

## LESSON 14-16: Samson      JUDGES 13-16

## OPPRESSION #7      Read Judges 13:1-25.

1. Who are the Philistines and where are they generally located?
2. How long do they oppress Israel?
3. There has been a pattern of Israel crying for help and God answering. What happens this time?
4. The narrative begins at a place called Zorah.
  - The name Zorah (*Heb. tsorah*) comes from the root word, *tsirah*, meaning “hornet.” What is the purpose of the hornet? (Exod. 23:28, Deut. 7:20, Josh. 24:12)
  - *Tsirah* comes from the root word, *tsarah*, which means to be leprous. What is the purpose of leprosy?
  - What is the connection between a hornet and leprosy—how are they alike in purpose?
 

The purpose of the hornet (*tsorah*):

The purpose of leprosy (*tsarah*):
  - In what sense is Israel leprous at this point?
5. The narrative begins with a man named Manoah. What does the name Manoah mean?
6. Why would the author want to remind us at this point that Israel still has a “sitting down” place in the Land (that their place in the kingdom is secure)?

## Questions for Reflection:

- Which churches in Revelation 3 follow the model of leprous Israel pictured here?
- Why would these churches need that reminder that they still have a “sitting-down” place in the kingdom—a secure inheritance?
- Obviously, God no longer afflicts us with physical leprosy, but our spiritual “old man” can have a leprous quality about him. Paul says in Ephesians 4:17-19:

*“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” (NKJV)*

Blindness, being past feeling, being alienated from God—these are all “leprous” conditions.

- How does God drive hidden sin to light in our lives? What catalysts does He use? What form does the hornet take in our life?

## THE PROMISED SON

7. Manoah's wife is barren. The Angel of the LORD appears to her to announce she will have a son who will be devoted to the Lord's service from birth as a Nazirite.
- **Who else in the Bible follows a similar pattern?**
  - **What does the Angel tell her about the child she will bear?**
  - **What Nazirite rules must she follow?**

*"... he shall begin to [chalal] deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." (Judges 13:5b) "Shall begin" implies that Samson would not deliver Israel fully. That is the literal meaning of the statement, but there is a deeper nuance in the text.*

**8. Look up the word, *chalal*, which is behind the phrase "began to."**

- **What does *chalal* mean?**
- **Look at how this word is used in these passages. Where do these "beginnings" lead?**

Genesis 6:1-2: *"Now it came to pass, when men began to [chalal] multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful . . ."*

Genesis 9:20: *"And Noah began to [chalal] be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard."*

Genesis 11:6: *"And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to [chalal] do . . .'"*

Numbers 25:1: *"Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to [chalal] commit harlotry with the women of Moab."*

Isaiah 53:5: *"But He was wounded [chalal] for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities."*

- **How does Isaiah 53:5 illustrate *chalal*-ing?**

The word *chalal* shows up four times in Samson's narrative (Judges 13:5, 25; 16:19, 22).

### Questions for Reflection:

Have you ever had a *chalal*-ing moment in life? Have you ever done something that seemed innocent or even right at the time, but in hindsight, you realize it started you down a path that didn't end so well?

- What prompted your decision to start down that path?
- If you had to do it over again, would you make a different choice?

## MANOAH'S CONVERSATION WITH THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

The Angel of the LORD goes to Manoah's wife first, not Manoah. The reversal of norms creates a sense of distance between Manoah and God. The woman becomes the pivotal figure in this engagement.

### The pattern:

The Angel speaks to the wife (v3-5)

The wife tells Manoah (v6-7)

Manoah prays to the LORD (v8)

The LORD hears Manoah (v9a)

The Angel reappears to the wife (v9b)

The wife calls to Manoah (v10) *Note: Manoah follows his wife – definitely not the cultural norm*

Manoah addresses the Angel (v8)

### Round 1:

9. Why doesn't Manoah's wife ask the Man of God his name or where he was from?
10. How does the woman's account differ from what the Angel told her?
11. Why does Manoah ask God to send the Man of God to him?

### Round 2:

12. How does the Angel respond to Manoah?
  - "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?"
  - "What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?" (v12)
  - "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You." (v15)
  - "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?" (v17)
13. At what point does Manoah realize he has been speaking to the Angel of the LORD? What is his reaction?
14. What is the reaction of Manoah's wife?
15. What do we know about Samson so far?
  - What does his name mean?
  - He will be a Nazirite from birth. What Nazirite rules must he live by (Numbers 6)?
  - What was prophesied about him?
    - In Genesis 49:16-17:
    - In the Song of Deborah:

The PROPHESED DELIVERER (Imagery Review of the Song of Deborah)

**Judges 5:2** *“When leaders lead in Israel, when the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the LORD!”*

**Judges 5:31** *“Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD! But let those who love Him be as the sun when it comes out in full strength.”*

**P<sup>a</sup>ra** (base verb):

to lead, act as leader

to let go, let loose, let alone, leave untended

to be let loose, be loosened of restraint (for vengeance)

**P<sup>a</sup>raot** (plural noun): Leaders

**P<sup>e</sup>raot** (plural noun): Locks of hair (specifically in context of letting one's hair grow for a Nazirite vow)

פרעות בפרע

leaders

p<sup>a</sup>raot

(or p<sup>e</sup>raot)

lead (when)

p<sup>a</sup>ra

#### Translations variations:

*“When leaders lead in Israel, when the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the LORD!” (NKJV)*

*“When the locks go untrimmed in Israel, when people dedicate themselves – bless the LORD!” (JPS, Jewish Study Bible, 1985)*

#### Amplified version:

*“When leaders lead in Israel . . . [When God raises up a leader who is under a Nazirite vow and without restraint and turns him loose on His enemies for vengeance], . . . when the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the LORD!”*

#### THE PICTURE

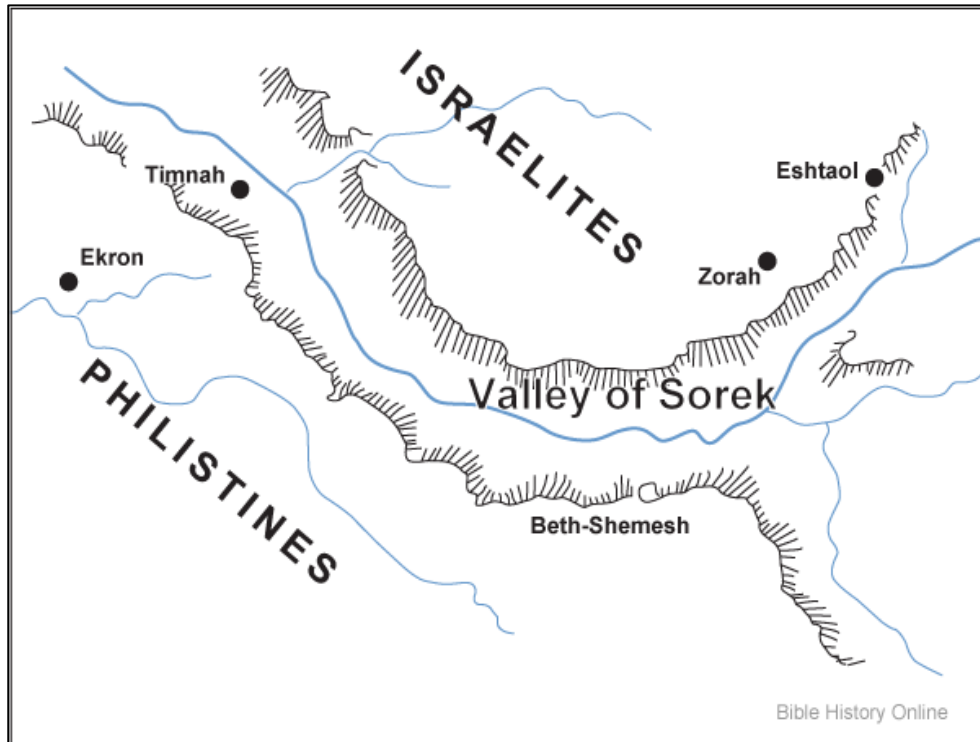
Samson is not mentioned by name in the verses, but the picture of him is there: The imagery of a Nazirite leader being turned loose on an enemy for vengeance, combined with a lack of restraint and great strength. His lack of restraint will be a key element in the unfolding events. Like the sun, he will shed light on the condition of Israel and reveal the enemy's treachery.

16. Why would God choose to use someone who is without restraint to deal with an enemy?

17. Why would God use someone who is without restraint to judge a rebellious, unrepentant people?

#### Question for Reflection:

- Samson was made a Nazirite from birth. How would you feel if this kind of obligation was placed on you – if you had no control over your life?
- We do not take Nazirite vows like Old Testament Israel did, but we are called to be separated from the Canaanite side around us.
  - How do we separate ourselves from the “Canaanite” inside us?
  - How do we separate ourselves from the world?
  - How do we separate ourselves from the believers who are acting like Canaanites?



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Source: [https://www.bible-history.com/geography/maps/map\\_philistine\\_valley\\_sorek.html](https://www.bible-history.com/geography/maps/map_philistine_valley_sorek.html)

18. What do the place names Mahaneh Dan, Zorah, and Eshtaol mean?
19. "And the Spirit of the LORD began to [chalal] move upon him . . ." What does the use of the word, *chalal*, in verse 25 tell us about the events to come?

#### Question for Reflection:

- Is it better to wait for permission before you act or ask for forgiveness later?

#### SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES, FIRST ENGAGEMENT **Read Judges 14:1-20.**

##### **Samson and his Philistine wife (v2-4)**

20. The narrative takes place in Timnah.
  - What does Timnah mean?
  - What other significant event happened at Timnah in Israel's history?

21. There has been a theme through the Judges narrative of doing what was right in your own eyes as opposed to what is right in God's eyes. Was Samson's request for a Philistine wife right or wrong . . .
- . . . in his own eyes?
  - . . . in his parents' eyes?
  - . . . in God's eyes?

### **The Lion in the Vineyard (v5-6)**

22. What is troubling about Samson being near a vineyard?
23. To have a lion come roaring out of the vineyard at him might be hinting that . . . ?
24. Why would Samson not tell his parents he had killed a lion?
25. The young lion, the *kephir ari*, is a literal lion, but it is also used figuratively in Scripture. Look up either word (young/*kephir* or lion/*ari*) and look at other passages where "young lion" is found. Of whom or what is the young lion figurative?
26. Of whom/what is the vineyard is figurative? (Isaiah 5:1-7)
27. Put the pictures together. Of what is the lion in the vineyard a picture?

### **The Honey in the Lion's Carcass (v7-9)**

28. What is our reaction to the thought of a person eating something out of a carcass?
29. If the lion is symbolic of the enemy, then what is the sweetness that comes from seeing your enemy dead at your feet?
30. Why would Samson give his parents a taste of honey?
31. Why wouldn't he tell them where it came from?

### **Samson's Feast & Riddle (v10-20)**

32. God sent Samson to deal with the young lions hiding in His vineyard. How does Samson draw them into the open?
33. What kind of a feast is this? What is the occasion?
34. Who are his "companions"?
35. Why would he be given Philistines for companions? Where are his own people?

By way of entertainment, Samson poses a riddle and offers garments as a prize for solving the riddle. Why use clothing as a prize? Because it plays into the picture of this particular oppression.

*"Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen **garments [cadeen]** and thirty changes of **clothing [beged]**." - Judges 14:12*

There are eight different Hebrew words translated as "garment" or "clothing," each with a different use, sense, or character. The particular ones emphasized here are *cadeen* and *beged*.

**Cadeen** are the sheets or wraps worn over the top of clothing.

**Beged** are the clothes worn beneath the sheet, including underclothes.

**Beged** is a common word for garment and used extensively, but most often in the following ways:

- A man is given a new *beged* when his status or condition changes (like a priest changing his garment before entering the Lord's service)
- When a man is made unclean, he must wash his body and his *beged*
- When a man is mourning, he rends his *beged*
- *Beged* can be used as a disguise, particularly in war
- *Beged* are taken among the spoils of war (as something taken from the enemy by force, treachery, or pillaging)

So we can see that, in general, these "under" garments often reflect the character or condition of the man. When a man's status or condition changes, there is often a change in his garment. *Beged* are also valued as spoils of war, as something taken from the enemy by force, treachery, or pillaging.

**Beged** has a "hidden" or under-the-sheet quality reflected its root word, **bagad**.

**Bagad** means to act treacherously, deceitfully, unfaithfully, covertly, or fraudulently – all "hidden" acts that go on behind the scenes or beneath the sheets, so to speak. *Beged can* be treacherous when it is used to disguise or hide the man's character or intentions.

Samson offers a riddle and this prize of clothing. If he wins, he collects 30 shirts (one from each companion). If he loses, he has to hand over 30 shirts (a princely sum). He takes upon himself an obligation that is thirty times greater than the rest. The Philistines look at Samson as an easy mark with nominal risk on their side.

They agree to the riddle challenge and set out to fleece Samson. And so, the bagad-ing begins.

36. Who *bagads* who—how does the treachery play out in verses 15-18?

37. *"If you had not plowed [charash] with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle!"(v18)*  
What does the word, *charash*, mean?

**Charash** is translated here as "plowed," but doesn't actually mean to plow. Plowing *illustrates* what it means to *charash*, but it is only half the picture of this word. There are two definitions for this word.

**Charash** means:

**Definition #1:**

**Definition #2:**

38. Look at Judges 14:15. What are some specific tactics of this oppressor? How does this oppressor operate and how does *charash*-ing tie in?
39. Why doesn't his wife tell Samson what is going on?
40. How does Samson deal treacherously with the Philistines in return?
41. If you were the Philistine receiving these garments, what would this communicate to you?

### THE PROFILE OF THIS OPPRESSION

This oppressor is very sophisticated. They never confront head on, but manipulate things behind the scenes. They use people as tools, thus removing themselves from the danger of exposure. They use threats, treachery, fraud, lies, and destructive violence. They wield guilt, false accusations, and make themselves out to be the victim when it suits their agenda.

There is usually a secondary oppressor in this scenario – the tool that is being used. Because of the pressure being brought to bear on them, they become oppressors themselves. Their actions are driven by fear, shame, humiliation, and guilt, and they often react with destructive anger and silence. Keeping one's mouth shut when you should speak up is an earmark of this kind of oppression, and perpetuates this oppression.

### Questions for Reflection:

- What are some ways this kind of oppression plays out in our day?
- Have you ever been the victim of *charash*-ing like Samson?
- Has anyone ever used you as a tool the way the Philistines used Samson's wife?
- How might things have turned out differently if the wife had gone to her husband and explained what the Philistines were doing to her?
- Have you ever been caught in the middle of a conflict between two warring parties where there was no way out without someone getting hurt? If so, how did you deal with it?

### SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES, SECOND ENGAGEMENT **Read Judges 14:20 - 15:8.**

42. How does Samson deal with his wife's treachery?
43. When Samson comes for his wife, he discovers that her father has given her to his "best man" who is also his enemy. Why does the father do this?
44. What is Samson's response? (v3)
45. Samson's purpose is to drive hidden things to light. The first time, he drew the young lions out of hiding with a feast. How does he drive this sin to light?
46. What time of year is it? (v1)
47. What burns?



48. What does the burning reveal? (v6)
49. Treachery, once revealed, gives way to open warfare. What is the Philistines' response?
50. What is Samson's response?
51. Samson settles at the rock of Etam (v8). The word for "settle" indicates a permanent dwelling. He is there to stay.
- What is the Hebrew word used for rock?
  - Who does it describe in Psalm 18:2?
  - What does Etam mean?

### Questions for Reflection:

Keep in mind, Samson is a man given over to his Canaanite side with little conscience or restraint, which makes him an ideal tool for the Lord's purposes. He is also the judge whom God has sent to execute judgment on the Philistines. He is not necessarily an example we should model in regards to taking vengeance and retaliating. If anything, he models the destructive path that retaliation takes when it is allowed to play out.

- Once we begin down the path into cycles of retaliation, where does the path end? What stops the cycle?
- *"Don't blame me. It's your own fault . . ."* Have you ever had someone do something hurtful to you and then make an excuse for their behavior by turning the blame back on you as if they were innocent?
  - If so, what was the reaction from your Canaanite side?
  - What should be our response as a child of God?
- *"Yeah, but he started it . . ."* Have you ever been called to act as judge between two people caught up in this cycle of retaliation? If so, how did you put an end to it and sort things out?
- What are some of the ways we can stumble in dealing with this kind of oppression? (Think of the stumbling blocks.)
- After avenging his bride, Samson withdraws as if there is an end to the matter. Just because you quit fighting and seek a place of refuge, does that mean the enemy stops pursuing you?

SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES, THIRD ENGAGEMENT **Read Judges 15:9-20.**

52. The Philistines use the same tactics as before: Find a tool to do your work for you and compel cooperation w/ the threat of violence.
- Who is their tool?
  - How do they compel cooperation?
53. How many men does it take to drag the lion out of his lair?
54. Samson, the judge, executed punishment on the Philistines, but they refused to accept it as an end of the matter. They tell the men of Judah they want Samson in order to do to him what he had done to them (but they don't say what). Samson tells the men of Judah the same thing, and that what he did was fair. So there is a stalemate. Both sides are justified in their own eyes for what they have done and propose to do. The men of Judah are being asked to judge between the Samson and the Philistines. How do they judge the matter?
55. Samson allows the men of Judah to deliver him to the Philistines under what condition?
56. The confrontation plays out at Lehi (Hebrew, *lechi*).
- What does *lechi* mean?
  - What is happening to the *lechi* in the following verses: Micah 5:1, Lamentations 3:30, Isaiah 50:6, Job 16:10?
    - *"Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; He has laid siege against us; They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek."* - Micah 5:1
    - *"Let him give his cheek to the one who strikes him, and be full of reproach."* - Lamentations 3:30
    - *"I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting."* - Isaiah 50:6
    - *"They gape at me with their mouth, they strike me reproachfully on the cheek, they gather together against me."* - Job 16:10
  - What is the slap in the face that Samson receives and from whom?
  - How does Samson return the slap in the face? (v14-15)
57. Samson's victory song: *"With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!"* (v16) There is a play on words in the Hebrew.

**Donkey:** (Heb.) *Chamor*      **Heaps:** (Heb.) *Chamolah*

Both "donkey" and "heaps" take their root from the word, *chamar*, which means to boil, bubble, or froth up and yet come to nothing. It also carries the sense of being red—not just in color but figuratively from being troubled or in turmoil.

Donkeys are *chamar*-ish in color but also *chamar*-ish in nature. They are stubborn and tend to boil up suddenly. A thousand Philistines have boiled up against Samson in donkey fashion and

been delivered a rebuke by the mouth of a donkey. Their frothing has come to nothing. Heaps upon heaps rose up but died away just as quickly.

58. Who fought with Samson?
59. What does verse 18 tell us about Samson's understanding of his relationship with God?
60. Having dealt with the Philistines, how does he respond to his betrayal by the men of Judah?

### SAMSON, the HARLOT, and the PHILISTINES **Read Judges 16:1-3.**

The text doesn't give us a sense of when the rest of the narrative takes place. It just opens with "Now." I venture to say that it may have taken place within his time as judge, at the end, because of the narrative is bookended by the phrase "he judged Israel twenty years." (Judges 15:20, 16:31) The inclusio suggests the events happen within that time period.

God is using Samson in his Canaanite persona to deal with an enemy and create a picture. In terms of structure, the harlot of Gaza episode is part of the previous picture but it also ties to the narrative with Delilah.

61. The narrative opens in Gaza. What do we know about Gaza?
  - What does the name Gaza mean?
62. Why would Samson go all the way to Gaza? For what purpose?
63. The text belabors the fact that this all happens at night. Look at the timing of events.
  - How long did the Philistines wait for Samson to come out?
  - When did Samson actually come out?
  - So, if Samson leaves at midnight, but they remained there all night, then what does that tell us?
64. The text isn't specific, but Jewish tradition holds that Samson actually hauled the gates to Hebron and planted them on the hill there. Why Hebron?
  - What do we know about Hebron?
  - What does the name Hebron mean?
  - Who have the men of Judah joined themselves with?
  - If you were the children of Israel living in Hebron, and you woke up one morning to find a Philistine gate planted on a hill outside your city, what message would you take from that?

### THE BIG PICTURE (Judges 14:1–16:3)

Samson, the great deliverer, was born of miraculous birth (born to a barren woman) and was a Nazirite from birth. His mother was told that he will begin to save his people, but the path he would take to

accomplish that would lead to his defilement (and death). Little is known about his early life until he steps into his ministry. Something is known of him through prophetic pictures, but it is veiled.

Samson steps on the scene as a poser of riddles and a diviner of men's hearts. He is like the sun when it comes out at full strength, shedding light on the condition of his people. He confronts the young lions who have been feeding themselves on God's flock and vineyard. First he draws them out by sitting down with them at a feast and posing a riddle aimed at revealing their treachery and true character. Twice he resorts to physical violence and gives them a thorough thrashing.

The Philistine lions dealt with Samson treacherously by using one of his own to betray him. He is arrested but goes willingly on condition that his own people not kill him themselves. He was delivered a proverbial slap in the face and handed over to the Philistines to be killed. And when the act of deliverance was finished and he was near death, he cried out to God "I thirst!" Though he is strong, he acknowledges that he cannot save himself, nor does he seek deliverance from his own brother's standing by. His cry is to God only. The Lord responds with an outpouring of life-giving waters that revive Samson and bring him back from near death.

**The secondary picture:** Samson finds himself locked behind closed doors in an enemy stronghold in the dark with the enemy guard stationed outside the gate. The place should be his grave, and yet the fortress cannot hold him. In spite of the guard stationed at the door, he passes out of the place in the night, taking with him the gates so that they might not be closed again. He plants the gates before his people as a message.

65. How is that a picture of Christ?
66. Who were the lions in the vineyard in Jesus' day? Who were oppressing God's people?  
(*Note: Jesus did not challenge the physical oppressor of Israel (Rome) but only the spiritual oppressors.*)
67. What methods did Jesus use to engage the lions?
68. The Gaza incident a picture of what?
69. How does Christ respond to those of His own people who betrayed Him?

### Questions for Reflection: The Big Picture for Us

How do we model Samson and Christ? Who are the enemies we grapple with:

- 1) **The spiritual Enemy:** (1 Peter 5:8-10, John 8:44, Ephesians 6:11-12)
- 2) **The external enemy:** (1 John 5:19-20, Romans 1:18, 24-25, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12)
- 3) **The intimate enemy:** (Matthew 7:15, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, 2 Peter 2:1-3,12-21, Jude 1:3-4, 12-13; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:14-18)
- 4) **The internal enemy:** our carnal "dark" side (Ephesians 5:8-13, Romans 13:12-14, Galatians 5:16-17, 1 Peter 4:1-2, 1 John 2:15-16)

**Profile of this oppression:** treachery, deceit (including hypocrisy which is when your *begeh* doesn't match who you really are), unfaithfulness, and a pursuit of lusts and "gain."

- Samson's purpose was to shed light on things. We, too, are called to be children of light. What are some ways we model Samson in this?

Bring the truth to light in a darkened world. We have been equipped with the truth of God's Word, and we use that truth to reveal and battle an enemy who brings people into bondage with lies, violence, and false guilt for the purpose of his own gain.

- **The picture:** As Samson stood before the oppressors, the Holy Spirit came over him, and the jawbone of a donkey was supplied to him with which he gave them an answer. What promise are we given when we find ourselves standing before the enemy? (Matthew 10:16-20)

### SAMSON AND DELILAH **Read Judges 16:4-21.**

In the big picture of the Philistine wife, Samson modeled Christ, the deliverer, overcoming an enemy to the point of death and being raised back up from the dead. The episode at Gaza was a follow-on picture of Christ resurrected from the grave.

By contrast, Samson is also a child of God set aside for God's purpose but still contending with his own carnal Canaanite lusts. In chapter 15, he is revived and given newness of life (in the likeness of Christ), Now, in chapter 16, he is taking the path back into a sinful lifestyle, and there are going to consequences. Even as God uses Samson to deal with the Philistines, God also uses the Philistines to deal with Samson.

**70. The narrative opens in the Valley of Sorek. What does Sorek mean?**

**71. What is different in Samson's relationship with Delilah than it was with the others?**

**72. How do the Philistines get Delilah to help them?**

**73. What does Delilah's name mean?**

- **What does the root word, *dalal*, mean?**
- **Look at Job 28:4 where *dalal* is found. How is Samson like Job's man on a rope descending down into a mine pit?**

Other variations of the root, *dalal*, include:

- *Dal* (adjective) – to be low, weak, impoverished
- *Dalla* (fem. noun) – bundle of hair or threads of warp hanging down from a loom

So, just in the simple exploration of Delilah's name, we see the picture elements of what will play out in the following exchange. It might be that Samson is playing off Delilah's name as he teases her with false answers.

Samson's exchange with Delilah is his descent down the figurative rope, and it develops in a three + one verse structure similar to Jotham and Abimelech's narrative. It plays off the *dalal* theme.

**Delilah's first ask** (v6) "Please tell me . . ." (The tease: she plays to his vanity)

**Samson:** bind me with 7 fresh bowstrings (Heb. *yether*)

**Delilah's second ask** (v10) "You have mocked me and told me lies. Please tell me . . ."

**Samson:** bind me with new ropes (The new ropes didn't work at Lehi. Why would they work now?)

**Delilah's third ask** (v13) "You have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me . . ."

**Samson:** weave my hair in a loom (He hints that his hair is the source of his strength, but hedges at the truth. He is beginning to cave.)

**Delilah's final ask** (v15) "How can you say 'I love you' . . ." she pestered him so that he was vexed to death

**Samson:** cut my hair

74. How does the tone of Delilah's words change through the sequence?
75. How does her tactics compare with Samson's Philistine wife?
76. Samson tells Delilah that his hair is the source of his strength. (v17) Is that a true statement?
77. What does the shaving of Samson's head reveal?
78. ". . . Then she began to [*chalal*] torment him [*afflict him, weaken him and bring him down*], and his strength left him." (v19) Where does this *chalal*-ing moment lead?
79. The Philistines capture Samson in the Sorek Valley. Why take him back to Gaza?
80. Why make him a grinder?

SAMSON'S DEATH Read Judges 16:22-31.

81. What is the occasion for the Philistine's revelry?
82. Overall, the passage is presented in timeline order, except for verses 23-25. There is a switching of verses 24 and 25. What is the author's intent in deviating from the timeline structure?
83. Samson cannot see with his eyes. He has to be led by the hand by a young boy. He asks the boy to take him to the temple pillars to lean on them. Look up the Hebrew word for "lean." What does it mean?
84. In a literal sense, Samson is weak and has to physically lean on the pillars of Dagon's temple for support. But on whom is Samson leaning in the figurative sense?
85. What is Samson's request?
86. There is a fourth and final *chalal*-ing moment in verse 22 when Samson's hair begins to grow. Where does this *chalal*-ing lead?

## Questions for Reflection:

Samson presents us with this incongruent picture of a man who pursued his carnal lusts to his own death, and a man who achieved God's purpose even in death. In our eyes, his actions are appalling, provoking, seemingly without conscience or restraint, and deserving of judgment. But we cannot forget that Samson was a judge, invested with God's authority to execute eye-for-an-eye judgment on God's enemies. The man and his actions appear very differently depending on whose eyes you are looking through.

Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman was wrong in his parents' eyes, even according to the Law, but right in God's eyes because it suited God's purpose.

- Was Samson's taking of the harlot of Gaza part of God's plan as well?
- Was Samson's affair with Delilah part of God's plan?
- Do we model Samson's behavior in pursuing our carnal lusts, thinking that God's purpose will be accomplished regardless of what we do?
- The focus of the action pivots around the Philistine women: the wife who became an adulteress, the harlot, and the woman Samson loved. How are they a reflection of Israel's relationship with God?
- What did it take to teach Samson not to live by the lust of his eyes?
- **In 1 Corinthians 6:15-19**, Paul explains that while sexual immorality is expressed in a physical act, it crosses the boundary to become an internal, spiritual defilement. Why?
- **Read 2 Peter 2:18-22.** How do Samson and Delilah model a picture of this for us?
  - Delilah is an intimate enemy—one who presumes the role of a Bride but is not. Who is she a picture of?
  - She represents a certain kind of liberty to Samson. What liberty?
  - How is she a slave to corruption?
  - What role does Samson play?
  - What does it take to free a believer who has been caught back up in bondage (what did it take for Samson to be freed)?
- Shame caused by humiliation is one of the stumbling blocks in oppression. How did Samson overcome this?
- Why is Samson remembered in the Hebrews hall of faith? (Hebrews 11:32-34)

When we start down that wandering road away from God, we often wake up to find ourselves enslaved and in the proverbial grinder. God lets us go through that experience of torment and buffeting by the enemy to teach us where our true strength is. And He reminds us: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."* 2 Corinthians 12:9

## PICTURE OF CHRIST IN SAMSON

In the same way, Jesus Christ, the great deliverer of God's people, was born of a miraculous birth (to a virgin). Though He is not a Nazirite by vow, he is *nazir* or separated from his brothers in the same way Joseph was separated from his brothers when he was sent down to Egypt. He would be the Savior of His people, but the path he would take to accomplish that would lead to his defilement and death. Little is known about his early life until he steps into his ministry. Something is known of him through the prophetic pictures, but it is veiled.

He steps on the scene as a poser of parable and dark sayings, and a diviner of men's hearts. He is the Light, shedding light on the condition of his people, who have been overrun by external and internal enemies. He confronts the Pharisees who have been pasturing themselves on God's people and keeping them in bondage. He draws them out in various way. He begins by sitting down with them at a feast and posing parables aimed at revealing their treachery. One such parable is about a wedding feast where a guest is found to be wearing an unsuitable garment. It is a bit of a dig at the leadership. It riles them and they begin plotting against Him. On two occasions he resorts to physical violence and gives them a thorough thrashing.

The lions dealt with Him treacherously by using one of His own—an intimate friend—to betray him with a kiss. They go in mass to the solitary place where He has taken refuge, and they arrest Him. They do not kill Him themselves, but deliver the slap in the face literally and figuratively, and deliver Him to a Gentile court to be put to death. The act of deliverance in Jesus' case was death on the cross. It says in John 19:28: *"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'"* Instead of life-giving water, he was offered sour wine. *" . . . when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!'"* And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." John 19:29. But His death was not permanent. The battle having been won, the Lord returns Him to life, and His spirit is revived on the day of resurrection.

There is a limit to how closely the shadow images of Christ's life and death play out in the Old Testament, but you can see the gist of the picture.

So, how does Christ respond to those of His own people who betrayed Him? The evidence of the His resurrection leaves them to sort out for themselves whether they believe or not. Having accomplished the salvation aspect, Jesus now steps into the next picture which is the role of judge.





NAPHTALI

EAST  
MANASSEH

ASHER

ZEBULUN

ISSACHAR

WEST  
MANASSEH

EPHRAIM

★ Shiloh

GAD

DAN

Timnah

Zorah

Eshtaol

Lehi

BENJAMIN

Bethlehem

Etam?

REUBEN

Ashkelon

Ashdod

Ekron

Gaza

PHILISTINES

Gath

JUDAH

Hebron

SIMEON

**Samson**