

WHAT SAMSON REPRESENTS

Rev. Harold C. Cranch

Readings: Judges 13-16

When we look back at the life of Samson, we can see the many brave things that this strong judge of Israel did. We can see how through him the Lord led the Israelites out of their bondage to the Philistines so they might be free again. You may remember many of the things that Samson did—the brave way that he fought against a lion and killed him with his own hands since he did not have any weapons. The Lord gave him such great strength.

In the beginning of his adulthood, Samson fell in love with a Philistine girl, and it was because of her that he began his battles against the Philistines. Again, at the end of his life, he fell in love with another woman of the Philistines, and it was because of her that he was captured and put in prison.

At his death Samson was also a brave man and a hero. Brought before the rulers and generals of the Philistines in the temple of Dagon, he prayed for forgiveness and for strength. Then by pushing on the supporting pillars of the temple, he brought the heavy roof down upon all those enemies of Israel, destroying them, even though he also died in their midst.

This story of Samson is even more wonderful when we understand it more fully. It not only tells of his heroic deeds, and of his great strength and power; it is also a prophecy of the Lord's Coming. All the leaders of the Children of Israel represented some aspect or quality of the Lord. Samson represents the power of the Lord's Word.

We know the Lord's Word has great power. If people listen to it, and obey it, it will lead them in everything of life. It will give them strength to overcome evil. But sometimes the Word seems weak. This is not the fault of the Word, because it is only when we *do not use* its teachings that it has no power over us. That is how it was with Samson. Whenever he obeyed the Lord, he had great power, but when he disobeyed, and did not listen to the Lord's teachings, he became weak.

Now let us look at how Samson's life is a prophecy of the Lord's Coming into the world and of his work here. First, Samson represented the Word, and the Lord came into the world as the Word made flesh to dwell with people. The things that Samson did for the Children of Israel represented the things that the Lord did later for all people.

You remember an angel told Mary that the Lord would be born, and an angel told Samson's parents that he would be born. The Lord was a Nazirite, and He did His Divine work. Samson was a Nazirite, and he was pledged to do the Lord's work. You remember that the Lord went out into the wilderness among

the wild beasts, and He remained there for forty days and nights, and won victory over many temptations. Samson fought against a lion, and the Lord gave him the victory. All through His life the Lord fought against His Spiritual enemies, and He always overcame them. All through Samson's life he fought against the Philistines and overcame them. One of the Lord's own disciples, one whom He loved, betrayed the Lord for money so that He was taken and put in prison, and finally crucified so that His body was put to death. It was also someone whom Samson loved, Delilah, who betrayed him for money so that he was put in prison, and finally died. And just as Samson did his greatest work at his death, freeing the Children of Israel and saving them from slavery to the Philistines, so the Lord's work was completed and He became the Savior and Redeemer of all people by His death and resurrection. So you can see that the story of Samson is a picture of the Lord's life in the world, and of His power.

There are two things that we should particularly remember when we read the story of Samson. One is that Samson was given his great power because he represented the Lord's Word, and we can be given spiritual power when we read the Lord's Word and use it. The second thing is that it is only when Samson obeyed the Lord that he had this great power. Whenever he turned away he became weak and was able to be captured. With us, if we do not use the teachings of the Word we become spiritually weak, and we will have troubles and temptations. Whenever we do things that are wrong in our life, whenever we think about and love evil, we have been captured by that evil.

But we can still be like Samson in the prison. We can think of the bad things that have tempted us. We can be sorry that we did them and ask the Lord to forgive us. And He certainly will forgive us if we ask Him sincerely. To ask Him sincerely means to be willing to obey Him again. If we do this, then the Lord will once again give us strength and the ability to overcome our temptations and evils. In this way he will be with us all through our life and will lead us ever closer to the happiness of heaven.