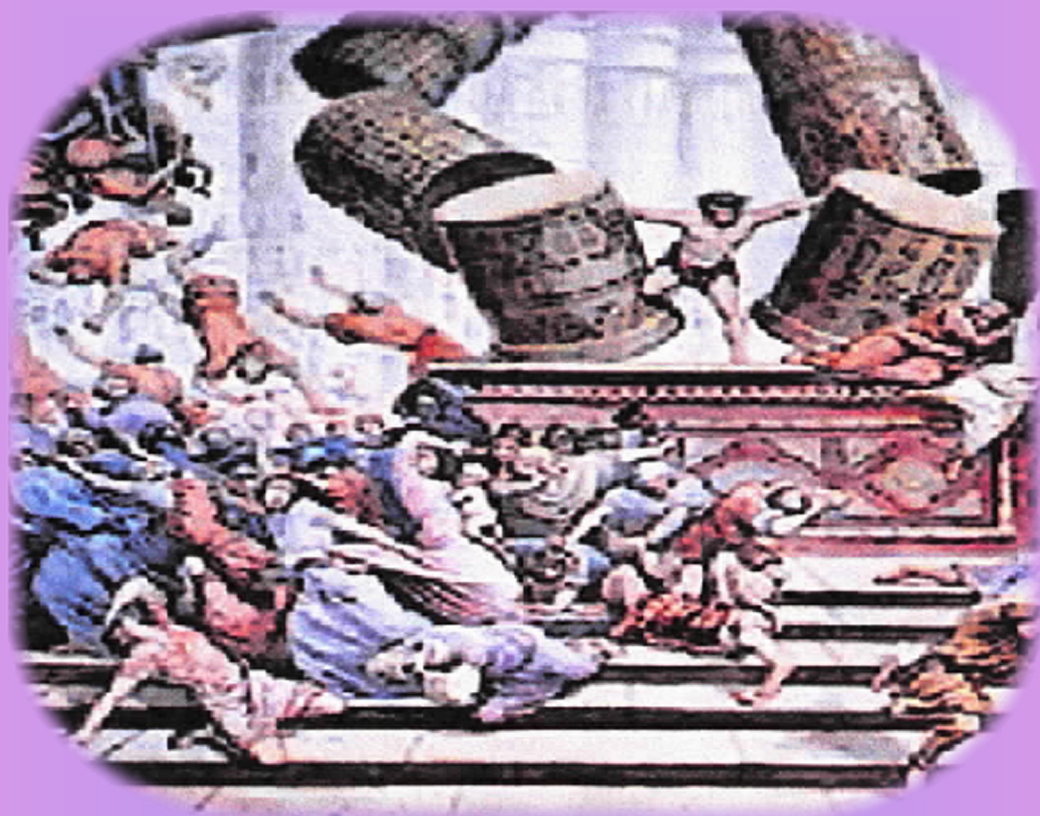


Samson



Hero
of
Faith

SAMSON, HERO OF FAITH

The account of Samson begins with the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Judges.

“And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

“Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:

“For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

“Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible [that is, awesome]: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name:

“But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

“Then Manoah entreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

“And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her.

“And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day.

“And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am.

“And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?

“And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

“She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.

“And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

“And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD.

“And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?

“And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?

“So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

“For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

“But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD.

“And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.

“But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shown us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these.

“And the woman bare 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 Eshtaol.

“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 thou goest to take a wife of

the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

“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.” (Judges 13:2–14:4)

The account shows that Samson’s birth was the result of intense yearning on the part of Manoah’s barren wife. In time, her desire to have a son was rewarded by an angel’s visitation to her, and the son was committed to being a Nazarite even before his birth. Moreover, the woman herself was instructed to obey the vow. She could not partake of any of the forbidden beverages until Samson’s birth, and from the time of his birth, he was dedicated to the LORD God with the vow of a Nazarite.

Upon superficial examination, the subsequent account of Samson’s life seems to reveal a rough, uncouth individual. Many look at some of his deeds with askance and question the propriety of God’s using him in any special sense as His representative. However, there were several offsetting factors.

First, a review of Samson’s life, as far as we can observe, indicates he never abandoned the Nazarite vow. He remained a Nazarite from his birth until his death. Being faithful to this vow included not only abstaining from any alcoholic beverage but also not cutting his hair. It is true that later his hair was shorn from his head, but this act was done by another and not with his consent. In addition to the privation and the dedication to religious service of one under the influence of this vow, the very long hair was somewhat obnoxious to the common

people. Not understanding the philosophy of God's Word, they would regard Samson's appearance as a form of radicalism or extremism, and they would look distastefully and unfavorably upon the individual who faithfully performed the obligations of the Nazarite vow. Therefore, Samson's faithfulness unto death showed strength of character.

Second, Samson judged Israel for a period of twenty years (Judges 15:20). This judgeship means that under Philistine servitude, individual Israelites looked to him for leadership, consolation, and guidance in connection with their obligation as Jews under the covenant of God. Samson's judgeship implies that he did mighty deeds from the standpoint of receiving both *physical* strength and a measure of *wisdom* to deliver Israel from the bondage of the Philistines. We will consider some of the incidents in his life that provide a basis for this assumption.

When Samson wanted to marry a daughter of the uncircumcised Philistines, his parents properly questioned the soundness of his intention, particularly because he was a Nazarite. The principle of wanting children to be equally yoked with other believers is a proper concern for religious parents, but in Samson's case, the Lord overruled the matter. Knowing Samson's weakness along certain lines, God allowed him to be led into these channels; that is, He did not force Samson's will. When certain circumstances arose whereby this foreign woman came into Samson's life, God allowed the relationship to develop and did not stop, prohibit, or discourage the desire to marry her. Why not? Conditions were thus created for Samson to vent

displeasure upon the Philistine host and, in the process, give lessons to the rest of the nations.

For instance, when Samson went down to see the woman from Timnath, “a young lion roared against him” in the way (Judges 14:5,6). With his bare hands—that is, with no weapons—Samson slew the lion, rending it as he would have torn apart a young goat or a lamb. And as often happens with the youth of today, Samson did not tell his parents about the incident. “The Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him,” giving him extraordinary strength. We are reminded of Psalm 18:34, where David said that God taught his hands “to war.” David slew a lion and a bear with his hands (1 Sam. 17:34-37).

At a later time in his life, Samson went by the place where he had slain the lion, “and he turned aside to see [if] the carcass of the lion [was still there]: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion” (Judges 14:8-18). He proceeded to make a feast of the honey. “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.” Still later, he went down to the marriage festival in connection with the woman of Timnath. To the thirty men who were invited to the feast, he proposed a riddle about the lion, saying that if they could understand the riddle and interpret it within the seven days of the feast, he would give them “thirty sheets [ordinary shirts] and thirty changes of raiment [festive garments].” However, if they could not solve the riddle in the seven days, they would have to furnish him with those garments. Samson propounded the riddle: “Out of the eater

came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Samson had in mind that out of the mouth of the strong lion came forth the sweetness of honey. After three days of fruitless endeavor to solve the riddle, the thirty men suggested to Samson's wife that she entice her husband to obtain the secret, and ultimately she prevailed. On the seventh day, the thirty men answered Samson, "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?" Samson knew immediately that they had gotten the secret of the riddle from his wife.

To fulfill his part of the bargain and provide the change of garments, Samson went down to Ashkelon. There he slew thirty men and brought back their garments, which he gave to the original thirty men who had answered the riddle (Judges 14:19). He then left Timnath in anger and returned to his father's house. Thinking Samson was so displeased that he had left forever, the father gave his daughter to a companion. When Samson came back at a later time, the father suggested that he take the younger daughter, the sister of Samson's wife, saying that she was even more beautiful. Not only was Samson not satisfied, but also he was quite stirred up about the matter. Therefore, he "caught three hundred foxes ... and turned [them] tail to tail, and put a firebrand ... between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them [the foxes] go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives [olive trees]" (Judges 15:1-5). By this ingenious method of tying the foxes' tails together, Samson caused extensive damage to the Philistine crops.

The victims, whose crops were spoiled, turned on the wife's father and the wife herself and burned both of them alive "with fire" (Judges 15:6-8,11-13). Then Samson again visited destruction upon the Philistines. As a result of his being stirred up, "he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam." The account subsequently states that three thousand men of Judah went to the top of this hill to speak with Samson. They wanted him to passively submit to the Philistines and become a servant. Accordingly, they asked Samson to let them bind him so that they could commit him to the Philistines for punishment. If Samson did not willingly agree to their demand, the men of Judah intended to forcibly bind him and turn him over to the Philistines. Samson could have refused, even though three thousand men were involved, but rather than harm the Lord's covenant people, he said he would allow the binding on the condition they would not slay him but would turn him over to the Philistines. The men of Judah then bound Samson with two new cords and delivered him to the Philistines.

This incident shows the condition that existed in Israel at the time. The extraordinary exploits of Samson should have alerted the Israelites to the realization that God was raising up a deliverer in their midst and using him mightily to conquer the enemy. Instead of recognizing Samson in this light, however, the Israelites were fearful as to what the Philistine reprisals might be for his actions. Thus the nation manifested a weakness in character.

Samson was a loner but a giant along certain lines. A champion for the cause of Israel, he wrought great deeds against the enemy of the

Lord, the Philistines. Evidently, he was very much concerned with the Word of the Lord in judging the nation and in teaching the Israelites God's ways, but as a people, they were too submissive. Samson's position was somewhat like that of Moses in Egypt years earlier. When Moses' actions in slaying an Egyptian suggested that he might be the Israelites' deliverer, the nation said representatively in the two Hebrews who were striving on the beach, "Who made thee ... a judge over us?" (Exod. 2:14). Thus the nation did not cooperate with God's providence at first. Not until Moses appeared the second time and the great plagues came upon Egypt did the nation recognize that he had been sent of God.

After Samson was committed to Philistine bondage, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and his fetters melted in his hands like wax (Judges 15:14-17). Then, being loosed from his bonds, he wrought a great slaughter. Finding the still moist jawbone of a freshly slain ass, he used the jawbone as a weapon to slay mightily the Philistine host. He described the slaughter in a parable: "With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men."

Following this destruction of a thousand people, Samson became famished with a great thirst—so much so, in fact, that he thought he would die (Judges 15:18-20). In his extremity, God miraculously "clave an hollow" in the same jawbone that Samson had used as an instrument of destruction, and it now became a well-spring. Out of the cleavage in the jawbone came water, which Samson drank, and his spirit and strength revived.

One might ask at this point, “Why go into the details of the narrative?” The answer is that the narration contains a number of important lessons, some of which we will discuss later.

Next Samson went to see a woman in Gaza (Judges 16:1-3). When the people of the city heard he was in their midst, they surrounded the city, thinking they would kill him the next morning. They fastened the city gate and “laid wait for him all night.” When Samson arose at midnight, he went to the city gate. Finding it locked, he lifted the gate. He did not merely break the hinges but *uprooted* the heavy gate *with the two side posts*, which were deeply entrenched as the foundation of the gate. He carried the whole business, bars and all, on his shoulders all the way from Gaza to the top of a mountain just before Hebron. There he presumably put the gate in an upright position.

In these incidents, Samson exhibited a certain amount of humor and wit in his character. For example, setting the gate on the top of a hill was a very galling experience for the people of Gaza to witness. Because the gate could be seen for miles, it was a continual eyesore to them as a memorial of what Samson had done. That he possessed intelligence as well as strength was manifested in his parables, which were couched in poetic language. Tying together the foxes’ tails to burn the cornfield was a novel idea and an ingenious method. These incidents give insight into Samson’s character.

The account of Samson and Delilah is recorded in Judges 16:4-21. After Samson fell in love with Delilah, the men of the region wanted to pay her a great sum of money to beguile Samson into revealing the

secret of his strength. Three times Samson gave her false answers: bind him with seven green “withs” (a strong type of woven rope somewhat like hemp), bind him with new ropes, and weave or tie the seven locks of his hair to a web and fasten them with a pin. Saying that she had been deceived three times, Delilah implored him daily until he finally disclosed the secret: “There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.” Then Delilah lulled Samson asleep upon her knees and called for a man to shave off the seven locks of his hair. Sure enough, Samson’s strength departed, and the Philistines caught him and put out his eyes.

With the worthy individuals God chose prior to the Christian or Gospel Age, there was a certain sense of retribution in the present life. David is an example. In Samson’s case, the retribution helped to offset or cancel his problems with women. His *eyes* were the basis of his problem, so what happened? God permitted his *eyes* to be put out; that is, divine retribution allowed him to suffer the loss of his eyesight as part of the penalty for his weakness. However, the weakness was counterbalanced by strength of character along other lines, such as the keeping of his Nazarite vow.

The Philistines blinded Samson, took him to Gaza, bound him with fetters of brass, and forced him to grind grain like a brute beast (Judges 16:22-30). Moreover, they attributed his captivity to the power of Dagon, their fish god. Meanwhile, Samson’s hair began to grow. At a religious festivity in the Temple of Dagon, the Philistine lords called

for Samson to be taken out of the prison house so he could make sport for them; that is, they wanted blind Samson to dance as a source of amusement. A young lad guided Samson to the place of worship to be humiliated and tortured, as it were. Knowing that the temple was supported by two pillars, Samson asked the lad, who held him by the hand, "Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them." The temple "was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines" plus "about three thousand men and women" on the roof. Samson prayed, asking God to restore his strength for one more victory over the Philistines, even if he had to die in the effort. God answered that prayer, and Samson "bowed himself with all his might" and pulled down the pillars. The temple collapsed, the result being that Samson killed more people in his death than during his entire lifetime. Incidentally, the architecture of ancient times was quite different from that of today. An account in ancient history tells of a house in Rome that was large enough to hold the entire population of that city, yet the building was supported by only a single hinge. It is no wonder, therefore, that pulling down the two pillars of the Temple of Dagon resulted in the collapse of the whole structure.

Samson is listed as a hero of faith in Hebrews chapter 11, where the Apostle Paul spoke of a number of individuals who were faithful prior to the Gospel Age. In detail, he described the faith of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and others. Then in verse 32 he said, "What shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, *and of Samson.*" At the conclusion of the chapter, the apostle added, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the

promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” In other words, these Old Testament heroes of faith will receive a better resurrection, a better reward, than the world of mankind in general, but their reward will be secondary to that of faithful Christians of the Gospel Age (Rev. 2:10).

Samson’s deeds were not meant to be just an interesting story, for they teach important lessons. All of the incidents have an allegorical value with spiritual lessons intended by the Holy Spirit. An example is Delilah’s deceiving of Samson and lulling him asleep in her lap. Samson represents the blind masses whom the religious systems have lulled into a false sense of security and sleep down through the Gospel Age, especially during the Dark and Middle Ages. Under the feudalism of the Middle Ages, there was an affinity between the lords and the religious leaders—a collusion between Church and State—and the people suffered as a result, being kept in servitude. The advocates of communism, in trying to enlighten the people as to the power that is latent in their numbers, have spoken derogatorily concerning the church systems, saying religion is the opiate of the people. Of course religion in the *true* sense, that is, *the proper understanding of the Word of God*, actually does the opposite: *it enlightens the masses*. The opiate and the deception have been religion as practiced *contrary to Scripture* both in the past and at present. The masses were kept in a measure of ignorance in regard to certain rights that they possessed. Today the people are beginning to feel their might or power, realizing there is strength in numbers. For instance, workers banded together under leaders and formed labor unions so that they could speak with a representative voice and make demands on capitalism. A more recent

example pertains to racial issues. Ethnic groups have united, feeling that if they could make their voice felt and heard, their demands would be answered. All down the line, people today feel there is strength in numbers. The cry for rights and liberties is taking place in many nations. We live in an age in which the enlightened masses are demanding their rights, both fancied and true.

In this allegory, Samson represents the blind masses, who realize their strength is coming back. Being dissatisfied with the systems that were an instrument in their suppression in the past, they have groped for some way to pull down the structure of capitalism and to substitute in its place the theory of communism or socialism. While the capitalistic world has faults, socialism is not the answer, for it entails a great personal enslavement of the individual to a state arrangement. Individual thinking is crushed, and there are abuses and inherent evils. Certainly it is not the panacea that will cure the ills of the world. While a measure of right and wrong is on both sides of the issue, neither side is the harbinger of good news and salvation for the human race. The only really hopeful solution is the one put forth in the Bible, for true salvation is *of God* and will come *through Jesus Christ*, who tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9).

In feeling that religion is the opiate of the people, the proponents of communism have wanted to overthrow all belief in God. Atheism is held in high esteem in their ranks, and people are advanced in the system in proportion to their being avowed atheists and ardent advocates of the teachings of communism. In their views of the wrongs that are practiced in Christianity, they discard the Bible and its teachings

because they do not see them in the proper light. Communism has made great inroads with various nations—China, Russia, etc. In nations where socialism is the form of government, the same theme persists, namely, that the power of the base-roots level of the masses can be utilized to bring about better conditions in the earth.

The Scriptures indicate that at the end of the age, God's people will be instrumental in enlightening the people of earth to a certain extent. The Lord's people are pictured by the young lad who guided Samson's hands to the pillars that supported the house of worship of Dagon. Communism has wanted to overthrow the Church but has not been successful thus far. Even Stalin had to resuscitate the Church because the people wanted a religious service of some kind in burying the dead. Thus there has been some tolerance of religion as long as it was not bound to the leadership of Rome or some other religious system considered to be a threat to communism. The Church has had to be subservient to the State in every sense of the word, for as a tool of the State, it would not overthrow the system.

In connection with the guiding of Samson's hands to the pillars of the temple, if it could be seen that nominal Christianity as practiced today is not what is taught in the Scriptures, that the basis of consecration to God is an individual matter, that consecration and devotion are to Jesus Christ and God alone and are not dependent upon any religious denomination, that the true Christian looks to God for leading and does not need a religious system of worship, that the Bible is the teacher and guide, and that the Lord and Bishop of the Church is Jesus Christ himself, then the people would dispense with the need for

institutions whose *man*-made practices and arrangements have been diversionary and have vitiated the power of God's Spirit working in the lives of His little ones down through the Gospel Age. The invitation "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" is a *personal* matter (Matt. 11:28).

In desiring to overthrow the nominal church systems, communism has tried to bring out the faults of Christianity. But the Lord never commended the systems as they exist today. The names of true Christians are written in heaven and not on any church membership books down here on earth (Heb. 12:23). God knows who are His—*He* does the selecting and the rewarding—and no amount of money or political influence can alter the books that are in heaven. God is the Judge and He will reward His saints as He sees fit. If the people could realize these truths, they would throw off the undue expense and bondage that they experience under the nominal church systems. The Temple of Dagon was a house of worship, and the two pillars supporting it represent the two primary pillars of the clerical arrangement: Catholicism and Protestantism. In the true sense of the word, there is only one catholic (*universal*) Church of God, and it is not Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Armenian, Anglican, etc., but the catholic Church *taught in Scripture*. After more than a thousand years, the world is experiencing greater trouble now than previously, so multiple denominations are not bringing about the salvation of the people.

The young lad who guided Samson's hands to the pillars represents a class of people who have no strength of their own. That lad could not have pulled down the pillars and, in fact, did not even

intend to do so, but Samson capitalized on his naiveness. Samson's hands were guided to the base structure, that is, to the foundational themes of the system. His slaying of the multitude with the jawbone of an ass represents the same lesson—that God's true people, an insignificant element, are regarded with odium and distaste and as fanatics and foolish people who have wasted their lives in religion. To state the matter bluntly, they are regarded as asinine in their thinking. In the earlier days of the Gospel Age, allegories were written to ridicule the Bible. One story even featured a golden ass. Thus the jawbone represents the mouth or teaching of the pure simple-minded people of God, who have utilized some of the great works of history such as Luther's Reformation. Even the emperor capitalized on the religious motivation of Luther to bring about a political reformation and a release from bondage to Rome. The point is that Samson's exploitation of the religious theme is an end-of-the-age picture, showing that the people, the masses, will use the teachings or expressions of true Christians, the class considered foolish according to the wisdom of this world. Just as Samson used the jawbone of the freshly slain ass to accomplish the slaughter, so the prior teachings or message of the just-deceased last members of the body of Christ will be used to tear down the so-called orthodox religious systems of Catholicism and Protestantism.

The three hundred foxes that Samson caught, tied tail to tail, lighted with a firebrand, and let loose in the field are also a picture of the end of the age. The "field" is the missionary field of the religious systems, and the emphasis of the three hundred foxes is that a message will be given. The Bible often uses a play on words, and such is the case here, for the "tails" are "tales," that is, *messages*. The similarity of

the two words was intended, and certain wisdom was involved with the three hundred foxes. The number 300 is also important. The point is that fiery teachings will be used to unsettle the teachings of Christianity. The three hundred “foxes” represent that at the end of the age, a very small class of enlightened people of the Lord will give a strong message of truth. Then, as a repercussive effect of the message of the “three hundred,” the nonreligious “Samson” element will bring about the downfall of the so-called Christian (Philistine) system.

Zechariah 14:21 says that in the future, there will be no more Canaanites in the house of the Lord. Down through the Gospel Age and even today, certain leaders came into God’s house, into the religious systems, who were not true converts to Christianity. Politics and other elements led to their rise, and not being true saints, they took certain liberties and instituted practices not authorized by Scripture. This hypocrisy will cease when the Kingdom of God is inaugurated in the near future.

The tying of the foxes’ tails indicates that the Samson class will take part of the message of the last members of the body of Christ and utilize it to their own end to destroy the recognized church systems, the missionary field or Christian world, as it were. Many non-Christian nations have looked upon the deeds of Christianity and observed that where the missionary went, so went capitalism, and where the Bible entered, the sword and exploitation of the people accompanied it. Of course many missionaries were and are sincere and devoted—they sacrificed their lives and were well intentioned—but some have capitalized on getting a foothold in these nations. As a result, many have

wanted to rid the world of capitalism, and in its stead, communism was falsely substituted as the cure-all for earth's ills. However, communism did not succeed. Only God's Kingdom will succeed, and that success will come upon the ruins of current earthly governments. The Bible clearly teaches that God will humble all nations, and every nation will have to bow the knee and confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10,11).

Another picture, as recorded in the seventh chapter of the Book of Judges, confirms the interpretation of the three hundred. When God wanted Gideon to put to flight the host of Midian, only three hundred individuals were finally selected to go with him. Just as Philistines were in the land in Samson's day, so Midianites were in the land in Gideon's day, and Israel was in servitude to the enemy in both cases. Thirty-two thousand Israelites were originally with Gideon to do battle against the great host of Midianites, but God said the number was too large. Obeying the instruction of the Lord, Gideon said, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead." Twenty-two thousand Israelites returned, and there remained but ten thousand (Judges 7:3). This first test weeded out all those who were fearful and left only those who were ready and willing to go on the venture—a venture that was to be a *victory* not of the Israelites who participated in the fray but *of the Lord*.

However, the ten thousand were still too many, so the Lord gave another test that was far more searching. God told Gideon, "When you bring the ten thousand down to the brook, those who drink water with their tongues as a dog laps up water are the class to bring about the

great victory” (Judges 7:4-7 paraphrase). Of the ten thousand Israelites, the vast majority buried their heads in the water and drank greedily of the stream. Only three hundred scooped up water in the palms of their hands and lapped it with their tongues, while keeping their eyes looking steadfastly forward in anticipation of the coming battle and not allowing their gaze to be diverted. Incidentally, a dog customarily looks about as it drinks water and does not stare down at the dish like a cat or some other animals.

The antitypical water test will show those who are looking forward to the coming establishment of Christ’s Kingdom. Gideon’s three hundred men were subsequently divided into three companies of one hundred each. The number 100, a symbol of perfection, represents a justified class. One hundred men went with Gideon, and the other two hundred were placed elsewhere about the camp of the Midianites. All three hundred awaited a signal from Gideon. At the signal, they were to shout and crash the clay vessels or pitchers they were carrying, thus exposing a lighted torch that was inside. As the three hundred broke their vessels, causing a loud shattering sound, the lights shone forth, and the men gave a great shout. Confusion and fear gripped the Midianite host, who, being abruptly awakened from sleep, thought each light represented a battalion of soldiers. Thus the small number of Israelites was greatly exaggerated in the minds of the Midianites. Misconstruing the situation, the Midianites panicked and, in trying to flee, slew one another.

All three incidents teach the same lesson: (1) Samson used the jawbone of a *freshly slain* ass (the message of the recently deceased last

members of the body of Christ) to slaughter the Philistines. (2) The *breaking of the clay vessels* allowed the light (the message of truth) to shine forth. The Christian's "treasure" (the new mind, the new creature) is in an earthen vessel, and like Jesus, the feet members of the body of Christ will be put to death for their faith (2 Cor. 4:7). Supposedly in the interest of peace but actually in their misunderstanding of the true message of Christ, the authorities will persecute those who give the message. Similarly, the Roman authorities and the leadership of Israel misconstrued Jesus' teachings as being derogatory and threatening to their power. Not realizing that his message was both true and constructive, they put him to death through jealousy and other wrong motives. The vessels broken by the three hundred under Gideon show that the message of truth at the very end of this Christian Age will cost God's people dearly. They will lose their lives in a religious persecution. (3) When Samson pulled down the two pillars, the young lad who led him pictures the last members of the body of Christ, and death was involved in the collapse of the Dagon Temple.

A strong, *smiting* message will be given, yet it will be based on the coming Kingdom of God. We often pray the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). In repeating that prayer, whether or not we know it, we are asking for the abolition of all present governments and for their replacement by *Christ's* government. Let us not be misunderstood: By no means are we teaching anarchism, for Christians are to be law-abiding people and any government is better than no government. We very much appreciate the liberties that are allowed under the so-called capitalistic systems, and many blessings have resulted in these latter days because

of the increase of knowledge and other factors. But when we realize that God's Kingdom is the answer to all of earth's ills, that it will bless *all people* as a *universal* Kingdom, that there will be a *general* resurrection, or awakening, from the sleep of death with an opportunity of salvation and life, that all diseases will be healed, etc., then we see that *no earthly government can even begin to compare with the things God has in reservation for those who love Him*. The power of Jesus in the Messianic Age is what the world needs, and Haggai 2:7 describes it as the "desire of all nations." Mankind unwittingly yearns for this day. The whole creation is unknowingly waiting and groaning "for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19,22). In looking for this arrangement, we are indirectly asking for the abnegation and the suppression of law and order so that the present kingdoms will be replaced by Christ's Kingdom of peace, which, as prophesied, *will surely come*.

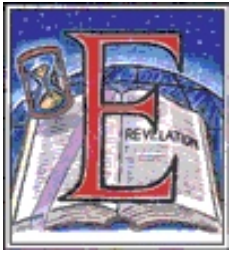
The revolution, discontent, and rebellion that are seen in the earth today will, in the near future, lead democratic nations to surrender their liberties and form a police state. There is no way for the human race to truly solve earth's problems, but man, in time of extremity, will look to a police state as the answer, thinking that a strong government can remedy the problems. The Scriptures predict a union of Church and State, and in this union, many innocent people will be suppressed and injured because of the false judgment of political and religious leaders. As prophesied in the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, the resulting condition will be similar to what happened back in the Dark Ages. Those who earnestly and prayerfully study the Book of Revelation in advance will be *forewarned* and thus *forearmed*, but to disinterested mankind in general, the coming condition and

union will be a great surprise. Thank God for the assurance He has given us through the Prophet Isaiah! “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon *his* shoulder: and *his* name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting [age-lasting] Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace there shall be *no end*, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. *The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this*” (Isa. 9:6,7). Amen!

Frank Shallieu

**For more information on end-time prophecy,
see the book *The Keys of Revelation*.**

The Keys of Revelation



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