

Episode #539 Judges 16 Part 1 – Samson 6: Samson and Delilah

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God's works and ways.

II. The Israelites were enslaved to the Philistines for forty years until God raised Samson to deliver them. When his Philistine wife was slaughtered, he attacked them and started a war singlehandedly. The men of Judah were not willing to fight for Samson, by he attacked their army with a donkey's jawbone and killed a thousand of them, chasing their army out of Israel. Then, he judged Israel twenty years. For all his faults, Samson is an excellent example to us of complete confidence in the power and presence of God with Him. Yet today we see that Samson seems to have suffered from a mid-life crisis and returned to the sins of his youth.

III. Samson and the Harlot. Judges 16:1-3.

- A. Judges 16:1. Samson goes to Gaza (The Strong), another Philistine city, and sees another Philistine woman. A mid-life crisis? Once again he is interested in "bad girl" Philistine women, not a woman of his own people Israel.
- B. Verse 2. The Gazites find out. They still hate Samson and think they now have him in their power. They surround him and set a trap at the gate for morning.
- C. Verse 3. Samson finishes with the prostitute at midnight. He is somehow aware of his danger. He goes to the city gates and carries them away.
 1. Note: a gate would be unbelievably heavy. These were to keep an invading army out!
 2. Second note: it is 37 miles (60km) from Gaza to Hebron as the crow flies. I would have trouble carrying a backpack this far, not to mention a city gate!
 3. Note, he finishes this amazing feat by carrying it uphill! He leaves it there as a testimony that could be seen far and wide. Hebron (Joining) = David's first capital in Judah.

IV. Samson and Delilah. Judges 16:4-20.

- A. Judges 16:4. Love = unlike in Greek, Hebrew is like English in that its word for "love," *ahav*, is very inexact. His "love" was not much. Sorek = Choice Vines, a valley between Ashkelon and Gaza. Delilah = Weak.
- B. Verse 5. Philistia had five major cities, so these were probably the five lords. 1,100 x 5 = 5,500 pieces of silver. They promise her great wealth! They well realize that his strength is not natural. They figure there must be a secret to overcome it (magic). Somewhat superstitious, but there was a secret: his relationship with Jehovah.
- C. Verse 6. She tries to trap him by wheedling out of him the secret.
- D. Verse 7. He plays along and tells her a magic solution. A complete fabrication.
- E. Verse 8. They try it. The Philistine lords bring the bowstrings, and she does it. Did she pretend this was a sexy thing or something?
- F. Verse 9. There are men ready to capture him. Where would you hide men in your bedroom? She warns him. It doesn't work; he breaks the bowstrings like burnt thread.
- G. Verse 10. She continues to work on him, complaining that he lied to her. How does this work in Samson's head? He knows she did what he said to her. Did the men sneak out so he didn't know they were there? Or did they act like it was a joke? Or act like they were her friends? Or does he well know what is going on? He has his strength and she is hot so he doesn't care if she betrays him?

H. Verse 11. He tells another lie making up magic. Note the repeated use of the number 7, which is a number God often uses. Probably his cultural thinking.

I. Verse 12. They try again, Delilah ties the ropes, and it doesn't work. Again the men were waiting in the room, though we don't read the Philistine lords came this time. Again the ropes are like thread to him.

V. Samson reaches his middle life and returns to the sins of his youth. We should have confidence in the life God has for us after this one and not panic when we see our later years coming. Samson takes up with Delilah, who has no loyalty to him and is willing to take money to betray him. We should learn that God's people are the people we should look to for a real partner!