

God's Providence in God's People

Contra Costa Gospel Church
Adult Sunday School

THE JUDGES (Part 8)

We now arrive at the most famous of the Samson stories – his relationship with Delilah. Even though the Samson narrative encompasses four chapters, with only one dealing with Delilah, when most people think of Samson they instinctively think of “Samson AND Delilah.”

However, as good readers of the Bible, we must remember that even this familiar story of his love affair with Delilah must be read in context with the rest of the account of Samson. What do we already know of him and his character? What about his commitment to the Lord? And to his vow? All of this prior knowledge about him will come into play as we read this final tragic account of his last battle and subsequent death.

- 1) The first story in Judges 16 is about his late night visit to a prostitute. There are a few different elements of Samson's character that are again brought to light in this short interlude. Which of these Samson characteristics do you see?

- 2) Delilah is introduced in 16:4. Three times she nags him for the secret of his strength and each time he tells her a lie, which she tries to use against him. You would think that he would have figured out her plan, but well, this is Samson; he is blinded when it comes to women. Finally, in 16:17 he reveals to her the source of his strength: his long hair.
 - a. It's very likely Samson knows that she will use this information against him (because of the three previous instances). Based on this assumption, what does Samson think of his Nazirite vow? How do you know?

 - b. I'm going to suggest that his hair is NOT really his source of strength, despite what the text says. Is this correct? Why or why not?

- 3) In 16:21 we read that the Philistines captured “Public Enemy #1” and gouged his eyes out. Why is this apropos for Samson? How is this also apropos for the leader/judge of Israel?

- 4) In 16:30 Samson brings down the temple of Dagon, the Philistine god, killing himself and everyone else in it (about 3000 Philistines). Based on what we have read previously

regarding his constant battles with the Philistines, why is it that this was seemingly the only possible ending to this narrative – everyone’s death?

- 5) How does Samson compare with other judges that we have studied? Better? Worse? The same? Why?