

# The History, Mystery and Tragedy of Samson - Part 3

by Ian Paisley

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of keeping anchorage, spiritual growth, and the blessing of God, as seen in the life of Samson.*

**Duration:** 24:19

**Scripture:** Genesis 49:22, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 4:15, Hebrews 11:32

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Faith And Victory"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the life of Samson, exploring the lessons from his journey, including his backsliding, rebellion, and ultimate return to God. Despite his flaws, Samson's faith and ability to finish where he began earn him a place among God's heroes. The importance of spiritual growth, God's blessing, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are emphasized as key elements in achieving strength and victory over challenges.

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## Transcript

These last Lord's Day mornings we have been dwelling upon the history, the tragedy, and the mystery of Samson. We have discussed the lesson of Samson's generation, the lesson of Samson's education, and the lesson of Samson's separation. Now we come to the lesson of Samson's motivation.

And if you turn with me to verses 24 and 25, you'll find that set out clearly in chapter 13. And the woman bear a son, and called his name Samson, and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtoel.

Some people have said we don't understand why Samson, with all his backsliding, with all his terrible sinning, with all his terrible rebellion against the law, a life that's punctuated with some terrible departures from God's commandment, why should he be listed among the heroes and champions of faith? But if you turn in your Bible to the great gallery of the champions of the faith, in the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, you will find that Samson's name is given a special place. What shall I more say, verse 32, for the time would fill me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, of Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets. Well, it's easy to understand why Samson is mentioned in the great galaxy of the heroes of faith.

Because of all he had many terrible black sins in his life, and of all his backslidings were tragic and terrible, and wrought awful havoc. Yet Samson finished where he first began. And when a man finishes where he first begins, then that man is entitled to a place among the heroes in God's work.

If you turn over with me to the 16th chapter of Judges, you will find in verse 31, Then his brethren, and all the house of its father, came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Ashto. That was the very place that you will notice in verses 24 and 25 of chapter 13, that the Spirit of God first moved upon him. Could I say something today? It is essentially true of God's people that they must keep their anchorage.

There must be no departure from the place where they start with God. When Abraham went down into Egypt, there was no restoration for him until he came back to the place where he built the altar at the beginning. Jesus, keep me near the cross.

There's a precious fountain, free to all a healing stream, flows from Calvary's mountain. We start at the cross, and we've got to finish at the cross. The man that doesn't finish where he began will not be mentioned among God's heroes of the field.

But Samson, with all his backsliding, and all his sinning, and we dare not and must not minimize the guilt, and the heinousness, and hideousness, and hellishness of his sinning. Yet he finished where he began, at the place where the Spirit of God first came upon him. I want you to notice two things in verse 24, the growth of Samson.

Spiritual growth is the character of a spiritual man. The Apostle Paul wrote to some of his converts, and he says you have need of milk and not of meat. They were not growing.

They were still in the baby stage. They had never got to their feet. They had never walked.

They had to be caught, and they had not come to the diet of manhood. We need to ask ourselves, are we still in babyhood as believers? One thing about a child that's very easily offended, it is childing. You ever see two children, and they have got special toys, and one of them wants the toy of the other.

Now, of course, we had this in our home, for we had two babies born on the same day. And anybody that has twins in their homes have not only extra blessings, but extra trials. And one of my boys would say, that's my toy.

And the other boy would say, well, I want it. And then there was a free for all. And we all laugh at that.

And let me tell you, as a pastor for 35 years, I've seen childishness among God's people. I've seen babyhood among the sinners. I've mentioned somewhat of that in an article that will appear in the next issue of our paper, about our church choir that we have.

And it was always the custom that someone sang a solo piece in the choir. And if Mrs. So-and-so's daughter didn't get singing the solo piece, she was offended. Remember one woman saying to me, well, why does my daughter not be allowed to sing? She can sing far better than that other person that sang.

She's far, far better. Why doesn't the choir master ask her to sing? That was babyhood among the saints of God. Childishness among the saints of God.

Let me say to especially our students that are with us, your gift will make room for itself. You don't need to push open doors. God will open the doors that need to be opened in Christian service.

But Simpson grew. And then we have this wonderful little clause, And the Lord blessed him. The Lord blessed him.

You will notice that the Lord is spelt in small capitals, because that means in the text it's Jehovah, the I Am. The one who never changes and never can change and bless his holy name, never will change. It says the Lord blessed him.

Let me tell you the greatest thing that any person can have is the blessing of God. That's all you need, the blessing of God. Of course when the Lord blesses you, there'll be opposition.

The devil's crowd will oppose you if the Lord blesses you. There's nothing the devil more hates and detests than a man or a woman or a church or a people that God has blessed. The devil will oppose that person, that people, that church, that body of believers.

And not only will the devil oppose it, but all the agents of the devil will oppose it. Turn over with me to that wonderful passage that we have at the end of Genesis. And we find that Jacob called his brethren, his sons, rather round as man.

And he comes down to Joseph and he tells us about Joseph. And brethren and sisters in Christ, if the Lord blesses you, not only will the devil oppose you, not only will the devil's crowd oppose you, but your own brethren, your own brethren will oppose you. There'll be opposition in the household of faith to the man that God blessed.

And we have that in the life of Joseph. Look at verse 22 of the 49th chapter of Genesis. Joseph is a fruitful bough.

When God blesses you, you'll be fruitful. There'll be results to your ministry. The greatest testimony that a minister of Christ can have is the fruit that results from his ministry.

That fruit doesn't come to his ministry because of anything he does. That fruit comes to his ministry because of God's sovereign blessing. And if God wants to pick up a man or a church or a people and bless them, nothing can stop the blessing of God.

God is sovereign in his blessing of his people. Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well. He's by a well of living water.

This bough didn't bear fruit of itself, but the richness that it needed and the refreshment that it needed came from the well. And what does it say about this man, Joseph, whose branches run over the wall? So when God blesses a man, nobody can limit or circumscribe his ministry. It can't be done.

You can't circumscribe the ministry of a man that God blesses. His branches will run over the wall. As a pastor, when the Lord started to bless me and my ministry, after a day and night of prayer in the old church, I had people who wanted to circumscribe my ministry and they said to me, you have not to go and take evangelistic services.

And then they said to me, certain members of my church committee at that time, they said if you go and take evangelistic services, we'll not pay you. And we'll not pay the man that comes to preach for you.

You'll have to pay your own supplies.

I said, well if that's all you're worrying about, I'll do that. And I did that for years. Every man that came to preach when I was away evangelizing, I paid their pulpit supplies.

Yes. I came up the hard way. I came up the hard way.

But then one day there was an election and all those skin flints were thrown off the committee. And we got people that were liberal and broad minded and believed that their pastor's branches should run over the wall. We had a treasurer in this church once and when I went away for a mission, he stopped even paying my health stamp.

And the people from Stormont came to me and said to me, Mr. Paisley, this year, your stamps are only paid for about 35 weeks and they're all canceled for all the other weeks. And when the pension comes, you're going to be in trouble. And I discovered that the treasurer, every time I went away for a week of meetings, he wouldn't even put a stamp on my car.

But you can't stop a person whom the Lord blesses. Let me tell you, the branches run over the wall. And what happens? Who opposes it? Who opposed Joseph, the devil's agent? Yes, part of her and his wife.

But who was the most bitter in the opposition? His own brethren? And the free Presbyterian church of Ulster and this preacher has been sorely shot at and has been grieved, not by the darts that came from the devil's armory, but the darts that came from the quivers carried by his own brethren, especially brethren whom this preacher helped and supported and strengthened their hand. Did the Lord promise us anything different? No, sir. But the Lord said, Your goal will abide in strength and I will continue to bless you.

And that's all I care about, is to know God's blessing. And I want to tell you, if I have God's blessing in my ministry, nobody can stop me. But when I cease to have God's blessing, then I'm absolutely finished.

So it doesn't matter who parades outside in front of that church at any time, that makes no difference. It doesn't matter what one of the household of faith takes the bitter arrow and fires it to grieve this preacher, it will not matter. By God, if God blesses him, he'll be blessed and his branches will run over the wall.

To the ends of the earth, the ministry of this church has gone. Why? Because the Lord said, I'm going to bless that preacher and bless that people. That's why.

Because if there was anything else, God could remove the candlestick at any time, the wind blow us where it listed. Let me tell you, it's God's purpose to bless. And I'll tell you something more, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

And when God deems to bless his child, he'll be blessed indeed. And look at the blessings he'll have. Look at verse 25.

He'll have the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breast and of the womb, and the blessings of thy father. Of course, there's five of them, for five is the number of grace. And it's always the Holy Spirit, always has his numbers right.

So there'll be the blessings of heaven, and the blessings of the deep, and the blessings of the breast and of the womb, and the blessings of thy father. And look at what it says about Joseph. These were of the

head of Joseph and of the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

God's man will have God's blessing. And that's what's happened to Samson. But then you'll notice something else, the most interesting thing about Samson, that it says that something happened to him.

And this is the point that we want to make, and we want to emphasize. The Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of death. He wasn't always moved by the Spirit of God.

God's servant doesn't always know the mighty breath of heaven, because the Spirit himself is also sovereign. But the Spirit of God began to move upon him at times, oh, for the blessed times, when the Spirit of God begins to move upon his people. Between Zorah and Ashto.

Ashto means a valley, a low place. And Zorah means a prominent place. This, of course, is a perfect time of the child of God's pilgrimage.

At times we are down in the valley. At times we are down in the dumps. Mr. Nicholson used to teach us to sing that chorus, down in the dumps.

But the Spirit of God can move upon you when you're down in the dumps. Sometimes we're in the mountaintop and the sun's shining and everything's going well. The Spirit of God can move upon us in the mountaintop.

But there's an in-between place, a place between the valley and a place between, a place between the heights. It's at the in-between place that God needs to keep us by the strength of his arm. May God help us today to know God's blessing.

My prayer is that you may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. My prayer is that the Lord will bless you. My prayer is that the Spirit of the Lord will move upon you and that we'll know and learn the lesson of Samson's motivation.

Let me give you a little bit of homework. Before next Sunday, read the other verses about Samson and notice how many times the Spirit of God came upon him. And at the end of the day, he had a final anointing of the Spirit of God and he slew more in his death than in his life.

What is our motivation? Is it selfish? To be heard, to be seen? To have notoriety just for the sake of it? Or is our motivation guided by the Lord? Is it the Spirit that is pushing us forward to do the will and work of God? May God help us to realize three things. We need spiritual growth. We need spiritual blessing.

And above all, we need the Holy Spirit himself. This is the secret of Samson's strength. And this will be the secret of our strength if we're going to defeat the uncircumcised Philistines of our day.

May God bless his word for Christ's sake. Amen.

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