts in his life, this one and the next one. We don't know what transpires those 20 years, but for 20 years, he's doing what God called him to do. And God turned him towards his purpose.

[34 : 23] He took him from following his desires to doing what God had called him to do. And it wasn't a very pleasant turning. Again, we don't want to follow this example.

We don't want God to bring us to a place where we're burning up people's fields and people are getting burned up. And we don't want to do that, right? We want to get to a place of surrender. Samson never surrenders.

He's just faced with an impossibility. He has to fight. But God has a way of turning people according to his purposes. He has a way of bringing things back to the way they should be.

Because God made a promise concerning Samson, and that promise is going to be fulfilled even in spite of Samson. Not just because of him.

He's going to do what he said he was going to do. God has a calling on each and every one of our lives, and he is going to do what he says he's going to do. And it should come to a place of glad surrender to that calling, not to, Lord, overrule me for that calling.

[35 : 27] Judges chapter 15. Thank you, Pastor. Thank you.

Thank you.