

Episode #540 Judges 16 Part 2 – Samson 7: Samson’s Sad Defeat

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. 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 a mid-life crisis returned him to the sins of his youth. He loved a Philistine woman named Delilah. The Philistine lords offered her a huge sum to find out the secret of Samson’s strength. Twice he teased her with made-up magic solutions. Today we will see how long Samson’s resolve held out.

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

- A. Verse 13. Note the inclusion of hair: he is softening and dancing on the edge of the truth. Yet again he is just making up magic, more complicated this time. Here an ancient copyist skipped several lines when two lines started with the same words. We can fill in the missing portion from the Septuagint. “‘If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom, and weave it tightly with the batten of the loom, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man.’”
- B. Verse 14. “‘And it came to pass when he was asleep that Delilah took the seven locks of head and wove them into the web of the loom, and she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom.’” Again she does it and it does not work. How does she manage to weave his hair without him waking? Was alcohol involved? He picks up the heavy loom with his hair as if it was nothing! We don’t read of men lying in wait this time. Maybe a shortened record, or perhaps she didn’t believe him. He picks up the loom with his hair like it is weightless.
- C. Verse 15. She turns up the heat. She claims he does not love her if he won’t tell her.
- D. Verse 16. His soul is his emotions. He was impatient enough to die. Why not leave her rather than give in? The strong man’s weakness.
- E. Verse 17. He reveals the secret! God had never actually said this explicitly. Plus there were three parts to this vow, not just this one. He had already broken the vow when he touched the dead body of the lion. Yet the hair was the symbol of the vow. What did he think would happen, considering the last three times she has done what he said? His sin leads him to lose faith.
- F. Verse 18. Delilah and the Philistines all seem to know that this time is the truth. They actually bring the money to pay her.
- G. Verse 19. She puts him to sleep and has a barber shave his head. She starts to test him, and his strength leaves, as he predicted. Was he a tiny weak man that she can overpower him as soon as God’s strength leaves him?
- H. Verse 20. She wakes him. At this moment his great faith devolves to arrogant madness. He seems to tell himself he can do it without help! Or else to believe Jehovah will never leave him no matter how outrageous his actions. Yet he immediately learns better.

IV. The last revenge and death of Samson. Judges 16:21-31.

- A. Verse 21. The Philistines get their final revenge. This was a terrible price for Samson to pay for his self-will and foolishness!

B. Verse 22. Nazirite separation, once defiled, could be restored. Numbers 6:9-12. Yet the LORD was under no obligation to give him a second chance. Note his grace.

V. Samson put off Delilah for a while, but finally gave in and told her the secret of his relationship with the LORD. Samson's faith turned into madness when he thought he could still save himself even without Jehovah's help. He lost his eyes and became a Philistine slave for his foolishness. Yet a Nazirite vow could be restarted, and his hair started to grow. We can learn much from the life of this strong but foolish man Samson.