

April 9 Answers

- 1) The Philistines' encounter with the ark, and the judgeship of Samson. God allowed the ark to be captured in order to teach both the **Philistines** and the **Israelites** a lesson about who He really is. The Israelites learned that God couldn't be used like a **good-luck** charm, and the Philistines learned that God was greater than their false god **Dagon**. Both sides were shown that God can **fight** His own battles and that He will be treated as **holy** before men (cf. Num 20:12; 1 Sam 6:19–20). The judgeship of Samson is a study in **contrasts**: (a) he would not cut his hair, but he ate honey from the **carcass** of a lion, (b) he was devoted to Israel, but he **lusted** after Philistine women, (c) he had faith in God's power (Heb 11:32), but he lived a dissolute and **decadent** life, (d) he was self-centered and vengeful, but he was willing to give his **life** to destroy the Philistines. Perhaps the story of Samson is meant to teach us more about **God** than about Samson. God stirred his spirit (Jdg 13:25), and his desire for the woman in Timnah was "of the **LORD**," for God was seeking an occasion against the Philistines (Jdg 14:4). This shows that God can **use** even the sinful desires of a flawed individual to accomplish His purpose. The fact that God used Samson shows that God's **blessing** does not equal His **approval**. Too often we mistakenly think that a person's success in ministry means that God approves of everything they say and do. How much **more** could have been achieved if Samson had been faithful to God? He died with his enemies, and once again, sin brought a tragic end to a life of great potential.