

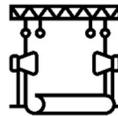
IV – Samson’s Death

A Bible Study About the Tragic Death of Samson - Judges 16



How to use this Bible Study

Welcome to this Bible study. It will be a blessing to you. The focus of this Bible study is the secret that revealed Samson's strength, and how it resulted in his imprisonment and death. It consists of background thoughts, scripture references and questions. There are no wrong or right answers to the questions and the scripture references are given as a help. This Bible Study can be completed individually, or you may wish to invite some friends or family members to do it with you. All quotations are from the New Kings James Bibles.



Backdrop

In Judges Chapter 13 we learned more about the circumstances surrounding Samson’s birth. In Chapter 14 Samson met his wife, killed some men, and returned to a deserted house. In Chapter 15 Samson gave “revenge” a new meaning that today will annoy any animal lover. His actions prompted the Philistines to plot their own revenge and once again it ended very badly for them. In Chapter 16 we learn again about Samson’s preference for Philistine women. The relationship with Delilah become his downfall which resulted in his unfortunate death. That is the topic of this Bible Study



1. Samson’s Lies - Judges 16:4-14

Chapter 16 of Judges did not take off where chapter 15 ended. There was a bit of a lull since we do not know much about what happened during those 20 years of Samson’s leadership of Israel, apart from two last events. Samson favoured the coastal town of Gaza where he spent a night with a Philistine prostitute. Somehow the local Philistines became aware of his nocturnal presence, and they set an ambush, planned for early in the morning. This in turn reached Samson’s ears and he promptly left Gaza with the doors, beams, and lock (bar) of the city’s gate in the middle of the night. To make sure the Philistines do not retrieve their city’s gate, Samson carried it on his shoulders all the way to Hebron, nearly 40 miles away. Effective, but not the best way of anger management in modern terms!

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 up to her and said to

her, "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.

Questions for Reflection

What do we know about the relationship between Samson and Delilah?

Who were the lords of the Philistines?

Why were they so eager to discover the secret of Samson's strength?

Why was it necessary for Delilah to entice Samson to get the truth from him?

What were the bowstrings made of, and why were they needed to be wet?

Scripture for Further Refence

Joshua 13:3; Judges 3:3; 1 Samuel 5:8,13; 1 Samuel 6:17;18

Afterthought

The "Lords" of the Philistines again saw one of their own daughters as a means of getting information from Samson. They pressured her to get an answer and promised her a great deal of money if she succeeded. Considering that, in Biblical times 10 pieces of silver amount to a year's wages, 1100 pieces of silver were more than a lifetime of earnings. Samson stuck to his guns and surprised those hiding in his room ready to pounce on him. Instead, the bowstrings around his hands broke before their eyes, and they had to flee. It was not yet payday for Delilah!



2. Samson's Secret Revealed - Judges 16:15-17

After Delilah's disappointment she tried twice to get the truth out of Samson.

And he twice lied to her. She cleverly played on his feelings for one last time and eventually he could not take the pestering anymore. Does it sound familiar?

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."

Questions for Reflection

What did Delilah mean by "your heart is not with me"?

How was Samson's soul (spirit) 'vexed to death'?

Was Samson's strength vested in his long hair, or was his long hair just a sign of God's strength in his life?

Scripture for further Reference

1 Sam 9:19; 1 Sam 14:7

Afterthought

This time it was not the secret of a riddle that Samson was hiding in his heart, but the secret to his strength. The source of Samson's strength was not in any of his physical abilities although he most probably had quite a few more muscles than the men of his day! With his heart exposed the truth about his supernatural power was dramatically illustrated as the final drama unfolded.



3. Samson in Prison - Judges 16: 19-22

After three previous attempts Delilah knew this time that Samson had told her all his heart. She was so confident that she called for the Lords of the Philistines, and they promptly brought her the money, even before they had proof that Samson's strength had finally failed him. Delilah was getting ready to deliver Samson into the hands of the Philistines.

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 Then 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.

Questions for Reflection

How did Delilah torment Samson?

Why did Samson not realise that the Lord had departed from him?

Why did the Philistines take him all the way back to Gaza, and had not kept him in Sorek?

Scripture for Further Reference

Job 19:2; Matthew 4:24; 1 John 4:18

Afterthought

As Delilah realised that Samson was losing his strength, she took even more advantage of Samson's embarrassment as she started to humiliate him in the presence of the Philistine men. It must have been a horrible day for Samson. There was not anything he could do this time to save himself! It was rock-bottom for him.



4. Samson's Death - Judges 16: 25 - 30

The Philistines took Samson all the way back to Gaza in anticipation of a feast for their god Dagon. The Philistines were in good spirits knowing that Samson was in prison. Not being able to see, Samson was grinding away his days and had ample time to reflect on his life, and how he failed so tragically. Deep inside him he knew that although his strength had forsaken him, the God of Israel had not. And he was about to prove the point. However, before he could do so, the Philistines planned on humiliating Samson even further. They wanted as much joy from Samson's misery as possible.

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.

Questions for Reflection

What were Samson's specific prayer requests from God?

Why do you think Samson asked it?

At what point do you think he realised that God was answering his prayer?

Did God accomplished His plans and purposes for the Philistines through Samson's death, or was He only answering Samson's prayer for the sake of Samson?

Scripture for Further Reference

Job 10:9; Jonah 2:7

Afterthought

We read that Samson called out to God, only for the second time. Once again, he acted out of vengeance, and he most probably died with a heart filled with vengeance. One was rather expecting a heart filled with reverence for God. After leading Israel for a period of twenty years his life come to this sad end. His brothers, and fathers' family came to dig his body from the rubble, and they took it away to be buried in the tomb of his father, close to the town where he was born. The list of Samson's successes against the Philistines is very long and impressive, but even so it is a list of failures. The story of his life leaves one rather perplexed. It warrants more soul searching for answers. This is the topic for our reflections on the lessons that we have learned from Samson's life, and the truth that we have discovered from God's heart.

Prayer to Pray

Father God in heaven. We thank you for your word, filled with stories about the lives of people like Samson. We thank you that we can learn many lessons from Samson's life. Help us to to fully discern your plans and purposes through history revealed in Your Word. Help me to discern your plans and purposes for my life today. Amen

Lessons Learned

What new historic facts have you discovered in this study?

What spiritual life lessons have you learned from this study?



Compiled by GAP Ministries

Website: www.goandproclaim.co.za

E-mail: outreach@global.co.za