

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

**Judges 16:2 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.**

**Judges 16:3 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.**

We now come to the closing chapter on Samson's life. It is noted that Samson went to Gaza (the largest of the five main Philistine cities) to satisfy his sexual desires with a harlot. The news quickly spread throughout Gaza that Samson was there. The men of Gaza surrounded the harlot's house and quietly waited all night at the gate of the city planning to kill him when he tried to leave. At midnight, Samson got up and decided to leave. Finding the gates locked, he removed the doors and the two posts that formed the gate to the city and carried them away with him—bar still in place across the doors. He carried them on his shoulders to the top of a hill in the area leading to Hebron (a city that was about 40 miles from Gaza).

This seems to be just another record testifying to the great strength of Samson. Sadly, it also adds further evidence that he was a man controlled by the desires of his flesh.

**Judges 16:4 ¶ And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.**

**Judges 16:5 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.**

Sometime later, Samson fell in love with a woman in the valley of Sorek called Delilah. Once this became known, the lords of the Philistines approached Delilah to make a deal. They wanted her to use her feminine wiles to find out what gave him his strength so that they could exploit that fact and capture him and torture him. They promised to give her 1100 pieces of silver each if she did.

Many commentators assume that the "lords of the Philistines" are those referenced earlier in the book.

*Judges 3:1–3 "Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them... Namely, five lords of the Philistines...."*

If this is correct, Delilah was offered a great fortune. According to the NIV Commentary it equaled "fifty-five hundred shekels of silver (more than 140 pounds)!"

**Judges 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.

**Judges 16:7** 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.

**Judges 16:8** Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

**Judges 16:9** Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.

Delilah obviously is not in love with Samson; she readily sets out to find out the secret to Samson's strength and make her fortune. First, she just asks Samson where he gets his great strength and what it would take to subdue him. Samson doesn't hesitate to answer her with a lie. He tells her that if he is bound with seven new cords that had not been dried, he will become as weak as any other man. She evidently went to the Philistine lords and told them what he had said, so they brought her the required cords. The next time they were together she proceeded to bind Samson with the cords, apparently with his amused cooperation.

There was a group of men hidden somewhere in the apartment waiting for her signal. After binding Samson, Delilah cried out, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." He immediately and easily broke the cords that bound him and the source of his strength remained unknown.

**Judges 16:10** 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.

**Judges 16:11** 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.

**Judges 16:12** Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And *there were* liars in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

Delilah accused Samson of making a fool of her and telling her lies.

At some time—a few days later, a week, or more—Delilah asked him again how he could be subdued. You'd think he would at least ask her why she wanted to know. But no, he tells her another lie. Maybe he just likes teasing her. He tells her that if he is bound with new ropes that have never been used before, he will be as weak as any other man.

I assume that she again told the Philistine lords what he had said and that they supplied her with the ropes. So, she tied him up with new ropes—apparently with his cooperation. Again she calls out, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." As before, there were men hidden in the apartment, but Samson again immediately and easily broke the ropes.

**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.

**Judges 16:14** And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.

The cycle is repeated yet again. This time Samson tells Delilah that if the seven locks of his hair are woven in to the loom with the thread, he could be subdued. This time it is noted that Delilah waited until he fell asleep to weave his hair into the loom. After fastening it with a pin to the floor (according to the described used in the commentaries), she called out again, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." He immediately woke up and got up so quickly that the pin was pulled out and he got up with the loom attached to his hair.

**Judges 16:15** 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*.

This time Delilah put on a bit more pressure. She declared that he could not love her if he could not trust her. He had made a fool of her three times by telling her lies concerning the source of his strength.

**Judges 16:16** And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death;

**Judges 16:17** That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for *I have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.

Delilah didn't give up; she persisted in nagging him about the matter for so long that he finally gave in and told her the truth. (You'd think he would have learned his lesson from the experience with his wife.) He told her that his hair had never been cut because he had been consecrated to God as a Nazarite from his mother's womb. If his hair were cut, he would become as weak as any other man.

**Judges 16:18** ¶ And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

**Judges 16:19** And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

**Judges 16:20** And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

**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.**

Delilah knew that he had told her the truth this time. She told the Philistines this and they met with her as planned and brought the money with them. I assume they were hidden in the apartment once again. Delilah soothed Samson to sleep with his head in her lap. She then signaled for one of the men to come and cut off his hair causing him to lose his strength so that he could be taken captive. One more time she called out, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." He awoke expecting to be able to free himself as before because he didn't realize that the LORD had departed from him.

The Philistines captured him and put out his eyes; then they took him to Gaza and bound him with brass or cooper restraints. They put him to work grinding grain in the prison house.

Guzik made a fitting observation: "It was fitting that Samson was first blinded in his imprisonment. He was attracted to ungodly relationships through his eyes. His failure to restrain this attraction to women brought him into bondage."

Chuck Smith made a good application: "He was blind to his own spiritual state. It is possible to be self-deceived about your own spiritual state. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves; the truth isn't in us. And there are a lot of self-diluted people as regarding to their own spiritual conditions. Samson was blind to the truth about his own spiritual condition. 'He knew not that the Lord had departed from him.'"

**Judges 16:22 ¶ Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.**

**Judges 16:23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.**

**Judges 16:24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.**

The Philistines could cut off his hair, but they couldn't keep it from growing long again. The time came that the lords of the Philistines gathered together to make a big sacrifice to Dagon their god. They wanted to celebrate the fact that "their god" had delivered Samson into their hands. Whenever the people caught sight of Samson they praised their god for delivering into their hands the man that had killed so many Philistines.

We know that Dagon was a god in name only; it was actually Samson's God, the God of Israel, that had allowed his capture.

**Judges 16:25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.**

**Judges 16:26** And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

**Judges 16:27** Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

As the celebration continued, the people started calling for them to bring Samson out so that they could make fun of him. So they brought Samson out from the prison house and put him between the pillars that supported the roof. Samson asked the boy that led him to put his hands on the pillars so that he could lean against them. He must have been a kind boy to have done so.

We are told that the house was full of men and women and that all of the lords of the Philistines were there. About 3000 men and women were on the roof watching Samson and making fun of him besides all the ones inside.

**Judges 16:28** 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.

**Judges 16:29** 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.

**Judges 16:30** 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.

Samson called out to the LORD begging for one last opportunity to get vengeance against the Philistines. He asked for strength “only this once” to avenge the loss of his eyesight. As he put his hands against the two pillars that were in the middle of the house, the main support pillars, he asked the LORD to let him die with the Philistines. He began to push (or pull) the pillars with all his strength, and the house fell down upon the lords and everyone else in it. It is noted that Samson killed more Philistines in his death than he had killed in his entire life.

It must have really caused the Philistine people to tremble. They had just been celebrating the fact that Dagon had delivered Samson into their hands, and now all their main government leaders and elite of society lay dead because of him. They must have wondered why Dagon allowed that. Maybe some of them even realized that Samson’s God was the more powerful.

What a sad end to one who had been blessed with so much. I think the LORD honored Samson’s prayer first and foremost because it had been His purpose from the beginning for Samson to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. I would like to think that he was also truly repentant of his actions before the LORD, but I can’t honestly say that the record encourages that thought. The primary thought expressed in his prayer is of vengeance. There is, however, a

reason to hope that he was truly repentant because he, too, is included in the great “hall of faith” chapter.

*Hebrews 11:32 “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae....”*

**Judges 16:31** Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him up*, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

Samson’s kinsman from his father’s family went to Gaza to bring his body back to Israel to be buried next to his father. He had served to judge Israel for 20 years.

I liked the New Bible Commentary summation of the story of Samson: “Samson was the last of the judges whose careers are described in the book, and more space is devoted to him than to any of the others. Of all of them, Samson most epitomises the state of Israel as a whole in the judges’ period. He was separated to God but could never fully come to terms with his separateness. As Israel went after foreign gods, Samson went after foreign women. And as Israel in desperation called on the Lord elsewhere in the book, so did Samson at both climaxes of the story (15:18; 16:28). In Samson we see the Lord’s struggle with wayward Israel focused in his struggle with one representative man. In a very real sense Samson *was* Israel. And in the end it was the Lord who was victorious.”

That is a truth that most people today do not realize. The word of God declares that Jesus will return to earth one day to rule as King of kings on the throne of David in Israel and that Israel will enjoy a relationship of fellowship and blessing before the LORD that will endure for time without end. Never again will they break fellowship with the LORD. Abraham’s faith will be completely justified as he witnesses the abundant fulfillment of God’s covenant with him.