

Jawbone Solution

“Then he found the jawbone of a recently killed donkey. He picked it up and killed 1,000 Philistines with it. [...] When he finished [...] he threw away the jawbone [...]” (Judges 15:15+17, NLT-SE)

Israel was experiencing the painful consequences of having turned away from God for the umpteenth time and were subjected to Philistine rule for four decades already by the time Samson became their God-ordained deliverer and judge. Samson’s story - that’s historically a classic regarding unfulfilled love and heinous betrayal, but it carries much more than just the movie material for heartrending romance and money driven treachery. His days were demanding, rough and tough as physical warfare was still part of daily life for God’s people. Yet, one person killing singlehandedly 1,000 enemies with a fresh jawbone was something extraordinary even then, easily outranking the still to come David-defeating-Goliath story.

Since we read that Samson executed such punishment on the Philistines after the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power (V 14), we can safely conclude the following: both Samson and the jawbone were part of God’s solution for this moment to free Israel from the oppressive clutches of the enemy.

- What strikes me the most is that Samson threw that jawbone away after he had finished “the job”. That’s truly amazing. Here he got a “tool” that worked wonders in his hands, eliminating opponents in masses, and what does he do? Chuck it away! Unbelievable.
- We’d never do that, would we? We’d probably tuck that jawbone safely away in our cabinet to have it readily at hand for the next contention or put it on display for everyone to marvel at. That’s how we usually operate, don’t we? Whatever works well we keep and institutionalize, if possible. We create systems and structures around the “jawbone” and teach how to make best use of it, offering it as the solution to others and even exporting it as the philosopher’s stone. It appears that based on this approach we tend to run our lives, churches, organizations, businesses, governments.
- Of course there is nothing wrong with sharing our experience, revelation, insight, wisdom, knowledge and stuff like that, since this is part of how we learn. So don’t get me wrong. But when it comes to the tools God wants us to use in specific tasks, we better be careful encouraging people to use what worked for others. As much as the jawbone worked perfectly in Samson’s hand it might not do so in ours, if you know what I mean.
- Packed with exciting, breathtaking reports, the Bible reveals God’s immense creativity in achieving His goals by a wealth of different methods. You hardly find a Kingdom job executed the same way twice. As we are creative individuals and not robots, God uses us in and with our individual creative capacity. So what then makes us believe that we can and must establish and institutionalize universal tools, structures and procedures that apparently promise repeatedly success in God’s Kingdom for anyone? By doing so aren’t we in danger of cutting His divine dynamic and varied approach out of the equation?
- So I’d like to challenge us all to allow God to show us our success-promising “jawbone solution” for our role in building His Kingdom rather than trying to use what worked for others. It’s the probably more difficult way, cause we’ll have to learn to hear from God for ourselves rather than let others hear on our behalf, but its likely to deliver the most effective solution and result for each occasion.