

Chapter 15: Samson against the Philistines

Vs 1-3: Retaliation

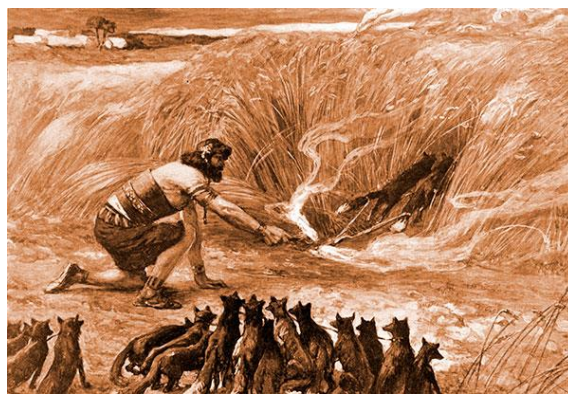
Samson went to visit his wife – only to discover that she has been given to another man!

His anger was terrible, and the outcome will be terrible also.

Prov 4:23 warns us **Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.** In other words, guard your heart and its deep feelings and passions, or you will have trouble!

Phil 4:7: **The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.** Samson knew nothing about this peace of living in union with God's Will.

Vs 4-5: Samson burns the crops of the Philistines



Can we make sense of this story? Samson went crazy with anger when he realised what they had done to his wife. He went into their fields with the crops almost ready for harvesting..... he captured 300 foxes – which was no mean feat! He took torches and placed one between two tails of foxes tied together.... when he set fire to the torches the foxes ran in all directions to escape the flames, setting the crops on fire as they did so.... thus, they destroyed the harvest

This was a truly imaginative way to destroy the enemy – using foxes in this manner!

Spiritually the Lord tries to “capture us” with His Saving Love. He wants to set us on fire with Divine Love and to send us out 2X2 into the world to deal with the evil that is destroying the nations.

The crops of the true Enemy are: Prostitution, sex-trafficking and sex-slavery, every type of addiction that robs us of our souls, deception, murder and euthanasia etc

I Jn 3:8: **The Son of God appeared for this purpose to destroy the works of the devil**

We who are on fire with God’s Love must run in every direction bringing the light and truth of the Gospel to everyone: so, let the Lord TRULY catch you; let Him set you on fire with Divine Love and let Him send YOU to everyone as he wishes.

Remember Mt 3:10-12: God’s fire cleanses, purifies, sanctifies and then glorifies. It does this for us first and then for others through us.



Vs 6-7: Philistines retaliate by burning Samson’s wife and her father to death!!

Much of the war, strife, deep-seated hatred, pain and brokenness of the world comes from the desire to get even. It’s the ‘you hit me, I hit you’ principle which is widespread.

Vs 8: So, Samson attacked them “hip and thigh”. This means a cruel and unsparing slaughter.... he was a one-man army against the Philistines!

But the result was that Samson could now trust no one; he became a fugitive hiding in the cleft of a rock at ETAM.

Vs 9-17: Samson kills 1,000 Philistines with jawbone of donkey

The leaders came to Judah to arrest Samson. This shows that his own people were not truly with him, nor would they understand his way of doing things.

The fact that his own people handed him over to his enemies illustrates just how awful their oppression was under those Philistines, and also how low the morale was among them. They were not expecting any deliverance from Samson, so they did not rally around him.

They would rather please their oppressors than support their deliverer. This is the fate of anyone who stands up in public to confront evil....

They are alone with no one to support them. Both Jesus and Paul experienced this in the NT; saints and martyrs have experienced it ever since Cf 2 Tim 4:16.

Samson allowed himself to be bound trusting in God to deliver him from his enemies



When the Philistine leaders arrived at LEHI The Spirit of God came upon Samson again...he broke the ropes that bound him, grabbed the jawbone of an ass and slaughtered the Philistines.

Samson's victory cry was: **with the jawbone of an ass heaps upon heaps. I have slain 1,000**

In our spiritual journey we too, make heaps upon heaps of the rubbish of our sins, sorrows, doubts, failures and temptations... yet, like Samson, we need the **water of life** to sustain us.

It was on Calvary's Hill that Jesus supplied all of our needs disregarding our failures, disobedience and the straying human will.

Samson then named the place RAMATH LEHI, which means "Jawbone Hill"!!

The weapon used by Samson was novel, convenient, simple, ridiculous but successful....so we don't have to be clever in overcoming the spiritual enemies that attack us.

Holy Water is also simple, convenient and successful, as is the Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel!

2Cor 10:4 **The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty for the pulling down of strongholds....**

Vs 18-20: Miracle of water

Samson was very thirsty after his personal battle with the Philistines, so he turned to God to ask for his needs....so he did have a prayer-life of sorts. God worked a miracle for him.

Samson then called the place EN HAKKORE. This means the **Spring of the Caller....** We all have moments when God has intervened for us.... times and places with special names for us.

Chapter 16: Samson's disgrace and death

Here in chapter 16, we meet the sad end of this strange man

Vs 1-3: Samson and the harlot: This is blatant sin and disobedience to God who chose him to be His representative to Israel. Like many sinning Christians today, Samson put his life into categories, some for God and some for himself, and of course excused himself by saying:

God understands! God **does** understand more than you do, and He does not agree to you destroying your only soul with stupid, destructive, behaviour.

Yet despite his rebellion, God still gave him the strength to avoid his enemies. He gives grace to every soul enabling them to flee from their true spiritual enemies. It seems that Samson only considered human enemies.

Eph 6:12: **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

The struggle Samson had with the Philistines is only a pale image of the spiritual battle we engage in. Even when nations go to war, it is always a spiritual battle, with humans cooperating on the lower planes, expressing what is happening on the higher planes.

Cf Revelation 12: 7-17 **Now war broke out in heaven.... And Satan was cast down to the Earth to wreck as much havoc as he could on God's children throughout history.**

Vs 4-5 Delilah agrees to betray Samson

This is the second and final disastrous relationship between Samson and a Philistine woman

- i) Samson loved Delilah, foolishly, believing the words “I love you” from a liar.
- ii) Delilah loved money and agreed to be paid handsomely for her betrayal. The payment was 1,100 shekels. This was more than 63 kilograms of silver!!

So, the trial of Samson began, with Delilah trying to entice him to reveal the secret of his strength, which was superhuman. But men were hiding in her room ready to pounce as soon as the secret was given.

If Samson was a giant of a man with huge muscles this contest would not be necessary. It was clear that his strength was a mystery to everyone.... The Philistines had worked it out that it must be connected to something!

If truth were to be told Samson’s strength was bound to his love affairs! His attachment to beautiful women and sex brought him to ruin.... As with so many others throughout history.

Samson is in serious spiritual danger and cannot expect that God work continuing miracles to save him from his own foolishness.

He kept the externals of his Nazarite vow but never yielded his soul to God. Many priests and religious have made the same mistake in our day, so we must bear with the bitter fruit of their sin and deceit, which has driven whole generations of younger people away from the Church

Vs 10-16: Samson lies to Delilah

A very dangerous game began in which the Philistines used Delilah to get the secret of Samson’s strength from him. He should never had got involved. It was pride and presumption on his part to taunt his enemies like this, and yet expect God to side with him!

Prov 16: 18 **Pride comes before a fall**

Delilah was open with him asking how he could be bound.... He gave several answers and proved that there **was** a plot against him by drawing the men out of the room to try and bind him, **yet he continued!** That is the mystery.

Delilah continued to pester him. Unfortunately, he did love her - insofar as he understood love as sexual encounters - as so many do today also, so he caved-in to her pleas. It is obvious that Delilah was not in love with Samson! She was a harlot and paid betrayer.

Samson gave in to his nagging Philistine wife in Judges 14: 15-18 also, but he learned nothing from that experience! Now Delilah expects him to destroy himself in order to ‘prove’ his love for her!

Samson gave in, demonstrating his moral weakness - so we **witness the strongest man on earth totally weak in an ungodly relationship** - and the power of evil it brought upon him.

He was faced with a choice of God's expressed Will or his own passions.... And the human chaotic will prevailed.....but it cost him his life!

As long as Samson – or anyone else – remained faithful to their consecration, they are strong.

Jn 15:5 **Without Me, you can do nothing**

Vs 17-20 Samson's Downfall



It only ever took a woman to bring a man down! Cf Garden of Eden!

Delilah lulled him to sleep with her sickly, sweet words and he remained asleep while his hair was completely shaved from his head – some sleep! Was he drugged?

We must know that the Enemy has **many razors** to shave off all grace and virtue from us if we put ourselves in his care! He will strip us completely, so that we lose all that the Lord has so graciously given to us in His great Mercy. In fact, the devil is so skilled at this that he can do it without us realising what is happening.

Delilah is now in the position of the Enemy who taunts us and tries to sow doubts in us while telling us that we are fools to move away from worldliness and sin.... We must enjoy life!

This time **Samson did not know that the Lord had departed from him!** The game was over. This time he could not shake himself free.

NB: The strength was not in his hair - as the men concluded. It was in his Nazarite vow and his fidelity to the Lord. The hair was a sign of his consecration to the Lord.

Removing it was breaking that vow, so now he was exposed to his enemies having played a dangerous and childish game to taunt them. He presumed that God would deliver him each time even though he provoked the problem! This is tempting God! Cf Deut 6:16

Vs 20: Samson's arrest & imprisonment



They took him and **put out his eyes**, bound him with bronze fetters – even though his strength was gone! They forced him to push a mill in prison – again presuming strength!

The eyes that had lured him into sin and bondage are now gone – cut out! If we cut out our faults, and the domination of the human will everything will be well: Mt 5: 29-30

If we put the ego in its place we will not end up in bondage to evil of any kind, or fettered by any sin.....Up to now Samson's blindness, bondage and slavery were INWARD. Now they are also OUTWARD! What is the reality on the inside will be manifested eventually on the outside.

Vs 22: Nevertheless, God gives everyone hope; Samson's hair began to grow again in the dungeon. This was a little light in the lonely darkness that engulfed him. This indicates that the relationship with God began to blossom in the most awful of circumstances.

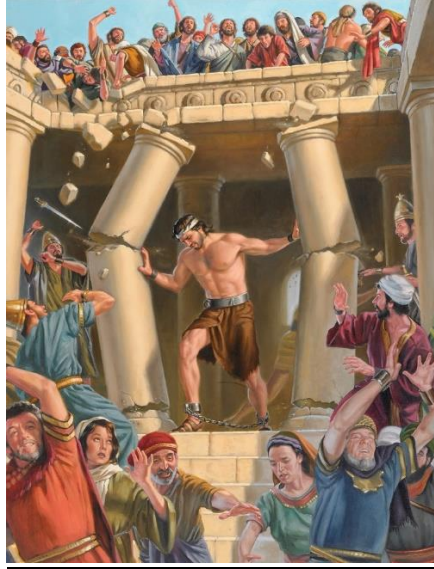
It is amazing that the Philistines did not concern themselves with the new hair growth. Possibly because he was now blind they thought that he was completely under their control for both labour and mockery.

Vs 23-25: Samson mocked by his enemies

The rulers boasted that **our god has delivered into our hands Samson, our enemy.... The destroyer of our land....**

They gathered to offer a great sacrifice to their false god DAGON (the principal god of the Philistines). This is his great humiliation that he is a trophy for the worshippers of false gods.

Vs 26-31: Samson's death



Samson was brought out of prison just to perform for people's pleasure.... They put him between two pillars holding up the temple building.

Samson asked God for strength one more time and then he pushed the pillars apart bringing the temple down upon thousands of men and women attending the festival.

Let me die with the Philistines was his last prayer! It is clear that Samson's strength was supernatural. Here is a tragic hero (Heb 11:32) whose life should have ended differently.

Samson's greatest victory over the Philistines came at the cost of his own life, after he had been broken, humiliated and blinded...perhaps in the lonely prison he turned to God seriously.

We see the danger of a leader not in communion with others. He judged for 20 years, but never sought help, advice or wisdom from others.

NB: These OT biographies were not written for our imitation, but for our learning, instruction. Sinners can learn from Samson what not to do with their lives.



This is an ancient Philistine temple upheld by two central pillars