

Compelled by the Spirit

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The book of Judges tells us what happens when a people forget about God. Judges draws a clear line between two generations. One generation, Joshua's generation, honored and obeyed the Lord's commands and experienced the benefits and blessings associated with their faithfulness. We are told however, that the next generation did not follow in the steps of their fathers.

Joshua 2:10: "and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."

The next generation should have carried the torch and led Israel into even greater exploits but instead, they fell into sin. There are many possible reasons why a generation only two-steps away from Moses could fall so hard; but what is of greater importance is figuring out what to do when the God of the miraculous is seemingly unknown to the current generation.

You are perhaps alone in a marriage, family or job trying to serve the Lord while everyone around you is oblivious and living in sin. What do we do? Today's generation knows very little of the Brownsville or the Azusa St. Revival. Spiritual generals are leaving the world, and the giants of church history are becoming faded memories. Today's biblical illiteracy is grievous. This generation – despite their mighty heritage, know little to nothing of the God of their fathers.

This is the condition when we arrive at Samson. Among the many Judges, Samson is undoubtable one of the more intriguing and polarizing figures.

There are many details surrounding the life of Samson that we could consider.

Beginning with his parents; when the angel of the Lord appears to them, they are excited to learn that though barren, Samson's mother will conceive a child. At this revelation they are a little reluctant, and perhaps even fearful. They ask the Lord for instructions on how to raise their child. In the Lord's goodness, He gives them basic rules to raise Samson. His parents sought God and raised a miracle child who would eventually wander from the path.

Pause and consider for a moment that Samson's parents feared the Lord. We have among our generation, many young people who have God-fearing parents. But now those children are living in rebellion. Be encouraged. As many parents who committed their children to the Lord at a young age and are now witnessing them choose different paths, take heart! The Lord is faithful with that which has been committed unto him (2 Tim. 1:12).

Just as God worked his purposes in the life of Sampson, I believe God will work in the lives of the many precious children who have been committed faithfully to the Lord.

There are other ingredients in the unfolding of Samson's story, but I'd like to camp out specifically on one particular part in the beginning of his life.

We are told that Samson and his family camped out on the border next to Philistine territory. It would be by the very nature of Samson 's vicinity to his enemy, that the spirit of the Lord would begin to stir him to what some scholars have called "strange behavior" (14:24). The resulting fruit of the move of God's Spirit ("Ruach Adonai") was contempt towards the Philistines.

Now, we do not have an alternative story to give us more detail, or to present different paths or potential outcomes, but what we do know is that Samson would respond to the stirring and the unction's in a violent and lustful manner. Eventually the contempt led Samson to invade Philistine

territory. This would not have been appropriate action for a Nazarite or a Jew but for Samson, the unction's became the excuse to enter forbidden territory. This would be where his story unravels. Yes, God moved on him, but Samson's behavior was unrighteous and ungodly.

Like Samson, many of us have been stirred by the Lord in this present generation. The Lord is moving over his church, and perhaps calling people into strange or unique action. However, we have to learn from Samson's example. Just because he was stirred, does not mean he needed to act or react in the manner in which he did. Many of us are taking liberties with the stirring, but perhaps the stirring that's taking place in your spirit, is not calling you to the action that you necessarily are getting involved in.

Where I live in New England, I'm very close to Salem, Massachusetts. There is much occult and witchcraft in this region. There's a contempt in my heart towards the work of darkness, but the contempt is not directed towards the people. In fact, the people are actually my genuine mission. If I ran with my contempt, I might retaliate towards people.

Sometimes when we take action into our own hands, we will direct that contempt towards loved ones, or that family member who is in sin. Perhaps we lash out at a people group, a city, or even a nation? An unction may be of the Lord, but the actions that follow might not be. When we respond in a way that the Holy Spirit never intended, we can hurt ourselves or others.

The question I want to ask you is, how is the Holy Spirit stirring you? What type of action is he calling you into, Samson is the example of a man who took action into his own hands and did what he wanted as he willed. We never see him considering the voice of God or seeking wise counsel. His unction is of the Lord, but his actions are of his own. Samson is likened to someone who sees wickedness and deals with it as

he sees fit.

In the coming year, the wickedness around us might cause us to grow impatient. Some of us will be compelled to lash out and react in ways that are unbecoming.

We must learn from Samson and instead seek wisdom and council on how to move forward.

I believe there is a great lesson to be learned from the life of Samson and that is, God will accomplish His mission one way or the other. He will either do it through us, or do it with us, but I believe we can cooperate and in doing so, we can be blessed and be a blessing to others. Just as the unction to acts comes upon, so can the plan of action.

Wait on the Lord.

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