

Samson and Delilah; Samson is Victorious in His Death

Judges 16

Judges 16 - *"Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. ² When the Gazites were told, "Samson has come here!" they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him." ³ And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.*

⁴ Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵ And the lords of the Philistines came to her and said, "Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver."

⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you." ⁷ And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

⁸ So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them. ⁹ Now men were lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

¹⁰ Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with." ¹¹ So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man." ¹² Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And men were lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

¹³ Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom"— ¹⁴ So she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

¹⁵ Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies." ¹⁶ And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death, ¹⁷ that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

¹⁸ When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart."

So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand. ¹⁹ Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his

strength left him. ²⁰ And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” So he awoke from his sleep, and said, “I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!” But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

²¹ The Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison. ²² However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

²³ Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said: “Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!” ²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: “Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, the destroyer of our land, and the one who multiplied our

dead.” ²⁵ So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.” So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. ²⁶ Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on

them.” ²⁷ Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.

²⁸ Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, “O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!” ²⁹ And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.

³⁰ Then Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.

³¹ And his brothers and all his father’s household came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.”

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Background Notes

Judges 16 begins with another dramatic demonstration of Samson’s strength. The Philistines thought that they had Samson trapped inside the Philistine city of Gaza. In the middle of the night, Samson got up and escaped by breaking down the massive gate of the city. He grabbed the huge gate and gate posts and pulled the whole thing right up out of the ground! Then Samson put the whole thing on his shoulders and carried it up to the top of a hill. Quite a feat of strength!

Once again we see Samson’ had strength, but no self-control. What was Samson doing in Gaza? He was with a Philistine prostitute, and it led into a trap. Evidently, he didn’t learn his lesson, because he got involved with another Philistine woman – Delilah. Slowly but surely Delilah seduced Samson into giving away the secret of his strength. Three times Delilah did exactly what Samson told her, and all three times Samson escaped - but he still continued his relationship with Delilah! How dumb could he be? Surely he must have realized that Delilah was betraying him! The lesson here is that “love” (in this case, lust) can be blind, and Satan will capitalize on it. Many of God’s servants have fallen into a trap this area. Don’t think that you’re immune!

In verses 29-30, Samson took hold of the two middle pillars of the Philistine temple and pushed with all his might, and the temple fell. Archeologists have uncovered ancient Philistine temples in the area of Israel that was once occupied by the Philistines, and their temples were constructed with two central supporting pillars, exactly as described in the Bible. So once again archeology supports the accuracy of the Bible!

Doctrinal Points

1. Loss of separation results in loss of spiritual power.

God had blessed Samson with great physical strength - strength that he could use for the Lord. But Samson broke his vow of separation to the Lord, and as a result, he lost his strength. The spiritual lesson here is; loss of separation results in loss of spiritual power.

Let me expand a little bit on what I think is a larger spiritual picture. In the books of Joshua and Judges, the land of Canaan represents or pictures the land of spiritual blessing and power for the Christian. But Satan, the enemy of our souls, wants to keep us defeated in this land of spiritual blessing. One of the keys to blessing and power is separation - **separation from the world** and **separation to the Lord**. Any time Satan can seduce us into losing our separation and becoming comfortable with worldly pleasures, he knows we have lost out on blessing and power.

The Philistines represent one of Satan's devices for keeping us defeated and causing us to lose our separation. The Philistines particularly represent worldly or fleshly principles at work to appeal to our sinful nature. If we become involved in worldly attitudes and activities, they will keep us from enjoying our blessings in Christ. They will rob us of spiritual power because we are no longer separated. The Philistines invaded the land from the sea. God's way of entrance into the land for His people was to follow the Ark of God through the Jordan River. The Jordan River is a great picture of identifying with Christ in his death and resurrection. The "death to self" principle is God's way into the Christian's land of blessing.

Worldly religion, for example, ignores that "death to self" principle, and tries to convince us to come into our land of blessing the comfortable Philistine way. Delilah was attractive and alluring and seductive, and so is the world, especially in the area of religion. The world is very appealing, and it's easy to get sucked into the ways in this world in our walk of faith, both as individuals and as churches. Churches gradually begin to preach a watered-down gospel to sound tolerant and "progressive." As a result there is a tragic loss of spiritual power.

Lack of separation results in loss of spiritual power.

2. Loss of separation results in loss of spiritual success.

Joshua 1:7-8 are two well-known verses on how to be successful: *“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”*

Samson only followed the first part of Joshua 1:7. He was strong and courageous - but he didn't meditate on the Word of God, and he certainly didn't do all that was written in the Law of God! He turned to the left hand and the right hand – **away** from the Word of God. Samson was no longer separated from the world, and he was no longer separated unto the Lord. No wonder he had only partial success in defeating the Philistines, and as a judge for Israel.

Do you see the spiritual picture? A lack of separation from the world results in loss of spiritual success. You may have a lot going for you (as Samson did), but if you're unwilling to be a separated Christian, you will never be a successful Christian, spiritually speaking. Separation doesn't mean running off and becoming a Christian hermit. Rather, it means being separated from the values and attitudes of this world system - and **separated to the Lord**. To be successful in God's eyes, you must be separated. There are no exceptions.

Lack of separation results in loss of spiritual success.

Practical Application

Don't toy with temptation!

That's an obvious application from the life of Samson, isn't it? Initially, Samson had no intention of forsaking the Lord. His problem was that he thought he could dabble in sin and get away with it. But temptation comes in such attractive packages - like Delilah - and little by little Samson fell.

Samson played around with temptation, and then he fell. And he reaped the awful consequences. 1 Corinthians 6:18 says, “Flee sexual immorality...” And 2 Timothy 2:22 says, “Flee youthful lust...” That's the key! **Run away from temptation as fast as you can!**

Don't hang around and “toy with temptation”!