



## Lesson 87

# Samson's Death

### Story Elements

- **Text:** Judges 16:1-31
- **Setting:** approx. 1070 B.C. in Sorek and Philistia
- **Main Characters:** God, Samson, Delilah, and several Philistine nobles
- **Plot:** Samson's secret to strength is divulged to his love interest, Delilah, who sells him into the hands of the Philistines.
- **Key word(s):** *wherein thy great \_\_\_\_\_ lieth* (vv 6,15)
- **Climax:** *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.*

## Background

1. (v 1) After Samson had exacted his revenge against the Philistines (cf. 15:1-20), months (years?) pass before he ventures to Gaza and patronizes the business of an harlot.
  - a. (v 2) Word of Samson's arrival spread to the Gazites, and a plan was hatched to ambush Samson in the morning.
  - b. (v 3) But Samson left at midnight, and since the gates were barred shut, he removed the entire gate assembly: gates, posts, bar and all. Samson tauntingly carried the Philistine gates some \_\_\_\_\_ miles away into Israel territory before depositing them atop a hill near Hebron.

APPLICATION → This story serves as a backdrop to Samson's destruction: he is falling further into sin, and the Philistines are growing more desperate to be rid of him. Samson's enemies knew he had a weakness for immoral women with Philistine allegiances, and they used that to their advantage. Likewise, our spiritual enemies search out our sinful corruptions, and we, like Samson, are *drawn away of our own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth \_\_\_\_\_*. (Jam. 1:14-15)

## Samson's Downfall: Delilah's House

2. (v 4) For the third time, Samson fell for a woman affiliated the Philistines. But unlike the previous two, her name is recorded in Scripture: Delilah.
  - a. (v 5) Offering her \_\_\_\_\_ pieces of silver each<sup>1</sup>, the Philistine lords bribed Delilah to discover Samson's secret to his supernatural strength and divulge to them the information. She accepted their offer.
  - b. (vv 6-14) Three times Delilah pleaded with Samson to tell her the secret to his great strength, and three times Samson lied, claiming that seven green withs (fresh \_\_\_\_\_), new ropes, or weaving his seven locks with web and pin (a loom) were the sources of his strength. Each time, Samson was able to free himself effortlessly when Delilah shouted, *The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!*

APPLICATION → We cannot help but shake our head at Samson's willful ignorance. Why would he let Delilah try to steal his strength? Could he not see that she was manipulating him and colluding with the enemy? Here is a lesson for us all: sin blinds us to its own danger. The immoral will *hunt for precious \_\_\_\_\_*. *Prov. 6:26*

3. (vv 15-19) Finally, after much pleading, Delilah was able to make Samson divulge the secret to his strength: his \_\_\_\_\_ consecration signified by his long hair.
  - a. Delilah had Samson's head shaved while he napped on her lap, then she began to "torment" him, or cruelly test to see if he had truly lost his strength.

<sup>1</sup> Judges 3:3 mentions *five lords of the Philistines*. Assuming there were still at least five rulers in Philistia during Samson's life, Delilah was offered 5,500 pieces of silver – a very substantial sum of money.

- b. (vv 20-21) When his weakness was established, the Philistines ambushed Samson, gouged out his \_\_\_\_\_ and sent him to slave labor in Philistia.

APPLICATION → Matthew Henry explains, “His consecration to God was to be his strength, for he was to be *strengthened according to the glorious power of that Spirit which wrought in him mightily*, that his strength, by promise, not by nature, might be a type and figure of the spiritual strength of \_\_\_\_\_, Col. 1:11, 29. Therefore the badge of his consecration was the pledge of his strength; if he lose the former, he knows he forfeits the latter.”<sup>2</sup>

4. (v 22) The biblical writer notes, *Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again*. This would be true of everyone, so mentioning this must mean that Samson’s hair began to grow back quickly, perhaps supernaturally, and in response to his \_\_\_\_\_ heart.

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## Samson’s Death: Dagon’s Temple

5. (vv 23-25) Later, when the Philistine lords gathered to hold a feast in honor of their god Dagon, they summoned Samson from the prison house, brought him to the temple of Dagon, and ridiculed and mocked Samson to amuse themselves and to exalt their pagan deity.
- a. (v 26) The blind Samson asked the boy that led him around to place his hands on the temple’s support \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. (v 27) The temple was filled inside and on top of the flat roof, with about \_\_\_\_\_ Philistines.
- c. (vv 28-30) Samson prayed, *Remember me, I pray thee, and \_\_\_\_\_ me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes*. He then pushed the two pillars with his hands and collapsed the giant temple. Samson’s final words were, *Let me die with the Philistines*.
- d. (vv 30-31) Samson killed more Philistines in his dying act than he did in all his life. His family came and fetched his body out of the rubble and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol.<sup>3</sup>

APPLICATION → Samson’s dying triumph is a glorious picture of the \_\_\_\_\_ hope. Spurgeon said, “So is it with those who are the people of God. The devil can shave them very closely, and clip off their beauty, their strength, and their consecration, **but a living something is still there that will grow again. If there has been a real regenerating work of God the Holy Ghost upon their hearts, it will show itself again.** Though the fruit and holy outcome of this living principle may for a while be removed—sadly removed to their bitter loss and damage—yet I say the living roots of grace are still in the soul, and ere long we shall have to say, ‘Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again.’”<sup>4</sup>

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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): strength • 1. b. 38; → death • 2. a. 1,100; b. bowstrings; → life • 3. Nazarite; b. eyes; → believers • 4. repentant • 5. a. pillars; b. 3,000; c. strengthen; → backslider’s

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 362.

<sup>3</sup> “This awful catastrophe seems to have so completely paralyzed the Philistines, that they neither attempted to prevent the removal of Samson’s corpse, nor to molest the Israelites for a long time after. Thus the Israelitish hero rendered by his strength and courage signal services to his country, and was always regarded as the greatest of its champions.”

Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, vol. 1* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 170.

<sup>4</sup> From Charles Spurgeon’s sermon titled “SHAVEN AND SHORN, BUT NOT BEYOND HOPE.” Preached January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1887 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.