

Church of God Sunday School

THE FALL OF SAMSON AND HIS FINAL VICTORY

Judges 16:4-31

The Philistines were ruling over the Israelites, because the Israelites had done evil again. God chose Samson to be the one to judge Israel then, and during those years, Samson accomplished many great things in the mighty strength that was given to him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Samson went to the Philistine city of Gaza (*GAY-zuh*) and carried away the doors of the gate to their city. After that he fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Bible does not tell us much about who Delilah was. We know only that she lived in the valley of Sorek (*so-RAKE*), which was between the land of the Philistines and the land of Israel.

The Philistine rulers must have known that Samson was in love with Delilah, for they came to her and asked her to find the secret to his strength. Each one promised to pay her "eleven hundred pieces of silver" if she could learn Samson's secret.

So Delilah began to talk to Samson, saying, "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee." In other words, "Samson, tell me, what makes you so strong, and by what means can you lose your great strength?"

Samson began to tease Delilah. He said, "If they bind me with seven green withs [bowstrings or harp strings made from animal sinew; they are very strong] that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man."

Delilah told the Philistine lords what Samson had told her, and they brought her seven green withs. She bound up Samson while he slept, and there were men waiting in Delilah's "chamber" (inner room). When Delilah called out, "The Philistines be upon thee," Samson woke up, breaking the withs as easily as if they had been burned away. So his secret was not known.

Delilah was upset! Samson had lied to her! She said to him, "Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies:

now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound."

Samson thought he would tease Delilah again. He said, "If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man."

So Delilah obtained new ropes and tied Samson up, as tight as she could. Once more she called, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." Samson immediately broke the ropes on his arms, as if they were a thread! So, the secret of his strength was still not revealed.

Delilah said to Samson, "Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound." She wanted him to quit playing games.

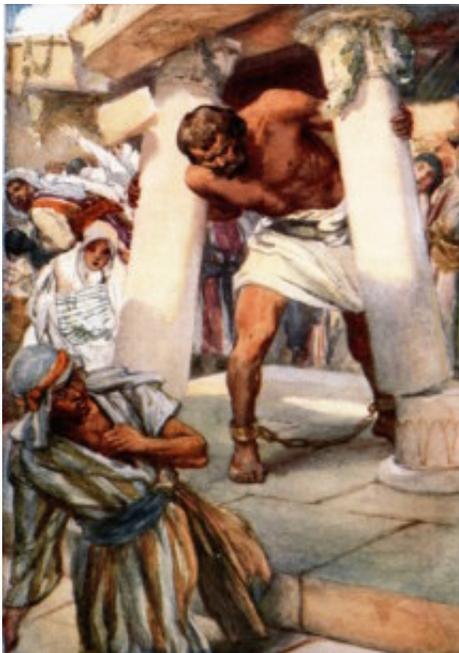
This time, Samson came very close to telling Delilah the truth. He should have been thinking of how careless he was becoming. Instead, he said, "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web [or loom]." Delilah thought surely he had told her the secret then.

Once again, Samson fell asleep. Delilah took up his long hair and wove the long locks on a loom and fastened them to the weaving frame with the pin of a beam. When she was done, Delilah called out as before, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." Samson jumped up, ready to take on the enemy—and he walked away with the pin of the beam and the web!

Delilah was getting desperate! Samson had still dared to lie to her. She pressed Samson more and more, day by day, to tell her the secret of his strength. (Did Delilah love Samson or was she only interested in the promised pieces of silver?)

Samson became "vexed unto death" from Delilah's continuous questions about the secret of his strength. Still, he did not realize that he was being careless. He even began to weaken in his resolve to keep his secret.

Finally, Samson broke down and told her all the truth about himself. He had been under the Nazarite



(*NA-zuh-rite*) vow from his birth, and his hair had never been cut. That was part of the vow to God. If his hair were to be cut, he would lose the great strength God gave him! (Samson surely was not thinking of the consequences of telling Delilah this. Had he forgotten how Delilah had tested him?)

Delilah must have been delighted! Samson had, at last, told her the true secret of his strength. She called for the Philistines to come one more time. They came, bringing the money they had promised her.

When Delilah saw Samson again, she made him feel very welcome and comfortable. And once again, it was not long until he was fast asleep, this time with his head on her lap! Samson was sleeping so soundly that he did not hear when Delilah called for a man to come and shave off the seven locks of his hair.

When the man had finished shaving Samson's head, Delilah called out, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." Samson

awoke, thinking, "I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself." He thought he would be super strong, as at other times. He did not know that God had left him and that he had lost his God-given strength.

The Philistines were all around Samson. He could do nothing to save himself! Quickly, they captured him and put out his eyes, making him blind. He was taken down to Gaza, where he was bound up with brass chains. He was put in the Philistines' prison, where he was made to grind their grain or corn.

No doubt, while Samson was in prison, he had time to think of all that had happened to him. He probably thought how foolish and unwise he had been. He must

have regretted how his strong-will and self-confident attitude had taken him away from the special work God had meant for him to do.

As Samson spent time in prison, his hair began to grow again. (Did the Philistines forget what the secret to Samson's strength had been? Maybe they thought that, as long as he was blind, he could hurt no one.)

The capture of Samson was something for the Philistine lords to celebrate, so they declared a special day to offer sacrifices to their god, Dagon (*DAY-gone*).

On that day, many thousands of Philistines came to the celebration. All the lords of the Philistines were there. There were many, many people inside the great temple of Dagon. Also, up on the roof there were three thousand people, watching what went on below! The people offered praise and glory to their god with the sacrifices.

At last, the people wanted Samson to be brought out so that they could laugh at him and

make fun of him. Samson was led out to the crowd by a young boy. Samson said to the boy, "Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them."

Samson then prayed to God, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

Samson may have felt that he was no longer worthy of life, yet God did honor his prayer and give him great strength again. Samson took hold of the two middle pillars that supported the huge temple, and he prayed to God again, "Let me die with the Philistines." Then Samson "bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

When Samson's brothers and all his father's house heard of his death, they came down to get his body. They took him back and buried him where his father's burying place was. Samson had "judged Israel [for] twenty years."

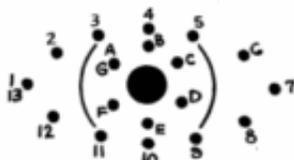
MEMORY VERSE:

"And he . . . said, I will go out as at other times before . . . And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."
 —Judges 16:20



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SAMSON SOUGHT REVENGE FOR THESE:





While the Philistines were celebrating their victory over Samson, something happened.

Follow the line from each letter to its box. Each path may cross others, but those are not turns. Then, write the letter in its box and read what happened.

The word search puzzle consists of a 5x7 grid of empty boxes. Letters are arranged in circles around the perimeter of the grid. Lines connect each letter to a specific box in the grid. The letters and their corresponding box positions are as follows:

- M** connects to the top-left box.
- G** connects to the top row, second box.
- S** connects to the top row, third box.
- N** connects to the top row, fourth box.
- R** connects to the top row, fifth box.
- I** connects to the top-right box.
- H** connects to the second row, first box.
- A** connects to the second row, seventh box.
- G** connects to the third row, first box.
- A** connects to the third row, seventh box.
- N** connects to the fourth row, first box.
- S** connects to the fourth row, seventh box.
- I** connects to the fifth row, first box.
- W** connects to the fifth row, seventh box.
- A** connects to the bottom row, first box.
- O** connects to the bottom row, second box.
- E** connects to the bottom row, third box.
- A** connects to the bottom row, fourth box.
- S** connects to the bottom row, fifth box.
- R** connects to the bottom-right box.

Samson prayed to God for strength once more. How does this story end?



Samson Loses His Hair