



## Samson (part 2)

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Judges 16 - 21



Samson's life was tragic, marked with pride, anger, violence, and a lack of being under God's control. However, God used Samson's flaws to overcome the Philistines, delivering His people once again. As we look at the ending of Samson's life, we will see that God is full of mercy, rescuing those who do not deserve it.

## Day #1: Gifts from God

What abilities has God given you? Are you a good artist? Does math come easily to you? Do you make people laugh? Take a moment to think of the gifts God has given you. God creates each person with different abilities. We should use these gifts to honor God.

God had given Samson the gift of strength. Samson was well known as an extremely fierce enemy of the Philistines. He led the Israelites for 20 years, even though the Philistines still ruled over them. The Philistines continually looked for a way to trap Samson (Judges 16:2).

Twenty years after the death of his wife, Samson fell in love with **another** Philistine woman. Her name was Delilah.

*The rulers of the Philistines went to her. They said, "See if you can get him to tell you the secret of why he's so strong. Find out how we can overpower him. Then we can tie him up. We can bring him under our control. Each of us will give you 28 pounds of silver." - Judges 16:5*

Delilah was more interested in silver than she was in Samson. So Delilah asked Samson to tell her the secret of his great strength. Samson did not take this opportunity to give God the praise for the strength that God had given him. Instead, Samson made up silly lies to tell Delilah.

*Samson lied to Delilah many times. The Bible says that lying hurts people (Proverbs 26:28). God is truth, therefore, He hates lies (Psalm 31:5, John 14:6; Proverbs 6:16-17). Discuss how lying ruins relationships. (When someone lies, you can't trust him or her anymore; you don't know when he or she is telling the truth.) We must always speak the truth in a loving way. If telling the truth is difficult for you, pray and ask God to give you the strength not to lie.*

*Do you love life and want to see many good days? Then keep your tongues from speaking evil. Keep your lips from telling lies. - Psalm 34:13*

## Day #2: Foolishness

When Delilah asked Samson to tell her the secret of his great strength, he chose to lie to her. First, he told her that if he were tied up with leather strips he would become as weak as any other man. The men who wanted to capture Samson hid close by, and Delilah tied him up with leather strips. Then she shouted:

*She said, "Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!" But he snapped the leather straps easily. They were like pieces of string that had come too close to a flame. So the secret of why he was so strong wasn't discovered. - Judges 16:9b*

Delilah was angry. Again, she begged Samson for the answer, but he continued to lie. Next, he said if he were tied up with new ropes, he would become weak. Delilah tried the new ropes, but Samson snapped them like pieces of thread. Then, he told Delilah that if she were to weave his long hair into a piece of cloth, he would lose his strength. Again, he burst free, as strong as ever.

Instead of telling Delilah that his power came from God, or telling her he simply would not tell her the secret, he made a game of it. It seems, just as with his riddle, Samson liked knowing something that no one else knew. And it seems that Samson enjoyed making others look foolish (Judges 16:15).

Samson had been chosen to deliver God's people from their enemy. He was chosen to fulfill the plan of God Almighty. It was not a game! Samson was foolish not to take the things of God seriously.

*Act like people with good sense and not like fools. These are evil times, so **make every minute count**. Don't be stupid. Instead, **find out what the Lord wants you to do**. - Ephesians 5:15-17*

*Ask God for the wisdom to make every minute count for His kingdom. The Bible promises that God will gladly give you wisdom when you ask for it (James 1:5).*

## Day #3: Old Habits

Have you ever heard the phrase, "Old habits die hard"? It means that people tend to do the same things over and over. Listen to how this phrase applies to Samson.

Delilah continued to beg and plead for Samson to tell her his secret. She told him that if he really loved her, he would tell her. Just as he had done before, with the bride of his youth, he gave in to her nagging. (Indeed, it seems Samson's weakness was beautiful Philistine women!)

### Day #3 continued:



*So he told her everything. "I've never used a razor on my head," he said. "I've never cut my hair. That's because I've been a Nazirite since the day I was born. A Nazirite is set apart to God. If you shave my head, I won't be strong anymore. I'll become as weak as any other man."* - Judges 16:17

Delilah sent word to the Philistine rulers to come back one more time. They came with their silver. Delilah lulled Samson to sleep. She called for a man to come and cut off his hair. Samson's strength left him.

*He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that **the Lord had left him.*** - Judges 16:20b

The Philistines grabbed him and blinded him. They took him to Gaza, put chains on him, and put him in prison. Then Samson, once the strongest warrior in the land, spent his days grinding grain in prison.



Similar to tossing a diamond into a trash heap, Samson treated the gifts God gave him carelessly. Samson acted foolishly. He did not respect God and God's great plan for His people. The first step in being wise is respecting God. When we study God's word and see the mighty things He has done, we will respect Him.

*If you really want to gain knowledge, you must begin by having respect for the Lord. But foolish people hate wisdom and training.* - Proverbs 1:7

## Day #4: Used by God

While Samson was in prison, his hair began to grow again. One day the rulers of the Philistines held a big celebration at the temple. The temple was packed full of Philistine men and women, including their leaders. During the celebration, the crowd of over 3,000 people called for Samson to be brought out. They thought it was funny to see Samson blind and weak. Samson asked the servant who was guiding him to take him near the great pillars that held up the temple so he could lean on them.



*Then (Samson) prayed to the Lord. He said, "Lord and King, show me that you still have concern for me. God, please make me strong just one more time. Let me pay the Philistines back for what they did to my two eyes. Let me do it with only one blow."*

Then Samson reached for the two pillars that held up the temple. He pushed with all his might, and the temple collapsed on Samson and the thousands of Philistines.

*So Samson killed many more Philistines when he died than he did while he lived.* - Judges 16:28-30

Notice that Samson prayed for strength to get revenge **for his own eyes**. He didn't ask for strength so he could give God glory, or even to set his fellow Israelites free from the Philistines. Even in his final hour, Samson was thinking only of himself.

God NEVER makes mistakes! God did not choose the wrong

### Day #4 continued:

man when He chose Samson. God knows the heart of every person (Luke 16:15). God knew that Samson was proud, foolish, and quick to anger. God knew all of Samson's faults; God chose Samson *because* of his faults. Looking at the condition that Israel was in, it seems there was not a godly person to use in his place. Even though Samson made terrible choices over and over, God's plan to rescue His people succeeded.



Even though we see evil around us every day, remember that **God is in control**. Nothing can stop the plans of God (Job 42:2).

*I know that You can do anything. No one can keep You from doing what you plan to do.* - Job 42:2

## Day #5: Our Own Way

Samson was one of the Israelites. When we look at his life, we see a reflection of the Israelite people as a whole. There was nothing special about Samson or the Israelites, except that **God chose them** (Deuteronomy 7:7). When God was with them, they conquered their enemies. Because they did not value what God had done for them, God removed His power from them. As soon as God left them, their enemies easily overtook them, for they were nothing without God. When they turned back to God, God mercifully returned His power to them, and once again they were victorious over their enemies.

The mistakes of Samson and his people seem to jump right off the page at us when we read their stories. We wonder how they could ignore God's clear instructions. We may be tempted to sit in judgment of this ungrateful bunch, but consider this: Israel is a picture of how **each of us** is without Christ. Isaiah 53:6a says:



***All of us** are like sheep. We have wandered away from God. **All of us** have turned to our own way.*

We must admit that wandering away from God and doing things our own way sounds exactly like what the Israelites did. But, God's heart aches to see His people enslaved to sin (Genesis 6:6). Just as God provided rescuers for His people when they turned to Him, **God has provided a final, permanent Rescuer for us**. The second half of the verse above tells us about that Rescuer, God's Son, Jesus:

*And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on Him, on Him.* - Isaiah 53:6b (The Message)



Our own way leads to sin and disaster (Isaiah 5:21, 24). But Jesus said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life." (John 14:6) When we place our trust in Jesus and follow Him, all of our sin is forgiven, and we are given the gift of full and eternal life (Acts 10:43, John 10:10). We, too, would be nothing except that God chose us (Romans 8:33). When we trust in Christ, we are more than conquerors.

*In everything we have won more than a victory because of Christ who loves us.* - Romans 8:37 CEV