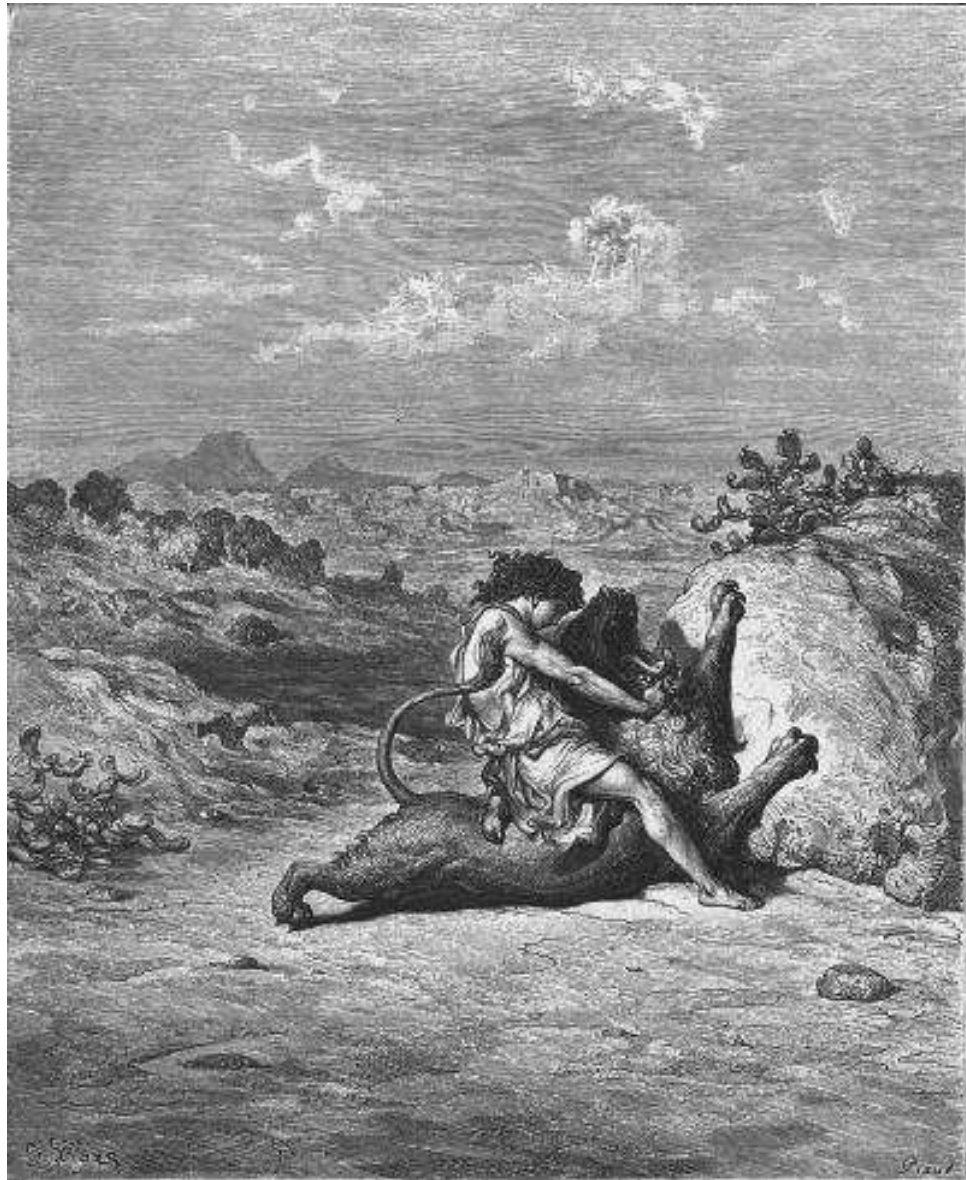


**CONCISE NOTES ON
THE LIFE OF SAMSON**

JUDGES 13-16

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Dore

JUDGES 13

The Life of Samson Judges 13-16

1 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

13:1. And the children of Israel. Included in the children of Israel were individuals of faith, of whom four are mentioned in Judges, and remembered in Hebrews 11.

- Gideon Hebrews 11:32
- Samson Hebrews 11:32
- Barak Hebrews 11:32
- Jephthah, the ninth judge of Israel. Hebrews 11:32

13:1. Philistines. Though the name Palestine is derived from them, the Philistines were not native to the land. They were Greek sea faring people who came to settle the territory along the Mediterranean. They had unusual skills in iron and metals which they used to create superior weapons to conquer.

2 ¶ And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren, and bare not.

13:2. his wife was barren. In Jewish society it was a great shame and disappointment for a woman to be barren. Part of the reason for this is the promise of the Messiah. What woman would not want to be the mother of the Messiah?

Special Note.

The troubles that come to us often prepare us for the events that God has for us in the future. Furthermore, a delay is not a denial. Though the wife of Manoah did not initially have a child, the delay was not a denial of her becoming a mother.

3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

13:2. angel of the LORD. In this context, the “Angel of the LORD” is a theophany according to verse 22. “*And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.*”

13:2. appeared unto the woman. God is not sexist and neither should men be. Though many women suffer verbal and physical abuse at the hands of men, God has always honored women. While other religions, such as Islam, suppress women.

“From arranged marriages of female children to religious laws that dictate what women can learn, how they must dress, where they may be seen in public, and with whom they may associate, virtually every aspect of their lives being controlled by an entrenched patriarchy” (Women and the Koran, The Status of Women in Islam. Anwar Hekmat, Prometheus Books, 1997). In contrast, Christianity liberates and exalts women. *Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Three Births Announced by an Angel

- Samson Judges 1:3
- John Luke 1:11-25
- Jesus Luke 1:26-35

Distinguishing Marks of a Nazarite

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean *thing*:

13:4. drink not wine...and eat not any unclean thing. Parents who would have godly children must set an example of gospel obedience. Samson’s mother provided an example to her son of what it meant to be separate from the world by two distinguishing marks. She would not drink strong drink nor eat anything condemned in the Law of Moses.

5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

13:5. thou shall conceive. Children are a heritage of the Lord (Psalm 127:3). They are not ours alone, but belong to the Lord. Parents have a responsibility to bring the children up for Him.

13:5. no razor shall come on his head. The principle behind this practice was that a Nazarite was to be separated from the pride of appearance. Inordinate attention to one’s clothing and hair can distract from being occupied with the person of Christ and fulfilling one’s religious vows.

13:5. a Nazarite. A Nazarite (meaning, “separate”), was a person of either sex who was bound by a special vow to the Lord. The origin of this vow is obscure. Numbers 6:1-21 seems to merely regulate a well-established practice.

13:5. he shall begin to deliver Israel. Samson was born to be a man of bloodshed and violence. As God has His martyrs, so He has his military champions as well. Samson was foreordained to fight.

6 ¶Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance *was* like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he *was*, neither told he me his name:

7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing*: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

13:7. drink no wine. Wine speaks of sensual delight. The Nazarite was to be separate from sensual pleasures, for a little while. A principle is established. There are times to be happy, and there are times to be sober and serious. *Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:* Wine also speaks of joy. Wine was used by our Lord at the Last Supper to express the joy of our salvation. *Luke 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

13:7. neither eat any unclean *thing*. The theme of holiness and separation undergirded the vow of the Nazarite. According to Numbers 6:6, there was to be separation from one's dearest relationships in order that God might have the full and complete place in life. *Numbers 6:6 All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head.*

Special Note.

Despite the divine prohibitions, Samson rarely lived out the ethics of a Nazarite until the hour of his death when he truly became a Nazarite unto the Lord.

“Wasted years wasted years oh how foolish
As you walk on in darkness and fear
Turn around turn around love is calling
Keeps calling me from a life of wasted years

Have you wandered a lot on life's pathway
Have you lived without love a life of tears
Have you searched for a great higher meaning
Or is your life filled with long wasted years

Wasted years wasted years oh how foolish
As you walk on in darkness and fear
Turn around turn around love is calling
Keeps calling you from a life of wasted years.”

Manoah's Prayer Request
Judges 13:8

8 ¶ Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

Manoah's Prayer Request Answered
Judges 13:9

9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her.

10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the *other* day.

11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, *Art* thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I *am*.

12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and *how* shall we do unto him?

13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

14 She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let her observe.

15 ¶ And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?

13:17. What *is* thy name? In the modern western world, a name is only a means of identification. A person's name is not as important as their Social Security number. But in the ancient world, a person's name spoke of their character. A name, ideally, was a description of the deepest essence of a person. The name of God speaks of who God is, as Moses discovered.

Exodus 3:13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* secret?

13:18. it is secret. it is wonderful. *Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* The name of the Angel of the LORD is incomprehensible.

19 So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered *it* upon a rock unto the LORD: and *the angel* did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

13:19. and *the angel* did wondrously. and *the angel* worked wonders.

20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and fell on their faces to the ground.

21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

13:21. the angel of the LORD did no more appear. The Angel of the Lord is referred to 56 times in 51 verses in the Hebrew Scriptures. These appearances of God in the form of the Angel of the Lord refer to Jesus Christ because no one has seen God the Father at any time. Only the Son is the revealed member of the God head.

Exodus 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

1 Timothy 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Various Appearance of the Angel of the Lord

- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar. Genesis 16:7-12
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob. Genesis 32:24,28; Hosea 12:3-4
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses. Exodus 3:2, 6
- The Angel of the Lord guided Israel in the Wilderness. Exodus 23:20-23
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Balaam. Numbers 22:22-35
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon. Judges 6:11-16
- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife. Judges 13:18, 22
- The Angel of the Lord accepted worship from Joshua. Joshua 5:14-15
- The Angel of the Lord is the person of Jesus Christ. Hosea 12:3-4 “messenger” (Heb. *malakh*, angel)
- The Angel of the Lord directed Elijah at Mount Horeb. 1 Kings 19:5, 7,
- The Angel of the Lord spoke to David about an altar. 1 Chronicles 21:18
- The Angel of the Lord avenged Israel against the Assyrians. 2 Kings 19:35
- The Angel of the Lord protects the saints. Psalm 34:7 (cf. Psalm 23:1)

22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.

13:22. We shall surely die. From a human perspective, Manoah had a valid reason to be afraid once he discerned they had seen God. Perhaps he remembered the words of the LORD to Moses. *Exodus 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*

A Rational Wife

23 But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these *things*, nor would as at this time have told us *such things* as these.

13:23. But his wife said. Unlike the wife of Job, who was a miserable comforter, the wife of Manoah presented three good arguments for calmness of spirit.

Three Arguments for Grace

First argument. If the LORD were pleased to kill Manoah and his wife, He would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at their hands. By way of personal application, if the Lord meant to harm you, He would not have received in the person of Christ an acceptable substitute for you. *Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

Second argument. The Angel of the Lord was the first to show Manoah and his wife gracious revelation. By way of personal application, if God wanted to do away with your soul, He would not have shown to you the depths of sin leading to repentance and a flight to Calvary. The Lord shows us the depths of sin that He might lead us to salvation and sanctification of the Spirit. There is a desire for holiness and a desire to know Him.

Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Isaiah 6:5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Luke 5:8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Third argument. If the Angel of the Lord meant harm, He would not at this time have told Manoah and his wife “*such things as these*”. The reference is to the promise of a son. By way of application, God has promised a Son that would one day crush the head of the Old Serpent, and He has. What a blessed promise has been fulfilled. Redemption accomplished can now be applied.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

1 John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

The Lord wants the heart of His children to know that He does not mean them harm. The Lord will not leave us or forsake us. *Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

The Evidence of a Firm Faith

24 ¶ And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

13:24. Samson (little sun). Samson enjoyed a bright childhood and future, a difficult and immoral life as an adult, but a triumphant ending. He was a man dominated by great power, but also great passion. He had no self-control, though the idea of self-control is important in the Christian's life. *1 Corinthians 9:25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Supplemental Material

Doctrine of the Nazarite

1. In all things relating to the beliefs and behavior of the Israelites, the LORD spake to give guidance.
 - *Numbers 6:1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,*
2. The LORD made provision for either a man or a woman with a special desire to honor Him to do so by the taking of a voluntary vow.
 - *Numbers 6:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord:*
3. The person who made the vow of a Nazarite unto the LORD was to be distinguished in four ways.
 - Separation from eating or drinking anything from the vine. *Numbers 6:3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. 4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.*
 - Separation from the use of a razor. *Numbers 6:5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.*
 - Separation from being ceremonially defiled by association with death. *Numbers 6:6 All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head.*
 - Separation from the world by a spirit of holiness. *Numbers 6:8 All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord.*
4. In case there was an unexpected and non-deliberate breaking of the Nazarite vow, the LORD in grace provided a way of cleansing. The person was to shave their head and offer a sacrifice to the LORD. The atoning sacrifice was to be both immediate and long term.
 - *Numbers 6:9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. 10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:*

11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. 12 And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

Special Note.

The offerings of sacrifice included two turtle doves (or two young pigeons), one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. The penitent was also to bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering.

5. The Nazarite vow was not intended to be perpetual in every case. A person who chose to end the Nazarite vow was to engage in acts of worship at the termination of the days of their separation. Specific acts were to be followed.
 - An appearance was to be before the entrance to the tabernacle. *Numbers 6:13 And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:*
 - An offering was to be brought to the Lord. *Numbers 6:14-15 And he shall offer his offering unto the Lord,*
 - ❖ *one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering,*
 - ❖ *and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering,*
 - ❖ *and one ram without blemish for peace offerings,*
 - ❖ *And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil,*
 - ❖ *and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil,*
 - ❖ *and their meat offering,*
 - ❖ *and their drink offerings.*
6. Various offerings were to be made by the priest. *16-17 And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer*
 - ❖ *his sin offering,*
 - ❖ *and his burnt offering:*
 - ❖ *And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread:*
 - ❖ *the priest shall offer also his meat offering,*
 - ❖ *and his drink offering.*
7. The Nazarite was to shave the head and burn the hair. *Numbers 6:18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.*

8. A final wave offering was to be made. *Numbers 6:19 And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven: 20 And the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord: this is holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder...*
9. Once the appropriate sacrifices had been honored, the person was released from the Nazarite vow and had freedom to drink wine. *Numbers 6:20b...and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.*
10. While every person had to make their own vow unto the LORD, others could be encouraging and a role model as the mother of Samson was to her son.
 - *Judges 13:3 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. 4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: 5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.*

JUDGES 14

The Danger of an Ungodly Alliance

1 And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

14:1. And Samson. As the narrative unfolds, Samson is presented as an amiable man, a witty man, a man gifted with words. But there was a streak of cruelty in his personality as well. And yet, Samson was also a man of God, and a man of prayer, as the last story of his life reveals (Judges 16:28-31). Though Samson was unique from all other men because of his great strength, he was like all others in that he was a sinner in need of a Savior. His greatest particular sin was the breaking of his Nazarite vow.

Spiritual Epithets

- | | | |
|----------|---|----------------|
| • Saul | “I have played the fool” | 1 Samuel 26:21 |
| • Paul | “I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” | 2 Timothy 4:7 |
| • Samson | “O Lord GOD, remember me” | Judges 16:28 |

2 And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.

14:2. I have seen a woman. The vow of a Nazarite was to abstain from fleshly lust and live for God. However, upon reaching maturity, Samson forsook this vow in practice if not in principle. Outwardly Samson looked like he was keeping the vow because his hair was not cut, but in his heart he had given himself over to sensual pleasures.

14:2. Timnath. This place was occupied by the Philistines, the traditional enemy of the Jews. Samson resided in the town of Zorah in the tribe of Dan, on the border of Judah. This marriage was a marriage of convenience.

14:2. Philistines. *Deuteronomy 7:1 When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6 For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*

Samson disregarded the Word of God and brought disgrace and tragedy into his life.

14:2. now therefore get her for me. Children are to honor their father and their mother, not command them as Samson did. *Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

14:3. for she pleaseth me well. A person will be guided by their own wisdom, or by the Word of God. Samson was wrong to marry the Philistine women. He should have married a woman among the daughters of his brethren. *2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?*

4 But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

14:4. it *was* of the LORD. The perceptive will of God was plainly stated in Scripture. Samson was not to marry a Philistine. But the decretive will of God ordained that Samson was to marry a Philistine for the LORD had a stated agenda. He wanted to stir up trouble between the Hebrews and the Philistines.

In this the sovereignty of God over all events in life is brought forth. God will use even evil for a greater good, illustrated in the Cross. *Acts 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

When the brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery, they meant it for evil, but God meant it for good (Genesis 50:20).

The Roar of a Lion

5 ¶Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

14:5. Then went Samson down. There is geography of sin, and it is downward. When the brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery he was brought down to Egypt (Genesis 39:1). When Jonah was fleeing from the Lord, he went down to Joppa (Jonah 1:3). So Samson went down to Timnath, a place of sin. He was geographically outside the will of God.

14:5. a young lion roared. Taking a shortcut while going through the vineyards of Timnath, Samson killed a lion without telling his parents about it. This speaks of his modesty and self-confidence. Samson did not need to boast or promote himself.

6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

14:6. and he rent him as he would have rent a kid. The heart of the believer cannot but help to remember there is a greater Champion than Samson who has defeated another roaring lion. *1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:* By His atoning work at Calvary, the Lord has destroyed this roaring lion, for Christ is Himself a lion, even the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5).

7 And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

8 ¶ And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

14:8. the carcase of the lion. One of the provisions of the Nazarite vow was a prohibition about touching a dead carcase of a human. If Samson did not violate the letter of the law on this matter, he violated the spirit. If something is doubtful, it is probably dirty.

9 And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

10 ¶ So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.

11 And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12 ¶ And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find *it* out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments:

13 But if ye cannot declare *it* me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

A Clever Riddle

**“Out of the Eater Came Forth Meat,
And Out of the Strong Came forth Sweetness”**

14 And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? *is it not so?*

14:15. on the seventh day. Literally, on the fourth day.

14:15. lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire. This was no idle threat. At a later time, the Philistines did burn everything. *Judges 15:6 And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.*

A Whimpering Woman

16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told *it* me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my mother, and shall I tell *it* thee?

14:16.

Questionable Feminine Techniques

• Tears	<i>“And Samson’s wife wept before him”</i>	Judges 14:16
• Pouting	<i>“Thou dost but hate me”</i>	Judges 14:16
• Persistency	<i>“And she wept before him the seven days”</i>	Judges 14:16
• Deception	<i>“Bring me venison”</i>	Genesis 27:5-46
• Slander	<i>“And Miriam...spake against Moses”</i>	Numbers 12:1
• A Dominating Will	<i>“I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth”</i>	1 Kings 21:1-16
• Seduction	<i>“ravished with a strange woman”</i>	Proverbs 5:20
• Flattery	<i>“the flattery of the tongue”</i>	Proverbs 6:24
• Contentiousness	<i>“a brawling woman”</i>	Proverbs 25:24
• Arrogance	<i>“the daughters of Zion are haughty”</i>	Isaiah 3:16
• Suggestive Dancing	<i>“Herodias came in, and danced”</i>	Mark 6:23

17 And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

18 And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What *is* sweeter than honey? And what *is* stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

14:18. before the sun went down. Just before the time was up, the Philistines gave the proper answer to Samson's riddle. But they waited until the last moment to do so in order to lure Samson into believing that the secret to his riddle was secure. There is a facet to sin that enjoys toying with the mind and emotions of others thereby making sin exceedingly sinful.

19 ¶And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

14:19. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him. It is a sobering thought to consider that a nation's warrior can be filled with the Spirit of the LORD in the slaughtering of one's enemies.

Those Killed by Samson

- Thirty men of Askelon. Judges 14:19
- One thousand men of Lehi. Judges 15:15
- Three thousand men and women of Gaza. Judges 16:27

Special Note.

Alvin Cullum York (December 13, 1887 – September 2, 1964), known as, Sergeant York, was one of the most decorated American soldiers in World War I. He received the Medal of Honor for leading an attack on a German machine gun nest, taking 32 machine guns, killing 28 German soldiers and capturing 132 others.

Audie Leon Murphy (June 20, 1925 – May 28, 1971) was one of the most decorated American combat soldiers of World War II. He was presented the Medal of Honor for his defensive actions against German troops on January 26, 1945, at the Colmar Pocket near Holtzwihr, France. During an hour-long siege, he stood alone on a burning tank destroyer firing a machine gun at attacking German soldiers and tanks. Wounded and out of ammunition, Murphy climbed off the tank, refused medical attention, and led his men on a successful counter assault. Fifty German soldiers were killed.

20 But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

14:20.

Why Samson's Marriage Failed

- Samson knowingly married someone who was outside the sphere of the Covenant of Grace.
- Samson did not share important information with his wife apart from duress.
- Samson was often geographically separated from her.
- Samson was betrayed by his wife, leading to discord, strife, bloodshed, and death.

Special Note.

By way of personal application, do not engage in an inappropriate relationship, especially on the basis of physical attraction. The believer must be separate from entangling alliances. A believer's basic relationship must be to God.

JUDGES 15

Divine Providence and God's Deliverance from the Philistines

1 But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in.

15:1. in the time of wheat harvest. A reference to the month of May.

15:1. I will go. The events of this chapter trace the origin of Samson's controversy with the Philistines. According to the prophecy of the Angel of the Lord, Samson would begin his life of bloodshed and violence with a view to delivering Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. *Judges 13:5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.*

Special Note.

Samson was a man who seemed to be always beginning something, but never able to finish what he had started. He began a Nazarite vow, but violated specific provisions. He began a marriage, but it failed. He began to deliver Israel, but could not complete that work. Many people begin to do good deeds, but they do not seem to be able to bring them to conclusion. "Samson was a man of great potential, but incomplete realization" (S. Lewis Johnson). And yet, for all of his faults, Samson was a man of faith (Hebrews 11:32). He trusted in Jehovah.

“Like a river glorious, is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious, in its bright increase;
Perfect, yet it floweth, fuller every day,
Perfect, yet it groweth, deeper all the way.

Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.

Every joy or trial falleth from above,
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love;
We may trust Him fully all for us to do.
They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.”

Frances R. Havergal, 1876

The Peril of Ungodly Alliances

2 And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: *is not her younger sister fairer than she?* Take her, I pray thee, instead of her.

15:2. Take her, I pray thee. This was an evil suggestion and contrary to the Mosaic Law. *Leviticus 18:18 Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.*

3 ¶ And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.

15:3. Now shall I be more blameless. In his mind, Samson determined to exact revenge upon the Philistines in general, but in particular, the Timnite father and his former wife. In his actions Samson declared himself “*more blameless*” than the Philistines. Since the Philistines had taken away his wife, Samson would take away their livelihood. He would destroy their corn, vineyards, and olive groves by fire. But how can Samson be “*more blameless*” in his revenge? Part of the answer is this. “*the corn, and the wine, and the oil, which they had prepared for Dagon, to be a meat-offering to him, were thus, in the season thereof, made a burnt-offering to God's justice*” (Matthew Henry).

4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.

15:4. foxes. Hebrew, shuw`al (shoo-awl'); a jackal (as a burrower). The jackal travels in packs. Jackals love fruit, grapes in particular, so Samson would have known where to find them.

5 And when he had set the brands on fire, he let *them* go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards *and* olives.

15:4.

What Samson Destroyed

- A wheat harvest 15:4
- Vineyards 15:4
- Olive groves 15:4
- A lion 14:5,6
- The city gates of Gaza 16:3
- Temple of Dagon 16:29,30

6 ¶ Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

7 ¶ And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.

Samson Dwelling at Etam

8 And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

9 ¶ Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi.

10 And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines *are* rulers over us? What *is* this *that* thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

15:11. the Philistines *are* rulers over us. How the Philistines came to be rulers over God's people is a tragic story in Hebrew history. Simply put, the Jewish people capitulated. They abandoned the Promise of God to conquer and possess the land, they abandoned pure worship of Jehovah and make some offering sacrifices to Dagon, and they refused to follow God's divinely appointed man in the person of Samson.

15:11. What *is* this *that* thou hast done unto us? One of the surprising facets of people is how they can twist a situation to appear to be a victim instead of foolish, willful, wrongdoers.

15:11. As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. According to the Mosaic Law, Samson could feel blameless for his actions because the Law did provide for retaliation. *Exodus 21:24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot*, In the New Testament economy, there is a different guiding principle established by Christ, and that is the principle of longsuffering. *Matthew 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*. Retaliation and vengeance is to be left in the hands of the Lord. *Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*.

Samson Agrees to be Bound

12 And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.

15:11-12. Then three thousand men. It is instructive to note that people who are out of fellowship with the Lord are afraid of God's champions, which is why the church is often persecuted and sought to be destroyed, not only externally, but internally. Those who are the recipient of great grace often betray their benefactors.

Traitors

- Isaac was betrayed by Jacob
- Joseph was betrayed by his brethren
- Samson was betrayed by the men of Judah
- Jesus was betrayed by Judas
- Paul was betrayed by Hymenaeus and Alexander
- William Wallace, the great Scot, was betrayed by John de Menteith
- William Tyndale was betrayed by Henry Phillips
- Calvinism was betrayed by Jacobus Arminius

13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

14 ¶ *And* when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

The Jawbone of an Ass

15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

15:15.

Characteristics of the Jawbone of a Donkey

- It was novel.
- It was simple.
- It was handy.

- It was ridiculous. *1 Corinthians 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 2 Corinthians 10: 2 Corinthians 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

Special Note.

It is no more ridiculous to believe that God could place a jawbone of a donkey in the hands of Samson and slay one thousand men then it is to believe that by the preaching of the gospel, souls can be saved for time and eternity, and lives transformed. But it happens. The prelates and princess of the Church in Rome initially laughed when they heard about an obscure monk named Martin Luther. How could one monk reform the church? But Luther was not alone. Martin Luther was a jawbone in the hands of God. Martin Luther was a weapon to the pulling down of binding traditions, moral corruption, and doctrinal error. Luther slew more than a thousand false superstitions before he was through. John Calvin was mocked and ridiculed when he turned the Word of God on the Sacramental system and won a great victory. George Whitefield was laughed at and mocked for his physical appearance. Eggs were thrown at him, and yet he continued to preach the gospel and press souls into the kingdom. He too was a mighty jawbone in the hands of God.

16 And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

15:16. with the jaw of an ass. In the Hebrew text, there is a play upon words here by Samson.

"With a donkey's jawbone
I have made donkeys of them.
With a donkey's jawbone
I have killed a thousand men."

New International Version

17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi.

18 ¶ And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

15:18. called on the LORD. It has been observed that spiritual depression often follows a great spiritual victory. God had not given to Samson a great victory only to let him suddenly die of thirst. In grace the LORD will often endure and overlook the pettiness of His people and provide their every need (v. 19).

19 But God clave an hollow place that *was* in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which *is* in Lehi unto this day.

15:19. and there came water thereout. Jesus said in *John 7:38* *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

20 And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

15:20. And he judged Israel. It was only after the Philistines were defeated and reduced in number that Samson was able to judge Israel. A principle is established. There must be change before an effective rule can take place. In the life of a sinner, there must be conversion and a recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord before there will be any change. Oh, may God help every person who names the name of Christ to be fundamentally and forever different.

JUDGES 16

Shaven and Shorn But Not Beyond Salvation

1 Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

16:1. and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

Three Women in Samson's Life c. 1060 BC

- A Philistine wife from Timnath Judges 14:1
- A harlot in Gaza Judges 16:1
- Delilah, in the valley of Sorek Judges 16:4

Special Note.

Despite being betrayed by his first Philistine wife, Samson sought out another Philistine woman whom he loved. It is not said that Samson loved his first wife, nor the harlot he visited in Gaza. But Samson did love Delilah (coquette) who dwelt in the Valley of Sorek.

Harlots of the Bible

- Tamar Genesis 38
- Rahab Joshua 2
- Two Harlots 1 Kings 3:16-28
- Jezebel 2 Kings 9:22 (Revelation 2:20-22)
- National Israel Ezekiel 23:3, 8, 20, 21
- The Whore of Babylon Revelation 17

2 *And it was told* the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.

3 And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put *them* upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that *is* before Hebron.

4 ¶And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah.

The Price of Betrayal

5 And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.

16:5. Entice him and see wherein his great strength. The ungodly do not understand the power of God upon a person's life or ministry. As a result, something besides the Lord is credited with spiritual life. People think that the secret of ministerial success is in the personality of the pastor, or a great choir, or an effective youth program. Forgotten is the fact that God is the source of blessing.

“Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

Thomas Ken, 1674

16:5. we will give thee. According to Judges 3:3 there were five judges of the Philistines. Each one pledged eleven hundred pieces of silver to Delilah for a total of 5,500 shekels of silver with an estimated value totally about \$89,641.

A Search for Samson's Strength

The Lie about Seven Green Cords

6 ¶ And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.

16:6. Tell me...wherein thy great strength. Samson learned by hard experience that entanglement leads to enticement which leads to slavery. No doubt, Samson thought he could control Delilah and any situation in which he found himself. But there is a power to sin that overwhelms the soul and shackles the will with invisible cords of any inability to do that which is good. *Romans 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

16:6. Tell me. There is an unholy boldness to sin. Jesus said that men speak from their hearts. *Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:* Eventually men and woman will say boldly and plainly what is on their heart, illustrated by Delilah's request that Samson tell her the source of his great strength and how he might be made weak.

7 And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

16:7. seven green withs. seven green cords. This was probably some moist “gut” such as was used for bowstrings.

16:7. If they bind me. It is possible that Samson was just teasing with Delilah, but his teasing was foolish. The New Testament instructs the believer not to engage in foolish jesting. *Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*

8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

9 Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.

The Lie about New Ropes

10 And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound.

11 And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

12 Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And *there were* liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

The Lie about Seven Locks of Hair

13 And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web.

16:13. thou hast mocked me. In truth, it is Delilah that has been mocking Samson by pretending to love him, by seeking out the secret of his strength, and by obvious acts of betrayal. Samson is not innocent of course, for he sees all of this as a clever game.

14 And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.

15 ¶And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*.

16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed unto death;

Telling the Truth

17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

On the Lap of a Vile Vixen

19 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

16:19. and his strength went from him. Spiritual strength and vitality will leave a person that persists in willful sin. And a greater tragedy is about to unfold for Samson did not know his strength was gone. He was deceived by sin. He thought he could be as he had always been but that is not the case. Either a person will be conformed to the image of the world or a person will be transformed by the power of God to live a holy life separated from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

20 And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

16:20. the LORD was departed from him. It is possible for a religious organization to exist, or for a religious person to continue to live as they have always lived, and not know the precise moment when the LORD departs from their lives.

Samson's Punishment for Sin

21 ¶ But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

16:21. put out his eyes. Samson had misused his eyes. He saw a woman in Timnath. He saw a harlot in Gaza. He looked upon Delilah and loved her. Now he will not be able to look and lust and sin in this manner. Jesus said, *Matthew 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

16:21.

The Wages of Sin

- Blindness “and put out his eyes”
- Humiliation “brought him down to Gaza”
- Bondage “and bound him with fetters of brass”
- Forced labor “and he did grind in the prison house”

22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

16:22. Howbeit. However. There are some very precious truths to be found in some of the little words of Scripture. Here is a case in point. Howbeit, however, the hair of Samson's head began to grow again, and with that growth came hope. Where there is life there is hope. Spiritually, it is not true that “the bird with a broken wing shall never fly as high.” Samson shall yet soar to new spiritual heights. The promise of the prophet is true. *Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

16:22. The life of Samson illustrates not only the Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints, but the Doctrine of Eternal Security. Jesus promised that He would never lose any of those whom the Father had given to Him. *John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.* In the end, Samson persevered in the sphere of saving faith and was secure in his salvation, for he is listed in faith's hall of fame (Hebrews 11:32).

16:22. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again. The wicked are not wise. Knowing the secret of his strength one would think the Philistines would make sure Samson's hair was never long again. But they were foolish. Jesus said to His disciples, *Matthew 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

Destruction of the False God Dagon

23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

16:28. And Samson called unto the LORD. The Doctrine of the Perseverance of the saints does not mean that the saints will be perfect, for there is no one righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10). What is stated is that the heart of a person will be fundamentally wedded to Christ. Despite his many faults and obvious failures, in the core of his being, Samson loved the LORD. He believed in God and prayed to Him. God will honor such faith as he did in the life of Lot, and in the life of Samson.

The Prayer Petitions of Samson

- Samson prayed for God to remember him.

“Pass me not, O gentle Savior,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.

Savior, Savior,
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.

Let me at Thy throne of mercy
Find a sweet relief,
Kneeling there in deep contrition;
Help my unbelief.

Trusting only in Thy merit,
Would I seek Thy face;
Heal my wounded, broken spirit,
Save me by Thy grace.

Thou the Spring of all my comfort,
More than life to me,
Whom have I on earth beside Thee?
Whom in Heav'n but Thee?"

Fanny Crosby, 1868

- Samson prayed for strength, physical strength.
- Samson prayed that God would answer this, his final prayer petition.
- Samson prayed that he be avenged for the loss of his eyesight.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

16:29. And Samson took hold. In an act of faith, Samson believed God answered his prayer. Because he believed, Samson *took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood*. When prayer returns, strength returns.

From Sinful Entanglement to Spiritual Enshrinement

30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

16:30. In the hour of his death, Samson finally became the Nazirite God intended for him to be.

Death with Dignity

31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

16:31. There are two great lessons to learn from the life of Samson. The first lesson is the danger of unconscious spiritual decay. Be sure, be very sure, “...*your sin will find you out*” (Numbers 32:23). And yet where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.

“Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary’s mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled.

Grace, grace, God’s grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God’s grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin.

Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold,
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold,
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide.
What can avail to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,
Brighter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face,
Will you this moment His grace receive?”

Julia H. Johnson, 1911

A second great lesson from the life of Samson is that while man is disloyal to the grace of God, in the end God’s grace will triumph over all.

Psalms 32:1-2

*A Psalm of David, Mas'-chil. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

“I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His wondrous love to me;
On the cruel cross He suffered,
From the curse to set me free.

Sing, oh sing, of my Redeemer,
With His blood, He purchased me.
On the cross, He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt, and made me free.

I will tell the wondrous story,
How my lost estate to save,
In His boundless love and mercy,
He the ransom freely gave.

I will praise my dear Redeemer,
His triumphant power I'll tell,
How the victory He giveth
Over sin, and death, and hell.

I will sing of my Redeemer,
And His heav'nly love to me;
He from death to life hath brought me,
Son of God with Him to be.”

Philip P. Bliss, 1876

Special Note.

Does the life of Samson mirror your own spiritual life? Is your journey in grace marred by spiritual decay?

“Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of Thy redeeming love.

Sorrowing I shall be in spirit,
Till released from flesh and sin,
Yet from what I do inherit,
Here Thy praises I'll begin;
Here I raise my Ebenezer;

Here by Thy great help I've come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood;
How His kindness yet pursues me
Mortal tongue can never tell,
Clothed in flesh, till death shall loose me
I cannot proclaim it well.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

O that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in blood washed linen
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;

Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,
Take my ransomed soul away;
Send thine angels now to carry
Me to realms of endless day."

Robert Robinson, 1758