Samson: A Frankenstein Composite of the Judges

Samson		Israel's Judges
"I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife." (14:1-2)	*Reverse of model judge*	Caleb said, "He who attacks Kiriath-sepher … I will give him Achsah my daughter for a wife." (1:12-13)
the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman (13:3)		the angel of the LORD appeared to [**Gideon**] (6:12)
"please let the man of God whom you sent come again to us" (13:8)		"show me a sign that it is you who speak with me" (6:17-18)
"We shall surely die, for we have seen God." (13:22)		"Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." (6:22)
"If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering" (13:23)	*Model call narrative*	"Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." (6:23)
Manoah took the young goat … and offered it on the rock to the LORD (13:19)		Gideon … prepared a young goat … **20** And the angel … said … "put them on this rock" (6:19-20)
the angel of the LORD went up in the flame (13:20)		fire sprang up from the rock … And the angel of the LORD vanished (6:21)
"he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines" (13:5)		the LORD … said … "save Israel from the hand of Midian" (6:14)

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Samson		Israel's Judges
"Let me now put a riddle to you" (14:12) But he snapped the bowstrings … So the secret of his strength was not known. (16:9)	*Role of secrets*	[**Ehud**] … said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." (3:19)
he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey … and with it he struck 1,000 men. (15:15)	*Unorthodox weapon*	**Shamgar** … killed 600 of the Philistines with an oxgoad (3:31)
So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head … And she made them tight [תקע] with the pin [יתד] (16:14)	*Method of execution*	**Jael** … drove [תקע] the peg [יתד] into his temple … while he was lying fast asleep (4:21)
Samson … caught 300 foxes … turned them tail to tail and put a torch between each (15:4)	*300 torch bearers*	[**Gideon**] divided the 300 men … and put … into the hands of all of them … empty jars, with torches inside (7:16)

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"How are we to interpret these many allusions to other parts of the book? … **Samson is an embodiment of all that was wrong with the judges who preceded him** … He represents the implosion of the whole judge system. The judges have gradually deteriorated in effectiveness as religious and military leaders over the course of three distinct phases in the book of Judges. **Samson is the end of the line in that deterioration**. He is the judge who no longer leads Israel or obeys God."

Dennis Olson

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