

SAMSON

PART I – SAMSON’S SEPARATION

Introduction:

1. The life of Samson is one of the most interesting stories in Scripture.
2. It is the second longest story in the book of Judges, just a few verses shorter than the life of Gideon.
3. It is the story of the weaknesses of the strongest man.
4. Samson’s life revolves around four women – his mother (13), a woman of Timnath (14 – 15), a prostitute (16:1-3), and Delilah (16:4-31).

I. The Nazarite Vow (13:1-5)

- A. The chapter begins with the same old story – Israel sinned and God allowed them to be oppressed.
 1. This time, their enemy was the Philistines.
 2. Previously, they had been defeated by Shamgar and his ox goad (3:31).
 3. But, following the rule of Jair, Israel had begun worshipping the Philistine gods (10:6) and God allowed the Philistines to begin oppressing Israel (10:7).
 4. It seems that Jephthah delivered them from that oppression, but once again the Philistines dominated Israel.
 5. This time, they oppressed Israel for 40 years.
- B. In verse 5, we learn that Samson was the one who would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines.
 1. The wording is important because Samson would not complete the job.
 2. Both Eli and Samuel would have to contend with the Philistines when they served as judges.
 3. In fact, it would not be until the time of King David that the Philistines would finally be conquered and Israel delivered from them.
 4. This illustrates the continued downward spiral of Israel in the book of Judges.
- C. Because of Samson’s destiny, we are told some of the facts relating to God’s choosing and separating him for his work as a judge, even before he is born.
 1. His father’s name was Manoah – meaning, “rest, a settled place, home.”
 2. He was from the city of Zorah in the tribe of Dan.
 - a. Remember that Dan had failed to drive out the Philistines.
 - b. Instead, many of them moved to the extreme north of Palestine and founded another tribe of Dan.
 3. Manoah’s wife was barren, indicating that the birth of Samson and the deliverance he brought would be from God and not man.
 4. An angel appeared to Samson’s mother and promised her that she would bear a son.
 5. She was given special instructions, for God wanted her son to be a Nazarite from the womb.
- D. The instructions for the Nazarite Vow are given in Numbers 6:1-21.
 1. The word “Nazarite” literally means, “to separate, to consecrate, to abstain.”

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2. Thus, one taking the vow would abstain from wine, strong drink and anything associated with the grape.
 3. The hair was not to be cut so when the vow was ended it could be offered to the Lord.
 4. One who took this vow could not defile himself with a dead body, even if was a close family member.
 5. This was a voluntary vow that could be taken for a little time or, as in Samson's case, for one's whole life.
 6. It is possible that Samuel and John the Baptist were also Nazarites.
 7. Some think that Paul had taken the Nazarite vow in Acts 18:18 and 21:17ff. *{However, Paul could not have abstained from the fruit of the vine when partaking of the Lord's Supper.}*
- E. Thus, Samson would be separated to God from the womb.
1. His mother was commanded to abstain from the grape.
 2. She was commanded never to cut his hair.
- F. It is important to notice that Samson never technically broke this vow to God.
- II. Samson's Godly Parents (13:6-14)
- A. Manoah's wife reported to her husband what the angel had revealed to her.
- B. He, in turn, prayed for the angel to reappear to instruct them in how to rear this child.
1. This should be the attitude of every parent!
 2. Samson's mother had to prepare herself and begin to sacrifice for her son before he was born. *{Surely, it was a child in her womb, not a cellular blob or a mere fetus.}*
 3. They prepared themselves before the child was born concerning how they would teach and raise him.
 4. In verse 12, Manoah enquired how they were to order the child.
 5. They wanted to know what manner of child he would be, what his mission and work would be.
 6. We should be thankful that God has given us instructions to help with our children (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4; etc.).
- C. The angel returned and again emphasized his instructions concerning Samson's Nazarite vow.
- D. May all parents seek God's guidance in the rearing of their children.
- III. God's Mighty Angel (13:15-25)
- A. Manoah wanted to prepare a meal for the angel in appreciation and thanks.
- B. The angel declined the offer, but allowed them to offer a burnt offering to Jehovah.
- C. Manoah, thinking he could thank the angel when the promise was fulfilled asked his name.
- D. The angel's reply and further actions indicate that this probably was not merely an angel, but an appearance of God.
1. His name was secret – literally, "wonderful." (Cf. Psa.139:6; Isa. 9:6)
 2. He authorized a sacrifice to Jehovah not offered at Shiloh.
 3. He ascended to Heaven in the flame of the offering.
- E. Thus, the promise of Samson's birth was verified and confirmed.
- F. Samson was born; he grew; God blessed him; and the Spirit of the Lord began to move him.
- G. This is the beginning of the fascinating life of Samson.

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PART II – SAMSON’S STUMBLE

Introduction:

1. Chapter 13 shows that Samson was chosen and separated before he was born to be a deliverer of Israel.
2. His parents sacrificed to help prepare him for this work.
3. However, as all people do, Samson had a mind of his own and was able to make his own choices.
4. It is in those decisions that the weakness of this strong man is made apparent.
5. Yet, God was still able to use Samson and his decisions – whether good or bad – to fulfill His will and to help His people.

IV. Samson’s Request (14:1-4)

- A. All that is known of the early years of Samson’s life is recorded in the last two verses of chapter 13.
 1. The Lord blessed him.
 2. The Spirit of the Lord began to move him (cf. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29).
- B. The story of Samson continues with his marriage.
- C. Samson saw and desired to marry a Philistine woman from the town of Timnath.
- D. His parents tried to discourage him from this marriage because it violated the Law of God.
 1. Abraham saw the danger of intermarriage with the Canaanites when Isaac was ready to wed (Genesis 26:34-35).
 2. Esau troubled his parents with his mixed marriages (Gen. 26:34-35).
 3. God commanded the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites and not to intermarry with them (Exo. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:1-4; Josh. 23:12-13).
- E. However, Samson chose to disobey God’s Word because, as he said, “She pleaseth me well.”
 1. This phrase is interesting because Samson literally says, “She is right in my eyes.”
 2. This was the problem during the time of the judges – “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (17:6; 21:25).
 3. Not for the last time, Samson chose to follow the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes instead of the Word of God.
- F. However, God was prepared to use Samson’s decision to accomplish His will and to begin Samson’s struggle with the Philistines.
 1. It is alarming and amazing to read many commentators on this verse.
 - a. They claim that even though Samson’s marriage would violate God’s Law, God approved of it and even caused Samson to desire this woman.
 - b. They say that God overlooked *His own law* just to be able to punish the Philistines.
 - c. Some even claim that the Holy Spirit moved Samson to want to violate the Word of God!
 2. It is impossible to reconcile this view with the nature of God.
 - a. God does not lie (Hebrews 6:18).

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- b. His Word is pure truth that will endure forever (Psalm 119:140, 151, 160).
 - c. God, being good, cannot produce evil (Matthew 7:18; 12:34).
 - d. God cannot have fellowship with sin (1 Jn. 1:5; 3:10; 3 Jn. 11).
 - e. Man cannot do evil that good may come (Romans 3:4-8).
 - f. Instead, he is to overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:9, 21).
 - g. In fact, he is not to do good if it will be “evil spoken of” (Rom. 14:16-17).
3. Instead, this verse teaches that Samson’s parents did not know that God would use their son’s evil decision to accomplish some good.
- V. Samson’s Journey (14:5-9)
- A. Samson was determined to go through with his decision, so, according to the custom of the day, his parents journeyed with him to arrange his marriage.
 - B. Along the way, Samson was confronted by a young lion.
 - 1. Those who try to deny the miracles of the Bible claim that this was a baby lion – a cub.
 - 2. However, the Hebrew word used seems to indicate that the lion had a mane, showing it to be at least two years old.
 - C. Samson, empowered by the Holy Spirit, tore the lion into pieces with his bare hands.
 - 1. The word “rent” is the same word used for the cloven hoof of an animal.
 - 2. There is great power in an empty hand when it is guided by the Lord.
 - D. Yet, for some reason, Samson did not make this event known to his parents.
 - 1. Many commentators suggest that Samson was silent because he had turned aside into the vineyard to eat grapes and, thus, had violated his Nazarite vow.
 - 2. However, the Bible does not say this.
 - 3. It is more likely that this was the first time Samson had experienced such strength from God and that is why he was silent about it.
 - E. He continued to Timnath and talked with the woman, again finding that she was “right in his eyes.”
 - F. With the marriage arranged, Samson returned home until the time for the wedding celebration.
 - G. When the time came, Samson journeyed again to Timnath.
 - 1. On this trip, he stopped to see the carcass of the lion he had previously killed.
 - 2. Some even find fault with this action of Samson, saying he was returning to gloat over his victory!
 - 3. He found that a swarm of bees had made a honeycomb in the lion’s remains and he took it, beginning to eat the honey.
 - 4. He shared it with his parents, but did not tell them where it had come from.
 - 5. Again, some say this was because he had touched the dead body of the lion and thus broken his Nazarite vow.
 - 6. However, the requirement in Numbers 6 seems to apply to a dead human body.
 - H. Perhaps God was using the lion to teach Samson a symbolic lesson.
 - 1. If he would follow God, he would be given strength to win victory over his enemies and great blessings would follow.

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2. Some have likened the honey from the lion as a symbol of all spiritual blessings that are found since Jesus conquered Satan.

VI. Samson's Game (14:10-18)

A. In order to understand this passage of Scripture, it is necessary to consider the marriage rituals of Samson's time.

1. In that culture, marriages were arranged.
 - a. Often, the parents of bride and groom would arrange the marriage of their children while they were quite young.
 - b. If this was not done, a young man could choose a woman that he desired to be his wife.
 - c. In this situation, the father of the groom would approach the girl's father and they would arrange a dowry and such like.
2. Once the marriage was arranged, the man and woman were considered "betrothed" or "espoused" (cf. Matthew 1:18).
 - a. This is similar to being engaged in our culture.
 - b. However, Barnes states, "Such was the nature of this engagement, that unfaithfulness to each other was deemed adultery" (cf. Deuteronomy 22:22-29).
3. "There was commonly an interval of ten or twelve months, among the Jews, between the contract of the marriage and the celebration of the nuptials" (Barnes). (Cf. Genesis 24:55)
4. When the time came for the wedding feast, usually determined by the groom's father, then the groom and his family would journey to the bride's house (cf. John 14:1-6).
5. Upon arriving, there would be a weeklong celebration (cf. John 2:1-11; Rev. 19:9).
 - a. Normally, the men and women would celebrate separately.
 - b. The bride, her family and her friends and attendants would gather at her father's house (cf. Matthew 25:1-10).
 - c. The groom and his family and friends would gather elsewhere (cf. Matthew 9:15; John 3:29).
 - d. Usually, there was a "friend of the bridegroom" and a "friend of the bride" – a "best man" and a "maid of honor" (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27).
 - e. Very wealthy or prominent families would have a larger party.
6. At the conclusion of the feasting, the bride and groom were considered wed and allowed to consummate their marriage.
7. Following this – usually the next day – the married couple would journey to the house the groom had built for their new family, often adjoined to his father's house (cf. John 14:2-3).

B. Thus, we find Samson and his parents arriving in Timnath where Samson begins the wedding feast.

C. However, it seems that Samson did not bring a "best man" or any friends with him, so the Philistines provided 30 companions for him.

1. It is possible that Samson's friends were as disappointed in his choice of a wife as his parents were.
2. Also, it should be remembered that there was great mistrust between the Jews and the Philistines.
3. These 30 companions may have been provided to watch Samson to make sure he was not tricking them as much as to celebrate with him.

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- D. Part of the groom's responsibility in the wedding feast was to keep his guests entertained with food and games.
 - E. Thus, Samson either proposes or takes part in the game of riddles.
 - 1. Usually, this game was a means of harmless fun – similar to "Truth or Dare."
 - 2. However, Samson decided to make things more serious with a large wager.
 - F. Samson bets 30 sheets and 30 changes of clothes that his companions cannot guess his riddle.
 - 1. The sheets were actually linen shirts that came down to below the knee.
 - 2. The garments were the outer clothes worn in those societies.
 - G. Samson's riddle reveals something about his character.
 - 1. First, Samson sinned by gambling with his friends.
 - 2. Also, it is troubling that Samson would use a feat of strength brought about by God as a punch line in his gamble for the Philistine's clothes.
 - a. This displays an attitude of arrogance and pride.
 - b. If he violated his Nazarite vow by eating the honey from the lion, this riddle is doubly troubling.
 - 3. Furthermore, Samson is essentially cheating by making a riddle out of a wonder that only he had seen.
 - H. However, some view this as a sign of strength in Samson.
 - 1. They claim that Samson is demonstrating his superiority over the Philistines by giving them a riddle they cannot solve.
 - 2. Also, by using an event in which God was involved, Samson is showing his faith in Jehovah.
 - I. Nevertheless, after three days, they could not solve Samson's riddle.
 - J. So, they turned to Samson's new wife.
 - 1. These men threatened to burn her and her father's household if she would not find out the answer to the riddle and reveal it to them.
 - 2. No doubt moved by fear, Samson's wife began to make the feast and life miserable for him.
 - 3. She cried throughout the remainder of the feast and even accused Samson of hating her.
 - 4. Finally, on the last day, Samson gave in and told her the answer.
 - 5. She, in turn, revealed the answer to the 30 men.
 - K. Before sunset on the last day of the feast, the men revealed that they had discovered Samson's riddle.
 - L. Naturally, Samson was upset at their deceit and his wife's dishonesty.
- VII. Samson's Revenge (14:19-20)
- A. It must be noted that Samson's acts in verse 19 were not just fueled by raw emotion and a desire for revenge.
 - B. It was probably not the way that Samson had intended, but God used these events to begin the punishment of the Philistines by Samson.
 - 1. Notice that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson before he killed the 30 men of Ashkelon.
 - 2. It was only after he had paid his debt to the 30 men in Timnath that his anger was kindled.
 - C. Samson's anger seems to be directed toward his wife, so he returned to his father's house without consummating his marriage.
 - D. While he was gone, his wife was given to his "best man."

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PART III – SAMSON’S STRUGGLE

Introduction:

1. Chapter 13 showed that Samson was chosen and separated before he was born to be a deliverer of Israel.
2. Chapter 14 demonstrated that he was immature and weak in many areas, but God could still use him to accomplish great things.
3. Chapter 15 continues the story of Samson’s accomplishments while highlighting the attitudes that led to his weaknesses.

VIII. Samson Feuds with the Philistines

(15:1-8)

- A. Following the disaster of his wedding feast, Samson had returned to his father’s house without his wife and without consummating the marriage.
- B. After his anger had cooled, he returned to visit his wife.
 1. He came bearing a gift, a kid (baby goat), in hopes of reconciliation.
 2. It wasn’t a bouquet of flowers, but it was an effort.
- C. When he attempted to go into her chambers, her father stopped him.
- D. In his absence, Samson’s wife had been given to his companion – the “best man” at his wedding.
 1. Her father claimed that he did this because he was sure that Samson hated the daughter that he had not married.
 2. Whether he was sincere or making an excuse to cover his tracks is hard to say.
 3. He offers Samson his younger daughter, but it would have violated God’s Law for Samson to have married her (Leviticus 18:18).
- E. Samson’s reaction to this situation is one of righteous indignation.
 1. According to the ASV, Samson said, “This time shall I be blameless in regard of the Philistines, when I do them a mischief.”
 2. Previously, Samson had not done anything in retaliation to the people of Timnath, likely because of the bond of marriage with one of them.
 3. Now, they have broken that bond and Samson says that he will be innocent in punishing them.
- F. Samson’s attack on the Philistines reminds us of his sense of humor.
 1. He caught 300 foxes and tied them tail to tail in groups of two.
 - a. The Hebrew word for “foxes” literally means “burrower.”
 - b. Thus, many claim that it is a reference to the jackal.
 - c. They think it would be easier to catch 300 jackals than to find and capture 300 foxes.
 - d. The exact meaning is unclear, but nearly every translation uses the word “foxes.”
 2. In between the two tails, he tied a firebrand or a torch.
 3. When he lit the torches, he released the foxes into the Philistines’ cornfields.
 4. As they ran in fear and panic, the fire spread until it had destroyed not only their corn, but also their vineyards and olive trees.
- G. When the Philistines learned that Samson had caused this damage to their crops, they retaliated by burning his wife and her father with fire.

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1. Remember that she had betrayed Samson in order to avoid this very punishment (14:15).
 2. Now, she and her father have reaped what they had sown.
 - H. Again, Samson promises vengeance upon the Philistines for their actions.
 1. It is worth noting that in his previous attack, Samson did not kill anyone.
 2. It does not appear that he was acting out of an uncontrolled anger.
 - J. So, Samson single-handedly wrought a “great slaughter” among the Philistines.
 - K. Following this, he dwelt in the cleft (or in a cave) of the rock Etam.
- IX. Samson – The Enemy of the Jews and the Philistines (15:9-20)
- A. After he had soundly defeated them, the Philistines pursued Samson to Lehi in Judah.
 - B. The Jews asked why the Philistines had come and learned that they wanted to capture Samson.
 1. Keep in mind that the Philistines ruled over Judah at this time.
 2. Thus, the Jews feared them and did not want to start a war.
 - C. So, 3,000 Jews went to Samson’s hiding place to bind him and hand him over to the Philistines.
 1. Someone has well remarked that the only time Judah gathered an army during the time of Samson was to arrest their judge!
 2. It is sad when God’s people side with their enemies rather than with the man God has chosen.
 - D. Notice that Samson’s attitude was, “As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.”
 1. God’s purpose was being served – Samson was fighting the Philistines.
 2. However, his attitude left much to be desired.
 - E. After they promised that they would not kill him, Samson allowed his countrymen to bind him and take him from his hiding place.
 - F. Upon coming into the presence of the Philistines, Samson broke his bonds and attacked them with the jawbone of a donkey.
 1. Samson had allowed himself to be a Trojan horse – once he got in reach of the enemies, he attacked.
 2. Again, we learn that seemingly insignificant, small things can accomplish great good in the hands of God’s servant.
 3. Many have argued that Samson defiled himself and broke his Nazarite vow by touching the donkey’s jawbone.
 4. Again, the restriction seems to be concerning a dead human body – which Samson was soon surrounded by.
 - G. When the fight was over, Samson had killed 1,000 men.
 - H. Following his victory, Samson began to brag.
 1. His “poem,” found in verse 16, is actually a play on words.
 2. James Moffatt translated it this way: “With the jawbone of an ass I have piled them in a mass. With the jawbone of an ass I have assailed assailants.”
 - I. He named the place Ramath-lehi, meaning, “hill of the jawbone” or “lifting up of the jawbone.”
 - J. Yet, God humbled Samson by reminding him of his dependence upon God’s help – Samson cried out for water.
 1. The Bible says that God created a hollow place in the jaw and water came from it.

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2. The Hebrew word for jaw is “lehi” – the name of the place where the battle took place.
 3. Thus, it literally says that God made a hollow place in Lehi.
 4. Probably, God miraculously opened up a spring or fountain of water for Samson.
 5. However, it is certainly possible that Samson drank from the jawbone as miraculously blessed by God.
- K. Seemingly humbled, Samson named the place Enhakkore, meaning, “fount (or, spring, well) of him who cried.”
- L. Samson judged Israel for twenty years.
- X. Samson – Lessons from His Life
- A. Godly parents and good parenting does not guarantee obedient children.
 1. Samson should have listened to his parents (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; 30:17; Jeremiah 35:14; Luke 2:51; Ephesians 6:1-3).
 2. However, his parents were not held accountable for his mistakes and sins (Ezekiel 18:20).
 - B. Be careful of your friendships.
 1. 1 Corinthians 15:33
 2. Samson became friends with God’s enemies!
 - C. Be careful who you date and marry.
 1. 2 Corinthians 6:14
 2. Samson wanted to marry a child of the devil.
 - D. “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
 1. Samson seemed to try to get as close to sin as he could without “going too far.”
 2. Instead, we are to avoid evil wherever it appears!
 - E. Vengeance belongs to the Lord.
 1. The Israelites might have rallied behind a man who was leading them in carrying out God’s punishment of the Philistines and deliverance of His people.
 2. It is hard to support someone who seems to be after his own petty revenge.
 - F. A contrast between Samson and John the Baptist...
 1. Birth foretold by an angel (Luke 1:11-13)
 2. Separated from the womb (Luke 1:14-15)
 3. Divinely appointed (Luke 1:16-17)
 4. God was with him (Luke 1:66)
 5. John was selflessly devoted to his work (Luke 1:80)
 6. John was highly disciplined (Mark 1:6; Luke 7:24-26)
 7. John was humble and passionate (Luke 3:7-14)
 8. John always gave glory to God & Christ (Luke 3:15-17)
 9. John was faithful unto death (Mark 6:27-28)
 10. May we imitate John more than we imitate Samson.

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PART IV – SAMSON’S STRENGTH / SAMSON’S WEAKNESS

Introduction:

1. During his life, Samson performed many feats of great strength and power.
2. Yet, for all his physical strength, Samson struggled with moral and spiritual weaknesses.
3. These struggles finally lead Samson from strength to weakness and then back to strength again.
4. Chapter 16 records the final events in the life of Samson.

XI. Samson in Danger (16:1-3)

- A. Once again, we find Samson straying too close to the enemy camp – Gaza was an important Philistine town, about 40 miles from Samson’s home.
- B. Not only was he too close to the enemy, he was also too close to temptation.
 1. While in Gaza, Samson visited a prostitute.
 2. This provided the Philistines an opportunity to try to capture him.
- C. The men of Gaza surrounded the gate of the city and waited for morning.
- D. But, at midnight, Samson picked up and carried the gates of the city away, escaping from their plot.
 1. The Hebrew word here can mean to pluck up; much like one removes the pegs of a tent.
 2. It seems that Samson pulled the gates and their supports up from the ground.
 3. He then put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of a hill. *{If this was all the way to Hebron, it was a distance of 30+ miles.}*
 4. Keep in mind that the gates of a city were often covered in metal to protect them from burning.
 5. For someone to “capture the gates” of a city meant defeat and surrender, for their means of protection was lost.
 6. In essence, Samson had conquered the city of Gaza – by himself (of course, with God’s help).
 7. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said that the “gates of hell (*hades*)” would not prevail against the church.
 8. In other words, through Him the church would conquer death, Hell and Satan! *{Jesus did spiritually (though literally) what Samson did physically.}*

XII. Samson and Delilah (16:4-20)

- A. Sometime following these events, Samson met and loved Delilah.
 1. If Delilah is a Hebrew name, it probably comes from the root “*dala*” which means, “to languish, to weaken, to impoverish” or carries the idea of “feeble” or “delicate, dainty.”
 2. Some think that the origin is not Hebrew and that the name means “devotee,” indicating that she was a temple prostitute.
 3. She is not called a prostitute in the text, but her actions (and Samson’s toward her) indicate the possibility that she was.

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4. Also, the text does not say that Delilah was a Philistine, but her relationship with the lords of the Philistines seems to indicate that she was.
- B. While some commentators suggest that Samson and Delilah were married, there is no indication that this was the case.
 1. Josephus says that Samson “fell in love with a woman that was a harlot among the Philistines; her name was Delilah, and he lived with her.”
 2. It appears that they were either “shacking up” or Samson was visiting her on a regular basis.
- C. When their relationship became known, the lords of the Philistines sought to convince Delilah to betray Samson.
 1. First, they offered her a large sum of money.
 - a. In Judges 3:3, we learn that there were five Philistine lords.
 - b. Each of them offered her 1,100 pieces of silver – 5,500 total.
 - c. In Judges 17:10, Micah offered his priest a yearly wage of 10 pieces of silver, plus clothes, room and board.
 - d. Clearly, this was a lot of money.
 2. Second, they let her in on their plans.
 - a. They did not want to kill Samson, only to bind and afflict him.
 - b. As we learn later, they wanted to parade Samson around both to humiliate him and to exalt themselves.
- D. Verses 6-9 – Delilah’s first attempt to learn the secret to Samson’s strength
 1. Even though she is very straightforward in what she asks, Samson does not believe that he is in danger.
 - a. Arrogance
 - b. Lust
 - c. Stubbornness
 2. Though she shouted, “The Philistines be upon you,” Samson did not know that they were actually hiding in the room.
 3. He seems to think this is all a game.
- E. Verses 10-12 – Delilah’s second attempt to learn Samson’s secret
- F. Verses 13-14 – Delilah’s third attempt to learn Samson’s secret
 1. She accused Samson of lying and making fun of her.
 2. Notice that this time his answer is closer to the truth – Samson’s strength is being worn down.
 3. “You just can’t warn some brethren!”
- G. Finally, Samson gave in and revealed the truth to Delilah.
 1. She made the same accusation that Samson’s wife had made: “How can you say you love me?” (Cf. 14:16)
 2. We do not know for how long, but she worried him with her desire to know his secret every day.
 3. When his soul was “vexed unto death,” Samson told her about his Nazarite vow and that if his head was shaved his vow would be ended and he would lose his strength.
- H. Upon learning the truth, Delilah called the Philistine lords and they brought her reward.
- I. As Samson slept with his head in her lap, she called someone to cut off his hair.
- J. This time, his strength left him and the Philistines were upon him.
 1. Verse 20 contains one of the saddest statements in the Bible.
 2. Samson did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

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3. Wisdom will cause one to avoid life's "Delilah's" (Proverbs 7).

XIII. Samson in Darkness (16:21-25)

- A. Samson had finally entered into spiritual darkness.
 1. He had hardened his heart against the Lord and driven Him out (Revelation 3:20).
 2. He had grieved the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30).
 3. His sins separated him from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).
- B. This manifested itself in the form of physical darkness – Samson was blinded by the Philistines.
 1. It was only when he lost his physical eyesight that Samson truly began to see.
 2. He was no longer looking at Philistine women, but now he was taking a good, hard look at himself.
 3. What was "right in his own eyes" had caused him to lose them!
- C. Samson was bound and treated as an animal – given a job usually reserved for women, slaves or donkeys. {*Blind, Bind, Grind*}
 1. Samson had hit rock bottom.
 2. Like Jonah, he was in the belly of the whale.
 3. Like the Prodigal Son, he was in the pigpen.
 4. Like Peter, he had denied the Lord and was weeping bitterly.
- D. However, there was still hope for Samson – he began to allow his hair to grow again.
 1. This does not mean to imply that his hair was the source of his strength.
 2. God was always the source of Samson's power.
 3. But, the hair was symbolic of his devotion to God that gave him access to this power.
 4. His hair beginning to grow again indicates that Samson has renewed his vow – it is a sign of repentance.
- E. Even though Samson repented, he still had to suffer the consequences of his sins.
 1. As the Philistines celebrated their victory over Samson by praising their false god Dagon, Samson was the source of entertainment.
 2. It is sad how far Samson has fallen.
 - a. Warren Wiersbe writes, "Instead of bringing glory to the God of Israel, Samson gave the enemy opportunity to honor their false god."
 - b. "Dagon was the god of grain, and certainly the Philistines remembered what Samson had done to their fields."
 3. The Hebrew indicates that they laughed at him in derision and contempt.
 4. It could mean that they used him as a means of laughter for themselves.

XIV. Samson in Death (16:26-31)

- A. Seemingly wearied by the activities of the celebration, Samson asks to be led to the support pillars of the temple that he may lean upon them.
- B. However, Samson had a plan, if God would grant him strength once again.
 1. We learn that the house was filled with Philistines.
 2. In the downstairs, there were the Philistine lords along with other nobles and dignitaries – those of the upper class.

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3. On the roof, there were around 3,000 men and women of the lower class, the common people.
- C. Samson prayed to God that he would be given great strength one more time.
 1. What a change is seen in Samson's attitude!
 2. He uses three different words for God in his prayer.
 - a. *Adonai* – Lord
 - b. *Jehovah* – GOD
 - c. *Elohim* - God
 3. He prayed for the Lord to remember him, showing his need for fellowship with God.
 4. He prayed for God to strengthen him, showing his dependence upon God and his acknowledgment of God as the source of his strength.
 5. He prayed for vengeance upon the Philistines.
- D. Samson caused the two middle pillars of the house to fall, resulting in the collapse of the entire structure.
- E. Thus, Samson died doing battle with the Philistines – killing more in his death than he had done in the battles he fought earlier in his life.
- F. Samson's family brought him up from the land of the Philistines back to Judah where they buried him in his father's sepulcher.
- G. Samson had judged Israel for 20 years.
- H. Like Abel, Samson, being dead continues to speak to us today.
 1. It is important to remember that he is listed among the men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 (verse 32).
 2. Though he made many mistakes, Samson learned to live by trusting in, depending upon and obeying God.
 3. He is faithful because he repented and obeyed.
 4. He was faithful unto death – dying in service to God by fighting the enemy.

Conclusion:

1. Proverbs 25:28 - "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."
2. Proverbs 16:32 - "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."