

SAMSON II---RUTH---SAMUEL I

Judges 16:1—I Samuel 2:15)

Review time periods: Beginnings, Noah, Patriarchs, Captivity, Wilderness, Conquest, Judges. (In time it will be apparent that knowledge of the time periods is the “glue” that helps keep the Old Testament story properly connected.)

It is clear that Samson was a man with serious character weaknesses---especially related to women---despite his great physical strength. He ignored the Lord’s warnings against becoming entangled with foreign women, loyal to idolatrous gods. Judges 16 relates the familiar story of Samson and Delilah, a Philistine woman who tricked him into telling her the secret of his strength---his uncut hair.

With his hair cut and his strength gone, Samson was quickly overcome by the Philistines, bound, imprisoned, blinded, and enslaved. Beginning in Judges 16:27, the account is given of how Samson, his hair grown out and his strength renewed, killed both himself and thousands of Philistines when he brought down a great temple by breaking down the supporting pillars. He led Israel twenty years.

The book of a Ruth is a well-known love story of a Moabite woman who married an Israelite man. The events in the story occurred during the period of the Judges. It is a story of both love and loyalty to Naomi, her mother-in-law, with whom she insisted on staying as Naomi returned to her native Bethlehem. The husbands of both women had died. (See the beautiful words in Ruth 1:16-17.)

There is a second love story, that of Ruth and Boaz, a relative of Naomi. Ruth worked in the grain fields of Boaz, where he noticed and admired her. Naomi carefully arranged for Ruth and Boaz to become married. Ruth and Boaz had a son, Obed, who became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The most important of all the Judges was a man named Samuel. He was the son of Hannah and Elkanah. Hannah had no children for a long time, but kept praying, promising to dedicate her son to God if her prayer was answered. The prophet Eli noticed her prayers and prayed on her behalf.

In time Hannah bore a son, Samuel. Keeping her promise, as soon as he was weaned the boy was sent to live with Eli and be trained by him.

Eli was basically a good man, but he had wicked sons, whom he did not restrain as he should have. This mistake would come back to haunt him.

