

The Old Paths

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“Samson Did Not Know!!”

Jarrod Jacobs

Perhaps some of the saddest words in the Bible are found in Judges 16:20. There we are told that after the man had cut Samson’s hair, and he was told that the Philistines were upon him, Samson “awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.” Though Samson thought he could go out and slay the Philistines like he had done at other times, he did not know that God had departed from him. Mr. Strong says that “depart” in this verse carries the idea of, “to turn off ... eschew ... remove ... withdraw, be without.” Therefore, Samson was “without” God and didn’t know it! God had “removed” Himself from Samson, and yet Samson was unaware at the moment! Can we imagine anything as sad as this? Samson was about to suffer physical abuse at the hands of the Philistines. Worse than this though was the fact that Samson was without God, and didn’t even know it!

Some years after Samson lived, David wrote, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over” (Ps. 23:4-

5). Notice, David said he would “fear no evil” even when walking “through the valley of the shadow of death”! How could he say this? He could say this only because God was with him!! Jesus said, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Again, such boldness and courage can be had only when God is with us! When we are serving God, we can face any enemy! Yet, it is a fearful thing to face those who wish you harm (physically or spiritually) when you are without God! Worse, it is sad to face those who mean you harm when you think God is with you, and He is not! How scared Samson must have been when those men grabbed him, and he could not escape their grasp (Judges 16:21)!

Sometimes we hear the phrase, “Ignorance is bliss!” When we read about Samson in Judges 16, we see very quickly that Samson’s “ignorance” of God’s departing didn’t bring him any “bliss”! Furthermore, can you think of any time when being ignorant of something brought “bliss”? Being ignorant of a bridge being out would not bring “bliss” to an unsuspecting driver! Being ignorant of a gas leak in the house would not result in “bliss,” I know. Being ignorant of cancer growing in your body would not bring “bliss,” either. Spiritually, being ignorant of God’s word will not bring “bliss” to anyone. Probably one of the most well-known pas-

sages on this subject comes from the book of Hosea, chapter four and verse 6. There, God says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge ...” (That’s not “blissful” is it?) The book of Proverbs is filled with wisdom for the “simple” (naïve/ignorant). Early in the book, wisdom is personified as a woman who cries out to the people to heed the wise counsel, but they did not. This book encourages folks to be wise and to listen to the word of God while they can. Looking to the New Testament, we see that those who do not know God (i.e., ignorant) are doomed and destined for “flaming fire”, Christ’s “vengeance”, and “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (II Thess. 1:8-9)! That doesn’t sound too “blissful” to me.

Seeing all the dangers (physically and spiritually) which come as a result of being ignorant, it’s no wonder that the apostle Paul says, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). In addition to this, we see no less than four times in the Bible that the concern of Peter and Paul rang out, begging brethren not to be ignorant of certain spiritual truths (Rom. 11:25; I Cor. 10:1; I Thess. 4:13; II Pet. 3:8)! God places a premium upon knowledge, there is no doubt about that.

Brethren, is it possible that God has departed from us and we did not know it? If it happened to Samson, why can’t it happen to us? The apostle John wrote, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (I Jn. 1:6). I recognize that some folks will blatantly defy God’s will while claiming to

be a faithful child. Yet, is it not also a possibility that some would be deceived into walking in darkness, and while being sincere in their thoughts and deeds, actually be doing things contrary to God's will? Absolutely! (Read: Matt. 7:23-24) Is not I John 1:6 a call and cry for self-examination? Some folks may very well say that they have fellowship with God, but in reality do not have it at all! Perhaps they have deceived themselves into believing that they have fellowship with God while they are engaged in some sin. God knows the truth, and if He sees that we are walking in darkness, then He will have no part of us! (Isa. 59:1-2) What a sad and scary situation in which to live!

As we study the life of Samson, we see that his selfishness and pride contributed to his ultimate downfall in Judges 16:20-21. His pride blinded him to the point that he did not even recognize that God had left him. In like manner, Christians today can be blinded by their own pride and selfishness, and ultimately lose that fellowship they once had with God. Please do not fall into that trap! Let us "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). Satan would love nothing more than to catch us while we are not looking, and then to lead us away from God permanently! Don't fall for Satan's devices. Make sure your eyes are open and aware. Let us hold on tightly to the hand of God, and let us make sure that we live in such a way that we please God and "walk in the light as he is in the light" (I Jn. 1:7)! May it never be said that we have lived our lives in such a way that God has departed from us!

The Incomparable Christ

Author Unknown

He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He became the Son of man that we might become the sons of God. He put on humanity that we might put on immortality. He came from Heaven to earth that we might go from earth to Heaven. He left the region where the rivers never freeze, winds never blow, frost never bites, flowers never fade; where there are no undertakers, no doctors needed, because no one is ever sick; where graveyards never haunt, death never comes, and no funerals are ever conducted. He was born contrary to the law of nature, was reared in obscurity, lived in poverty; only once did He ever cross the boundaries of His own small country. He had no wealth nor worldly influence, training or education. His parents knew nothing of the niceties of social tradition. In infancy, He startled a king; in boyhood, puzzled the wise; in manhood, ruled the course of nature. He healed the multitudes

without medicine, and made no charges for His services. He never wrote a book, yet all the libraries of the world could not contain all the books that could be written about Him. He never wrote a song, and yet has provided the themes for more songs than all earthly writers combined. He never founded a college, yet all schools of earth have not had the students that sat at His feet. He never practiced medicine, yet He has healed more broken hearts than the world has ever taken note of. He never marshaled an army; never drafted a soldier; nor fired a gun; yet no leader has had volunteers who, under His orders, made rebels stack arms and surrender to his command, never firing a shot. He is the Star of astronomy, the Rock of geology, the Lamb and Lion of zoology, the Harmonizer of all discords, and the Healer of all diseases. Great men have come and gone; He lives on! Herod could not kill Him; Satan could not seduce Him; death could not destroy Him; and the grave could not hold Him. He laid aside His purple robe for a peasant's gown. He was rich, but for our sakes became poor that we might be rich. How poor? Ask Mary! Ask the wise men! He slept in another's manger; He rode another's donkey; He was buried in another's tomb. All others have failed; He never. The ever and only perfect One, the chief among ten thousand; altogether lovely.

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