

SAMSON: JUDGE OF ISRAEL, HERO OF FAITH

PART II; NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES

All scripture is inspired of God and is useful for teaching

- 2 Timothy 3:16

As Rome expanded her powerful empire and there was a rebirth of religion and philosophy, Samson was not forgotten. The New Testament writers faced many similar issues as encountered by the author of Sirach, only now it was the Roman version of the gods and heroes with which they had to contend. The image of these figures loomed large over Roman culture and thought. Many of the gods and heroes underwent dramatic shifts in the way they were depicted in the Greek myths. Gods such as Herakles, now Hercules, became less coarse and formidable and were perceived as embodiments of Roman society. Such shifts would not go unnoticed by the Jews and the early Christian writers of the New Testament.

Another factor that influenced the memories of the Judges was Jesus Himself (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, John 1: 29-34). The descent of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism evokes images of anointing and those of the Judges, Saul, and David.¹ However, the reception of the Spirit was unlike the violent onrushes of those of Samson and the Judges, Saul, and David. Jesus was introducing a new form of the charisma, as the image was now "like that of a dove". This shift in imagery would influence the New Testament writers in how to present the great figures of Israelite and Jewish history, as all was now cast in light of the Jesus the Christ.

¹ We consider the "Spirit of the Lord", in the Old Testament, and the "Holy Spirit", in the New Testament, as the same Divine force.

MATTHEW 2:23

Although Samson is not named, another text that bolsters the development of Samson from Judge to Hero of Faith is Matthew 2:23; "He shall be called a Nazarene". It has been noted among many scholars that the basic construction seems to be based on Judges 13:5; the boy shall be a Nazirite. Matthew seems to be applying the weight of the prophetic word to the conditions surrounding the childhood of Jesus. Matthew had no need to name the specific prophet for two reasons. First, no prophet is named because in the birth account of Samson, the speaker of these words will not give his name; only saying that it is mysterious (Judges 13:17-18). Second, the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, places the book of Judges among the "Former Prophets", a general title that does not emphasize individual names as in the "Latter Prophets".

The use of the term, "Nazarene" illustrates a specific type of writing device. In Matthew's Gospel, as well as in other New Testament writings, "there is a reference to an OT character or event which illustrates the reality of the process of salvation, the reality which is fulfilled in Jesus Christ". Matthew and the other New Testament writers "take a specialized and apologetic view of the OT which is not intended to be a general exhaustive interpretation. 'Fulfillment' is more than fulfillment of a prediction; it is the fulfillment of a hope, a destiny, a plan, a reality".²

Matthew, according to R.E. Brown, "has uniquely standardized the fulfillment of the prophetic word". Brown continues;

"In finding this fulfillment, Matthew usually makes no attempt to interpret the large contextual meaning of the

² McKenzie, *Dictionary*, 698.

cited OT passage; rather there is a concentration on the details where there is a resemblance to Jesus or the NT event . . . the citations have a didactic purpose, informing Christian readers and giving support to their faith . . . as if to emphasize that the whole of Jesus' life, down to the last detail, lay within God's foreordained plan. Probably Matthew is continuing the invocation of Scripture begun in early Christian preaching, but is doing so now when the primary address is to settled Christian communities who need to be taught".³

He continues his argument;

"In the many instances where the Matthean evangelist was the first to see the possibilities of an OT fulfillment, he would presumably choose or even adapt a wording that would best fit his purposes. . . Besides using the formula citations to fit the general theology of the unity of God's plan, the Matthean evangelist selected them to serve his particular theological and pastoral interests in addressing a mixed Christian community of Jews and Gentiles."⁴

We would sharpen Brown's argument and suggest that the words and image of the Samson narratives were employed by Matthew with the term, "Nazarene". The expanse of Samson's legacy which began with the Philistines and David and, therefore, continuing through the Royal Messianic line generated by David makes the powerful Judge a vital and dynamic component in the Matthean argument for the unity of God's plan.

The key to Matthew's adaptation of Judges 13:5 was the common root and assonance between Nazareth and Nazirite; *NZR*. In addition to the assonance, Matthew was evoking a powerful

³ R.E. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament* (NY: Doubleday, 1997) 207.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

theology that surrounded Samson and, to a lesser extent, the later nazirites. A concise summary is given by J. Kühlewein, who comments that this root “referred originally to something removed from everyday life, elevated above the customary and set aside for something special, dedicated.”⁵ By this term, “Nazarene”, Matthew is forging a strong connection between the New Covenant embodied in Jesus and Samson, a Judge of the Old Covenant. J. Meier, supporting this proposed connection, states that Jesus is called a Nazarene “in the sense of the truly consecrated holy one who will save his people”, as seen in the birth account of Samson (Judges 13:5, 7).⁶

With this peculiar Matthean text, Samson is being cast anew in light of Jesus and the New Covenant. No longer are only images being invoked and memories praised, as in Sirach. With Matthew, the Samson narratives are given a trajectory that is fulfilled in the time of Jesus. In a real sense to his Jewish audience, Matthew is using Samson as one of the ways to open the Jewish canon which was deemed to have been closed. Matthew, a Jewish author, understands that the Hebrew concept of “word”, *dbar*, entails a living dynamism that continues until it completely fulfilled. Matthew is pointing to this dynamic characteristic in Judges 13:5. The Hebrew construction and assonance were valuable to the Matthean theology. Bypointing to this dynamic, Matthew builds a vital link in the development of the theology of the Samson narratives.

HEBREWS 11:32

In the early Christian period Samson was not forgotten. However, the image of Hercules loomed large in Roman society. The image of Herakles was changing to the Roman Hercules, less

⁵ J. Kühlewein, “consecrated person”, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* 3 vols. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997) 2:727

⁶ J. Meier, “Matthew, Gospel of”, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 6 vols (NY: Doubleday, 1992) 4:630.

chaotic and more of a symbol of Roman culture and philosophy. During this era, possibly somewhat as a result of the Herculean image, the image of Samson was viewed differently.

The letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament, probably written to the early Jewish Christians, invokes images of the Hebrew Scriptures to allow a deeper understanding of the Jewish background of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 11-12). It continues the work toward Scriptural unity that was begun by Matthew. C. Koester comments that "this section begins with a memorable series of examples from Israel's history. Rhetorically, an example was an action, from the past that a speaker used to persuade an audience about the truth of a point he was making".⁷ The list contains a rapid narration of names and events; a literary device known as *paralepsis* or *praeterito*. The purpose of this device is to demonstrate the "speaker's awareness of the breadth of subject matter, while his refraining from comment on each item shows that he is concerned not to burden the listener".⁸ The practice of rapidly listing examples was meant to impress upon the listeners the array of examples that support the author's point by showing how person after person manifests faith and suggests many more examples could be added. The speaker feigns an overwhelming list of examples, illustrated by the rhetorical comment, "And what more shall I say? The time of telling would indeed fail me".

Koester argues that the author is assuming that the listeners are familiar with the Old Testament figures, supporting the generally accepted scholarly hypothesis of a Jewish Christian audience, so that citing only a few details will call a story to mind and focus attention on the relevant point. Koester points out that there was

⁷ C. Koester, *Hebrews*. (NY: Doubleday 2001) 469.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 516.

a similarity of writing styles between Greek and Jew with these recitals. He comments;

“Jewish and Greco-Roman writers developed example lists, sometimes using repetition of a key word, or *anaphora*, to identify the unifying theme, much as Hebrews repeats “by faith”. Hebrews 11 most closely resembles Jewish lists in that it includes a rather large number of examples, many of whom come from the ancient rather than immediate past and that which depict figures worthy of imitation. . . The list of heroes and heroines of faith in Hebrews 11 is almost certainly the author’s composition, but the form includes traditional elements”.⁹

However, as Koester points out, Hebrews 11-12 “differs from Jewish sources in shaping the Biblical story to foreshadow the situation of the later Christians, who live as strangers on earth for the sake of Christ”.¹⁰ We would suggest that, given the same target audience as Matthew, the author was following the Matthean lead in his use of Old Testament figures.

We propose that the general structure of the recital in Hebrews is based on the recital found in 1 Samuel 12. Admittedly, the Grecian use of *anaphora* was not employed, largely because the rhetorical arts had yet to be developed. Samuel uses another form of repetition; the law suit, *riv*. He calls the Lord as a witness and proceeds with the evidence; the repetition of the saving acts performed through the great figures. The saving acts which manifested through the heroes are transformed into proofs of faith in the Letter to the Hebrews. Both lists are exhorting the people to faith with examples from their history. In Samuel the

⁹ Ibid., 470.

¹⁰ Ibid., 471.

mean were examples of the saving power of God. In Hebrews they are men who are to be imitated in the present age.

We suggest that it is significant that the list in Hebrews stops at the same place in Israel history as does the list in 1 Samuel: The list of leaders is Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, and Samson. In Hebrews, the list is similar; Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, also David and Samuel, with the added reference of the prophets. Significantly, the canonical order of Gideon and Barak are reversed in both lists. Therefore, this indicates more than a coincidence and passing familiarity with the Samuel list on the part of the Hebrews author. It is a powerful bridge between the Testaments, as the key image of David is maintained. This image is needed to preserve the theology of the Messianic line and to maintain the focus that Jesus is the Son of David.

The heroes of faith, the long list of famous leaders from the Old Testament serve, as a group, as "an illustration or declaration" of the definition of faith which begins Hebrews 11. They are examples of "ancient and worthy men" who exemplify the author's concept of faith.¹¹ The focus is on the faith of the leaders. The Greek states, "indeed in this [faith] the elders were given good witness". Pink will state that "it was not by their amiability, sincerity, earnestness, or any other natural virtue, but by *faith*" that the elders were accorded good witness.¹²

The author of Hebrews saw the rhetorical value of the list in Samuel. Significantly, the men are in chronologically reversed pairs; Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, Samson, also David and Samuel and the Prophets.¹³ Significantly, David is a centerpiece in the Greek text and is set apart from the progression with the

¹¹ A.W. Pink, *The Heroes of Faith*. (Pensacola: Mt. Zion, 2000) 5.

¹² Ibid, 10.

¹³ Our author seems to follow the lead of the Samuel list in the reversing of Gideon and Barak and capitalizes on the rhetorical force.

conjunction “also”. This allows the importance of Samson to be depicted in bold relief, as David completed the mission of Samson. By placing David at the center, the progression of the Samuel list, toward the Davidic Kingship, is still preserved and the importance of David in New Testament theology is maintained. By reversing the other pairs of names, the author is employing a well-known rhetorical device; *Hysteron Proteron*, placing an element first that should be last, which is part of the cluster of devices in the category of *Hyperbaton*, reversing or rearranging word order.¹⁴ With this purposeful reversal the author can draw attention and place strong emphasis on the key elements of the list, without elaboration. Therefore, this is a list that complements the list in Samuel. The points of emphasis were Gideon, Samson, David as the distinct center, and Samuel. Barak, Jephthah, and the Prophets embodied other issues surrounding the Davidic Kingship and Messianic line. Quite possibly, the author added the pairing of Samuel and the Prophets because Samuel was the archetypal Prophet who anointed David. But the mention of the other Prophets may suggest that they gained importance in the generations after David. According to the later Biblical authors only a few kings followed the path of David.¹⁵ The prophets had to rise in prominence, to keep faith in God and hope in the Davidic Kingship alive, amidst the weakening of the Davidic Kingship and the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. Therefore, the presentation of the “Heroes of Faith” leads toward David, with Samson’s name being a rhetorical device, and with Samuel leading away from the historical David and looking toward the Messiah.

Samson, Hero of Faith

¹⁴ When Hebrews was written, Roman oratory and rhetoric was in full flower as the influence of Cicero was being felt by speakers. So, our author would have to be familiar with this arranged and orchestrated speech.

¹⁵ Asa, 1 Kings 15:11; Hezekiah, Sirach 48:22; Josiah, Sirach 49:4.

The violent and, somewhat savage, image of Samson may seem out of place in the age which Jesus began. However, the indomitable power of Samson was seen as a valued foundational element in the line leading to Jesus. A.W. Pink suggests that Samson is an example of "sovereign grace" and an example "where faith shines the brightest the least are accounted the greatest".¹⁶ He, like McKenzie, seems to question the presence of Samson on this roll of heroes. Pink attributes it to "dignity", brought on by "sovereign grace". His suggestion of dignity seems to be synonymous with the Charisma, the onrush of the Spirit of the Lord. McKenzie argues, much like Pink, that the Spirit came with "strange frequency upon the most unlikely of the Judges, Samson. Possibly the unsavory character of Samson was felt to demand more of the spirit than the other heroes received".¹⁷

However, McKenzie sharpens the idea of dignity;

"Samson in the list of Judges . . . clarifies the Israelite idea of the Charismatic hero. The hero as such is morally neutral: he is neither good nor bad, he is neither better nor worse than other men. He is simply the instrument through which YHWH works his deliverance. He need not be apt; YHWH does not have to seek aptness- He confers it. When the Spirit of YHWH moves, it makes the person apt to execute His will".¹⁸

Both scholars are overlooking that Samson was a product of his historical circumstance and modern moral judgments are implausible. However, the idea of "dignity" is valuable. Samson was dignified, as was any Charismatic Leader, because of the experience of the Spirit. Such contact with the Divine will forever

¹⁶ Pink, 208.

¹⁷ J.L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Image, 1974) 259.

¹⁸ J.L. McKenzie, *The World of the Judges* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966),16-17.

dignify a man. Samson found renewed dignity in being foundational to the Messianic line and being completed in Jesus the Christ (Hebrews 12:2). As suggested in Hebrews 11:1 and 12:1-2, the dignity or value of Samson lay not so much in the power of his muscles but the role his exploits played long after his death.

Hebrews 11:1

Throughout his life, Samson had the confidence brought about by surpassing strength. However, at his death he embodied the author's definition of faith. Samson was placed between the two supporting pillars of the inner chamber of the temple of Dagon, the chief god of the Philistine pantheon. In a singularly powerful prayer, Samson calls upon God for vengeance (Judges 16:28). He is in the heart of an enemy temple where, according to ancient theology, the deity was at its strongest.¹⁹ His prayer is unique in Biblical Theology; it is the only recognized instance of the use of the three Divine appellations in one prayer; Lord, YHWH, God. Samson petitions God to remember and strengthen for a final stand. Samson is asking for vengeance, immediate vengeance, and to be the instrument of this vengeance. Here is an illustration of the confident assurance referred to in Hebrews 11:1. This is the elemental faith of Samson in bold relief. His consecration, signified by his hair, was broken.²⁰ The text makes no mention of an onrush of the Spirit. He stood between the pillars alone with his faith.

The second clause, "the conviction of things we do not see", also finds an embodiment in Samson. After Delilah betrayed him, the Philistines captured him and gouged or bored out his eyes (נקר). In the Old Testament, the eye was "a figure of synecdoche",

¹⁹ Cf. Roskoski, "Territorial Dominion".

²⁰ Judges 16:22-REASON

wherein a part can represent the whole entity or the whole entity can represent a part. It is also the "organ of judgement and decision".²¹ Without his eyes the symbol of his Judgeship was gone. If he could not see his enemy, his value as a warrior vanished. Between the pillars, Samson could not see the crowds gathering to watch his death or the Philistine dignitaries who examined this enemy of their people. He would not live to see the decline of Philistine power which his death would bring about, he would not see the one who completed his war with the Philistines; David. Most importantly for the author of Hebrews, Samson never saw his final fulfillment in Christ.

Yet, he was to make one final stand and achieve his most noted victory. His final act of strength was fueled by faith alone. The conditions in the prison, where he grinded the wheat, were horrendous.²² He was not well rested nor well fed. However, Pink argues that "during seasons of great spiritual darkness and gloom that faith wrought many of its mightiest works and achieved some of its most notable victories".²³ Samson experienced physical and theological darkness. He had only his faith to guide him through the darkness.

If for no other event, Samson earned his place on this list by the faith exhibited between the pillars of the Philistine temple. The author of Hebrews recognized the value and power of this act of faith.

SAMSON AND HERCULES

Under Rome, popular imagination seemed to blend the images of Hercules and Samson. Many scholars, from the early Church until the present, have tried to compare the two heroes. They

²¹ McKenzie, *Dictionary*, 258.

²² K. van der Toorn, "Mill, Millstone", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 6 vols (NY: Doubleday, 1992) 4:831.

²³ Pink, 210.

had much success with the Grecian Herakles. But, once one moves past the surpassing strength of the men there is little to compare. J.G. Winter wrote a landmark work comparing the Herakles with Hercules. He argues;

“Hercules is an integral part of Roman religion as none of the many forms of the Herakles myth ever was for Greece; for while the Greek Herakles appealed to the popular imagination, he appears to never have entered deeply into the religious life of the people, but for the Romans Hercules fulfilled a real religious need. . . In passing from Greece to Rome he seems to have taken on a new seriousness more in keeping with the character of the people that welcomed him”.²⁴

The Romans established a place in their history for Hercules. Greece made attempts to make Herakles the ancestor of various families and regions, but these attempts did not have the same effect as the efforts of Rome. Winter suggests;

“The Roman mind, sure in the faith that institutions can be traced to some individual founder, conceived of Hercules as the founder of one of the city’s oldest shrines. . . Anterior even to the legend of Romulus. . . for Roman religion, running to cult rather than myth, knew no hero-worship in the sense in which it was known in Greece”.²⁵

Under Rome, Hercules acquired many characteristics which were not present in the Grecian Herakles. He became a patron of the arts and was connected with the muses and often was depicted with a lyre, which seemed to replace the club of Herakles. Paintings from the Roman period often have Hercules depicted with children as an example of civic and religious education.

²⁴J.G. Winter, *The Myth of Hercules at Rome*. (London: MacMillan, 1910) 173.

²⁵ Ibid, 172

Running through all the varied depictions is the idea of heroic virtue and physical strength.

Although the Letter to the Hebrews places Samson squarely within the Biblical history, the early Church confused Samson and Hercules. In the *Preface of Eusebius*, translated into Latin by Jerome (347-420 AD), we read;

“If you proceed from the first Olympiad. . . back until Samson and the third year of the Judge [L]Abdon, you will count 406 years. This however is the Samson, whom the descendants of the Jews report was similar to Hercules in bodily strength, and they seem to me to have not much separating them, if indeed both lived around the time of the capture of troy”.

Eusebius seems to confirm the identification of Samson, like Hercules, with only his strength. He seems to overlook the unfolding of the salvific plan, of Samson was a part, which was narrated in the Jewish Scriptures. Augustine (354-430 AD), a contemporary of Jerome, tries to separate the two heroes and, in *City of God* 18:19, comments;

“Samson was the Judge of the Hebrews, who is thought to be Hercules, because of his wonderful strength”.

Augustine seems to follow the lead of the Letter to the Hebrews. He recognized that Hercules, regardless of the changes Rome made in the image of Herakles, was still bound and identified with his strength. This is illustrated in the famous work, “The choice of Hercules”. This story seems to have been written by Xenophon (430-354 BC), a Greek historian and student of Socrates who wrote the *Memorabilia*, a collection of dialogues which claims to record the defense Socrates made for himself at his trial in Athens. According to Xenophon, Socrates uses a story by the

Sophist, Prodicus; "The Choice of Hercules". In the story, a young Herakles is approached by two lovely women whose names were "Pleasure" and "Virtue" (*Eudaimonia* and *Arête*). Pleasure offers him an easy life and Virtue offers him a hard and difficult life, but one that will have lasting glory. Herakles chooses Virtue, as he stays true to his heroic nature. He was praised by the Cynical and Stoic schools of Philosophy because he endured and overcame opposition and adversity. With the Advent of Plato and Aristotle, these schools faded from prominence. However, under Rome, the schools were rediscovered and took a prominent role in Roman military and social Philosophy. With this rebirth, Hercules found a new importance as well. Yet, his heroic strength and courage always defined him.

Strength, indisputably, was the most identifiable characteristic of both heroes. In popular imagination this would bind them together in a pantheon of strength, which still exists today. However, the major transition of Herakles to Hercules may have provided a societal model for the transition of Samson from Judge to Hero of Faith. Both men were capable of brutally violent actions that did not fit well into the 1st Century's cultural dispositions. Yet, the traditions of both men were received by the writers of this Roman-ruled society. The transition of Herakles to Hercules may have provided a model for the Letter to the Hebrews to bring Samson, and the other Judges, from the distant past and make them relevant to the new Christian era. Both men were now seen as foundational to the Roman and Jewish-Christian cultures of the 1st Century. To the author of Hebrews and the great philosophical writers of Rome, these men became paragons of the qualities of which they wrote and espoused. Samson and Hercules received new value in the Roman era.

Samson, as illustrated in the Letter to the Hebrews, was not to be confused with Hercules. The author of Hebrews understood that

in the new Christian perspective faith was a key element, also illustrated in Pauline writings. The list in Hebrews brings these heroes into this context of faith. Samson was still remembered for his strength. But, Hebrews distinguishes him from Hercules by the repeated phrase, "by faith". The repetitious tone, perhaps annoying to modern ears, inundates the audience and creates a theological barrier between Samson, and the other Judges, from the Greco-Roman heroes and gods. Once Samson, and the Judges, are distinguished by faith. The following verses, vv. 32-39, the actions which can now be understood as results from their faith are recounted. The recurring theme of faith still remains. This theme serves to distinguish the actions of Samson, and the other Israelite heroes, from the actions of the Greco-Roman heroes. It is an important distinction, as many exploits and heroic feats are similar. This similarity was not lost on the author of Hebrews.

Among the Judges, Samson stands apart. As the introduction of Judges suggests, the impact of the Judges did not last longer than their lifetimes (Judges 2:13-19). Only the legacy of Samson outlived him. With his death, he killed more Philistines than he had in his lifetime (Judges 16:30). In doing so, he was foundational to David. Samson's actions move through Saul and culminate in David and his final breaking of Philistine power. More importantly, David began the line that found completion in Jesus Christ. Therefore, if we follow the lead of the author, we must see Jesus as being the zenith, the pinnacle, and the capstone of the actions of Samson. Furthermore, the messianic line that originated with David rested on the foundational exploits and feats of Samson.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of the theology of the Samson narratives, depicting the pre-monarchic Judge to the Christian "Hero of Faith," is a reflection of the movement found in the two testaments of the Bible. To the First Century Jewish Theology, the Old Testament was fixed and closed. However, the authors of the New Testament, particularly Matthew and Hebrews, saw the image of Samson as a way of opening the canon once again and it being fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Samson, historically and theologically, embodies the definition of faith as presented in Hebrews 11:1-2 and many of the memories of vv. 33-37 echo his actions and experiences. More than the other heroes on the list, Samson illustrates the immediacy and long term arc of the fulfillment of words and actions in the unfolding plan of salvation. Immediately, with his campaigns against the Philistines and his Charisma, Samson's life finds fulfillment in the Kingship of David and the Eternal Kingship, or Messianic line. A more distant trajectory or arc is based on Samson being the powerful leader from Dan, but is developed from seeing and understanding him as a "hero of faith". This development, in which his successes are recognized as the results of faith, prepares the way and looks toward a completion in Jesus Christ.

From Samson there is a distinct pathway to Jesus. Samson began the deliverance process of Israel. In Hebrews, we see David as the clear transitional benchmark. It is David who completed the war which Samson began and began the messianic line which was completed in Jesus. Samson finds his final completion and perfection with Jesus.

Through the development of the theology surrounding Samson, the influence of Herakles and, later, Hercules, must be recognized. Both men rose to prominence at approximately the

same time and their fame spanned the same period. The peoples of Samson and Hercules intersected and interacted throughout this period. Herakles, most likely known to the Philistines, passed onto mythic proportions early in the growth of his traditions and memories. We would suggest that the attribution such characteristics may have been triggered, at least in part, by the traditions of Samson. The Philistines or the Greeks would not allow for a hero of a peasant nation to be greater and stronger than their powerful hero.

Samson, on the other hand, became entrenched in the theology of Israel. As a Charismatic warrior, Samson was foundational to the forming of the nation of Israel by David. The New Testament sees Jesus as redefining and beginning a new Israel. By virtue of his preparing for the Davidic line and the theology of Hebrews, Samson was foundational to the new Israel as well. As the theology surrounding Samson developed and he was cast in the light of Jesus he became a Christian epitome of faith. In the New Testament, Samson moves past the Old Testament philosophy of seeing only historical fulfillments of actions and words. Jesus, in the New Testament, brought about a fulfillment in eternal life. Jesus opened the Kingdom of God, the path to Salvation, with the perduring effects of the Cross and Resurrection. Therefore, the foundation which Samson built would now prevail in Christ.

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