

OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 18 — “Sovereignty, Sin, & the Spirit of the Lord” — September 21, 2025

Introduction: Sin & the Sovereign Will of God

“Nothing is outside the scope of God’s sovereign rule. Eph. 1:1 emphasizes “all things” are brought to pass by His decree. Because everything is encompassed by God’s sovereign plan it is sometimes spoken of in the singular—its one decree.”

—Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

The Will of God from Our Perspective:

- (1) **The *Performative* Will of God**—That which God brings to pass in history either by direct causation or by providence.
- (2) **The *Prescribed* Will of God**—What God commands or reveals as the moral rule for human beings to obey (His *precepts*).
- (3) **The *Permissive* Will of God**—God’s willing “not to hinder” evil acts, though He ordains them within His providence. He does not approve sin, but He permits it for a greater purpose.

“It may be concluded, then, that sin is in the universe by the permission of God who hates it perfectly and who, being sovereign, had power to keep it from manifestation, had He chosen to do so. That He did not hinder the manifestation of sin, demonstrates that He, being what He is, must have a purpose in view other than the averting of sin. Here as nowhere else in the affairs of the universe, the end justifies the means.”

—Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*

Main Point: The story of Samson serves as a warning of our sinful tendency to _____ God’s Word while also assuring us that He is still able to accomplish His good _____.

Judges 13:25-14:19

Israel failed to take advantage of the time of peace and prosperity in the years between Jephthah and Samson and once again fell into apostasy. It was under the oppression of the Philistines that the Word of the Lord was fulfilled to Samson’s parents, who appear to have faithfully raised their son as a Nazarite. God would now begin to save Israel from the Philistines through him in spite of his many personal flaws.

Exposition:

I. The text highlights the role of the _____ of the Lord in Samson’s life to accomplish God’s plans and purposes.

Observations:

- (1) The Spirit had a role in _____ Samson to undertake certain actions that would serve the Lord’s ends.

“*The Spirit of the Lord began to stir him*”—*pā’am*—to stir, agitate, inspire, or move.

⇒ The Spirit’s activity throughout judges has been to “be _____” (3:10; 11:29) or “_____” (6:34) the various leaders in order to accomplish His work in and through them.

“...it is not surprising that the Spirit sometimes has to resort to more potent measures to achieve his desired goals. In fact, Samson is often seen as a representative of Israel as a whole...both became self-involved, apathetic, inclined to sin, and negligent in their cultivation of their relationship with God.” —Boda & Conway

- (2) The Spirit also worked in Samson to give him great _____ and certain times.

“*he tore the lion in pieces*”

“*he...struck down thirty men*”

Key Point: God’s desire is to work _____ and _____ us, but His ultimate will is going to be accomplished with us or in spite of us.

II. Samson’s choices demonstrate a worrying tendency to ignore God’s _____ in his life. (14:1-9)

Observations:

- (1) He sought to take a _____ from among the Philistines, contrary to the wisdom of both God (Deut. 7:1,3-4) and his parents.

“*she is right in my eyes*”

⇒ His words illustrate the condition of his _____ and foreshadow what was ahead for Israel (17:6; 21:25).

- (2) While not absolving Samson of responsibility for his choices, the text gives insight into the Lord’s plans and purposes.

“*he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines*”

(3) The condition of his heart is further illustrated by his willingness to ignore the _____ of God concerning Nazarites (Num. 6:1-8).

“they came to the vineyards”

“she was right in Samson’s eyes”

“he turned aside to see the carcass...he scraped [the honey] out into his hands”

(4) That he did not tell his parents where the honey came from illustrates that he felt some level of _____.

Key Points: God, in His providence, permits us to disobey His Word, but we are still _____ for the consequences that result from that choice.

III. Samson’s decision to integrate himself with the Philistines brought _____ into his life. (14:10-19)

Observations:

(1) Samson held a _____ among the people into which he was marrying.

(2) In order to provide some entertainment and perhaps to _____ himself, he posed a riddle to the attendees.

“you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes”

(3) The _____ situation between the Philistines and Israelites made the situation a serious one.

“Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire.”

“...what might have been a pleasant competition between friends [would turn] into a desperate competition to achieve honor and avoid shame.” —Boda & Conway

(4) He then demonstrated for the first (but not last) time that he could be compromised by a _____ woman.

(5) He then took _____ upon other Philistines in order to pay the debt he owed to his wife’s relatives, unknowingly carrying out the plan of the Lord.

Key Points: The people we choose to _____ involve ourselves with will have some of the biggest impact on the decisions that we make and ultimately how our lives unfold.

Assessing Samson

“It is significant that in all that has transpired since Samson became an adult, at no time has [he] shown any signs of leadership or plans for the deliverance of Israel; on the contrary, he seems to seek out association with his country’s oppressors and tale opportunities to integrate with them. YHWH, however, will take advantage of his rebellious and stubborn attitude to set up the needed confrontations.” —Boda & Conway

Applying the Text

- God’s sovereignty is never an _____ for us to blame Him for our own decisions.

Rom. 9:19-20—¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”

- God’s sovereignty should be a _____ to us as we live our lives in a world that is marred by sin.

Rom. 8:28—And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Rom. 8:31-32—³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

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