

# OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

## STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 20 — “Strong Desires & Weak People”— October 5, 2025

### Introduction

“The closing verses of Judges xv. marks also the close of this period of Samson’s life. Henceforth it is a record of the terrible consequences, first of using God’s gift, entrusted for the highest and holiest purposes, for self-indulgence, and then betraying and losing it. And this betrayal and loss are ever the consequences of taking for self what is meant for God, just as in the parable of the prodigal son the demand for the portion of goods which belonged to him is followed by the loss of all, by want and misery.”

—Alfred Edersheim, *The Bible History OT*

**Main Point:** The final season of Samson’s life reminds us that our \_\_\_\_\_ as men and women can lead us into ruin if they are not made to serve a greater desire for God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

### Judges 16:1-31

Samson had been set apart by the Lord for the purpose of beginning to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. He had, however, shown more of a desire to spend time among his enemies than his own people. The Lord had used him to strike the Philistines on multiple occasions, but his inability to control his passions would ultimately lead to his downfall.

#### Exposition:

#### I. Samson’s weakness for Philistine women once again placed him in danger. (16:1-3)

##### Observations:

(1) Samson’s unwillingness to restrain his lust led him to \_\_\_\_\_ where he sought the company of a harlot.

⇒ The text literally says “a woman, a prostitute” (compare to 4:4, “a woman, a prophetess”)

(2) The Philistines intended to ambush him, but he escaped and shamed them.

*“he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all”*

(3) He then took them into the territory of \_\_\_\_\_, probably with the goal of shaming them as well.

*“Hebron”*

**Key Point:** It is possible to \_\_\_\_\_ our passions for a time and to develop sinful patterns in our lives without experiencing any particularly negative consequences.

#### II. A relationship with another woman ultimately led to his downfall. (16:4-23)

##### Observations:

(1) The final woman highlighted in the Samson narrative is \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Delilah”*— “to be little or dainty”— Some argue the name can also serve as a pun on the Heb. for “night” (*layil*), in contrast to “Samson” which is related to “sun” (*šemeš*).

The Women of Samson’s Life: (1) “my \_\_\_\_\_” (2) “a \_\_\_\_\_” (3) “a woman he \_\_\_\_\_”

(2) The Philistines again sensed an opportunity and sought to \_\_\_\_\_ Delilah.

*“the lords of the Philistines”*

*“seduce him, and...we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver”*

⇒ Her willingness to \_\_\_\_\_ him demonstrated the transactional nature of their relationship.

(3) The account of her attempt to determine the source of his strength followed a certain Hebrew literary pattern.

“The repetition creates a strong sense of expectation, especially after the third occurrence, since an unexpected change or reversal often occurs in the next variation. The reader must wait...to discover the outcome, however.”—Boda & Conway

⇒ Her manner of questioning him progressed from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.  
"Please tell men...Please tell me...tell me"

⇒ His answers move progressively towards the revelation of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
"bowstrings...ropes...weave seven locks of my head"

(4) In revealing to her his identity as a Nazarite, Samson demonstrated the \_\_\_\_\_ of his own understanding of the Lord's power and what it meant to be in submission to His will.  
"I have been a Nazarite" "If my head is shaved...my strength will leave me"

⇒ For a Nazarite, the shaving of the head brought to an end the period of being \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord.

(5) Samson seemed to \_\_\_\_\_ the supernatural strength he possessed would not actually be taken from him.

**Key Points:** It is a dangerous thing to presume upon the temporal \_\_\_\_\_ of God in our lives, especially when we actively choose to walk in sin rather than obedience.

### III. The Lord empowered Samson a final time to strike the Philistines for the glory of His name. (16:14-20)

#### Observations:

(1) The setting is one of Philistine celebration and worship, believing that their \_\_\_\_\_ has defeated Yahweh.

(2) They intended to entertain themselves by \_\_\_\_\_ Samson and, therefore, Yahweh.

(3) Samson's prayer demonstrated what a complex biblical figure he was.

\_\_\_\_\_ → "O LORD God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once"

\_\_\_\_\_ → "O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes."

(4) The final comments on Samson, much like his entire life and career, are a \_\_\_\_\_ of both positive and negative.

**Key Points:** In spite of our many flaws and weaknesses, it is never too late to turn in faith to the Lord and to be \_\_\_\_\_ by Him for His plans and purposes.

#### Assessing Samson

Samson was a man characterized by numerous personal \_\_\_\_\_ who was nevertheless used \_\_\_\_\_ by the Lord for His purposes.

"[Ultimately] to be a judge, then, is to be the person in whom Yahweh's administration of Israel is realized at a particular time."  
—Barry G. Webb, *Judges*

Samson's life and judgeship was in many ways an illustration of \_\_\_\_\_ own condition before the Lord.

"Samson's awareness of his separation to God, and yet his disregard for it, his fatal attraction to foreign women, his willfulness and his presumption all hold the mirror up to the behavior of Israel itself...It is because of this...that the conclusion of the episode captures so powerfully the twin qualities of hope and grim foreshadowing." —Barry G. Webb, *Judges*

### Applying the Text

• Like Samson, we as believers have been set apart by God for His service and given particular \_\_\_\_\_.

• Like Samson, we can have our lives and our \_\_\_\_\_ marred by indulging the passions of our flesh.

• What is the \_\_\_\_\_ purpose of our lives?

Rom. 11:36—"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

Matt. 5:16—"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

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