

For the next few minutes we are going to consider some things we can learn from the account of Samson and Delilah. Their story is recorded in Judges 16 and has been the subject many writers, artists, and composers for hundreds of years. When Samson dallied with Delilah, he never imagined that their sordid relationship would be projected on huge movie screens some 30 centuries later.

A quick overview of the story of Samson begins back in Judges 13 with the announcement of Samson's birth by the angel of the Lord. The chapter begins by telling us that the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. During that time there was a certain man named was Manoah, and his wife was barren. An angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said, ***(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.***

Samson is one of the few in Scripture whose birth was divinely preannounced to his parents. He shares this honor with Isaac, John the Baptist, and Jesus. Samson, whose name means “sunshine,” was born sometime between 1045 BC and 1000 BC, during a dark period of Israel’s history. Several times this nation had turned from God and now found themselves under the oppressive rule of the Philistines.

Samson was born a Nazirite, meaning he was “separated” or “set aside” for God. This meant that he was not to drink wine or fruit of the vine. He couldn’t go near or touch a dead body, human or animal, nor could he cut his hair. Though he was set apart for special service to God, Samson ignored his Nazirite vow of godly devotion and relied upon his own strength and abilities rather than upon God’s. Although God empowered him with supernatural strength to begin the deliverance of the people of Israel from the Philistines, it was his weakness for the Philistine women that did him in.

Judges 14:1-2 And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. (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. Sampson was where he should not have been and

found a woman that he should not have found and insisted on a marriage that he should not have had. As you might expect, this lead to much trouble and headache for Sampson.

You would think he would have learned his lesson; but not so. **Judges 16:1** *Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.* His passion for women was more important to him than God's expressed will. God laid out a principle in Deuteronomy 7:3 not to have any relationship with women of other nations.

During his wedding to a Philistine woman in Timnath, Samson was deceived and humiliated by his wife-to-be and wedding guests. Jou can read about this in Jueges 14-15. Angered, we read in Judges 15 how Samson got his revenge by personally killing 1,000 men.

But, in the end it was his passionate obsession for Delilah that led him to reveal to her the secret of his strength. His hair was cut by Delilah, and as a result, he was captured, blinded, and forced to grind grain for his enemies. Eventually, while in prison, Samson's hair grew back and as it did so did his strength. After regaining his strength, he died while destroying the temple of the Philistine god Dagon, thus killing thousands of Philistines as well as himself. (**Judges 16**).

With the Spirit of God upon him, Samson was a powerful man with supernatural strength. While he had almost unlimited potential to deliver his people from the Philistines, his story ends in needless tragedy. He not only failed to deliver his people, but killed himself. Disobedience, defeat, disgrace, and destruction could be on his headstone. Despite his having the Spirit of the Lord upon him, his sexual yearnings of the flesh controlled his life.

Judges 16:1-3 *Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.* (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.

This is one of the worldly desires mentioned by John. **1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.** Perhaps Samson should have heeded commandment number seven given to Moses, “*thou shall not commit adultery.*” Notice what Solomon would later say to the matter **Proverbs 6:32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.** It’s likely that Samson did what we nearly all do when deceived by sin. He put his life and sin into categories, and figured that some categories God cared about more than others. Despite his sin, God still gave Samson supernatural strength to escape from the Philistines. God did this because God’s purpose was bigger than Samson himself, and because **GOD USED SAMSON DESPITE SAMSON’S SIN, NOT BECAUSE OF IT.**

Judges 16:4-5 And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. (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. Delilah was bought off. It seems this desire of a handsome wage led to her betrayal of Samson.

There are many valuable lessons we can glean from the story of Samson and Delilah. Though born with unbelievable potential, Samson forfeits his life because of sin. The lesson for us is that, the deeper we allow ourselves to be influenced by the glamour and allurement of sin, the more blind we become. **Judges 16:21 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.** This extraordinary story tells us that Samson was spiritually blind long before his eyes were gouged out.

ATTEMPT NO. 1. 16:6 And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.

(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. (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. Now you would think this would raise a flag to any logical thinking person as to what was happening; but not with Sampson. When they bound him with the withs (which is translated as “bowstrings” in some versions) he broke them like thread.

ATTEMPT NO. 2. *Judges 16:10-12 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. Is Samson blind or what. It should be apparent what Delilah was doing when he was bound with new ropes and again he easily broke free.

ATTEMPT NO. 3. *Judges 16:13 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.* Like before she weaved his hair while he was sleeping and then called the Philistines. Clearly Samson must have been blinded by love or else he was just down-right stupid.

Next we see the sweet talking Delilah once again appealing to the heart-stings of Sampson. ***Judges 16:15-16 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; Finally he told her the truth and he was apprended by the Philistines who immediately blinded him.

We must accept the reality that sin can seep deep into in our lives and has a blinding, numbing impact upon us. If we are not vigilant, we can find ourselves

ensnared by sin just as Samson was. All sin, especially sexual sin, comes with its own dire and sometimes deadly consequences. Sin binds us, then it blinds us; then it slowly grinds away at us. Samson ***he did grind in the prison house.*** In truth, sin will take us farther than we may intend to go. It will hold us longer than we may intend to stay. Furthermore, sin will cost us more than we intend to pay. We must heed the stern warning: ***Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.***

Samson also demonstrates that he was a vengeful man who pouted when things didn't go his way. We see this back in chapter 15 where we see his "*I have a right to get even*" attitude. ***Judges 15:11 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.*** Now v10 shows us that this was the same mindset of the Philistines. It's strikingly akin to the world's mindset today and contrary to the teachings of Christ.

However, despite all of Samson's weaknesses, he did turn back to God before he died. ***Judges 16:28-30 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.***

|(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. (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.*

God in His sovereignty used Samson to fulfill His purpose. In reality, Samson's death did much to impede the oppressive actions of the Philistines. Samson's destruction of the temple of Dagon was a major factor in their downfall by Samuel and the children of Israel some 100 years later.

Perhaps the greatest lesson we learn is that God would rather forgive than judge.

In the final analysis, God saw Samson as a man of faith. This is evidenced by the fact that he's listed in Hebrews 11:32 among other great men of faith. When we read through the list of names recorded there, we find that no one in the "hall of faith" was perfect. Samson was the strongest man to ever live, but it was God who gave him the strength. More importantly, Samson let himself be used by God. In fact, God could have used him without making him the strongest man. He's willing to meet us right where we are right now and to take us where He wants if we will let Him. ***James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*** In the end this is what Sampson did.

Invitation