

Judges 13-16

It is wonderful to be here with you all tonight.

Please turn in your bibles to the Book of Judges; we will be in Chapters 13-16 tonight.

Let us pray before we go any further.

Well, we have to come to the Seventh and final cycle of oppression for the Jews during this time of Judges.

The Philistines will have their turn as God's means of Chastening for the nation of Israel.

And the Philistines will be Israel's overlords until the time of the kings of Israel, and will be finally defeated under King David.

The Philistines were sea faring people who migrated from Greece to the Coastal regions of Canaan.

The cities of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron became their principle cities.

They had impressive military skills, and were much more superior in might to that of the Hebrews.

And during this time, they will move inland to oppress Israel.

Now it is important to note that Joshua in his blitz through Canaan already conquered much of this area, but the Israeli's were not able to hold the territory.

In fact, God specifically told Joshua at the end of his life,

Josh. 13:1-4 Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. 2 This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all that of the Geshurites, 3 from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines — the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites;

Josh 13:6 them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you.

God had promised Israel victory over this mighty people group, but they never had the faith to occupy the territory, and disobedience comes at a great cost to Israel.

They will now find themselves in bondage to a people group that should be conquered.

This is a great lesson for those sins in our life, that we are not willing yet to let go of, God is telling us to rid ourselves of the compromise, to be cleansed, yet often times, because they are not an immediate threat, we allow the compromise to linger.

Before long, those, what seemed to be non-threatening compromises have led to bondage.

I see it often, on social media, a Christian, will start social drinking, it is not that big of a deal, a post with a wine glass, or a beer with a friend.

And it seems so harmless, but God's Word warns us against such compromises, and it is not long, before I see the person, now at clubs, bars and fully embracing nightlife.

Then the woes and consequences of such a life, as their marriage suffers, finances are strained, kids following their example.

And before they know it, the Philistines are ruling over them, they are in bondage.

Israel should have dealt with the Philistines years ago, but they grew complacent and rebellious, and they will reap what they have sown.

And we will now enter into the seventh period of oppression.

And God will raise up a final hero, the last Judge, until the nation demands a king from God.

Samson is a man who started with such great potential, he could have easily been one of Israel's greatest deliverers and heroes.

Yet, as we often see in scripture, it is not how a man begins; it is really about how he finishes.

And Samson, will finish in tragedy.

As believers we can learn from Samson, the importance of not growing weary or complacent in our work for the Lord.

Our mindset should be for the long haul, not the here and now, so at the end of our life and ministry here on earth we can say as Paul did in **2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**

So let us look at this man's origins....

The Birth of Samson(cf. Num. 6:1-21)

13:1 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

Now it is very important here to point out, that this time Israel never asks to be delivered from the hand of the Philistines, and we will actually see evidence that they were quite content with their lot in life.

It is a fearful thing when a person gets accustomed with their bondage, and simply learns to accept their miserable condition.

Here Israel's contentment will lead to their longest term in bondage, 40 years...

But God acts none-the-less...

2 Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. 3 And the

Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

4 Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. 5 For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

We see here a man of the tribe of Dan, named Manoah.

Zorah is about fifteen miles from Jerusalem, and borders the Philistines.

Now, as we see in scripture often, when God is about to do something special in this world, He sends an angel.

And here we see the Angel of the Lord, or as we have discussed before, this is most likely Jesus, or the pre-incarnate Christ here on the pages of the Old Testament.

The Angel of the Lord is sent to Manoah's wife, who is barren.

And we see God sees this woman's condition, and in this day she would be considered cursed.

Manoah's wife is here promised a baby son.

Now it is interesting, with all the other judges, we have seen God use, they were already grown and had some life experience.

Here we see God is setting apart a baby, from the womb.

And look the mother is instructed to start her mothering in the womb.

She was responsible not to drink alcohol, or eat anything unclean.

What a tragedy today, that a baby in the womb often times is viewed as a troublesome thing, many today see babies as a menace, and will not even call a child in the womb more than a fetus.

We see God is very concerned for this child that will be in his mother.

Each baby is a gift from God and a miracle.

She not only is given instructions on how to carry the child, but also how to raise the child.

This chosen deliverer's story actually starts with his parents.

Samson's parents will have the responsibility to raise their child as a Nazarite, set apart to their God.

The Nazarite requirements are found in Numbers chapter 6, and mainly they were those who took a vow, and consecrated themselves to the Lord for a certain period of time.

Some very important restrictions for the Nazarites were, that they do not cut their hair, nor are they to have anything to do with grape vines and alcohol.

They were to abstain from touching a dead corpse as well, they were to remain ceremonially clean.

However, as we see here, and possibly with John the Baptists, some were called not to a simple time period but to a lifetime vow.

This would be something Manoah and his wife would have to teach their son.

God had claimed their child, and the parents had to train him for the world God called him too.

Understand tonight, God has entrusted us with our children, their lives and futures are dependent on us raising them in the ways of God.

**Prov. 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.**

I have seen church going parents live as though they have more time, and they push off the child's training, they think they will have more time later.

It's just not convenient right now for them... They are hoping the Children's Ministry worker handles the Bible stories for them.

And before they know their babies are teens, and they have missed valuable years of raising their children in Truth.

They find themselves scrambling in a panic to try to influence them somehow through all the noise of adolescence.

The training starts in the womb, and through those younger years.

It is vital that you use every opportunity to teach your children the proper world view, and to teach them to see through the delusion that surrounds us.

Begin to pray for them even in the womb, that God would set them apart.

Or they will be lost when they are grown.

Manoah and his wife have a huge responsibility here...

Now notice at the end of verse 5, Samson would only **begin** to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

He would not complete this work; his ministry only lasted 20-years within the 40-year era of the Philistines.

His life seems to overlap with that of the Eli the priest who we will learn about in 1 Samuel.

Let's read now as Manoah has a prayer answered to meet this Angel of the Lord...

6 So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name. 7 And He said to me, 'Behold,

you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death."

8 Then Manoah prayed to the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."

9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. 10 Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the other day has just now appeared to me!"

11 So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?"

And He said, "I am."

12 Manoah said, "Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"

13 So the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. 14 She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

15 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You."

16 And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord." (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the Lord.)

17 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?"

18 And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"

19 So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on — 20 it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar — the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.

21 When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the Lord.

22 And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!"

23 But his wife said to him, "If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He

have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these at this time."

So Manoah's wife immediately tells her husband, and we can be impressed with this man's devotion to his wife.

He trusts her as she relays this story to him.

Perhaps this is an indication that there were still praying households in Israel, and these two are expecting God to move in their land once again.

Manoah, after hearing this story, goes to petition his God once more, and he asks for a special encounter as well.

And God sent the Angel of the Lord back to his wife, who then runs and gets her husband.

And Manoah, followed his wife, and he gets to ask a question of his own now.

He accepts all that the Angel of the Lord spoke to his wife, but he wants to know what many father's today are concerned about, what will he do for work!

It is wonderful that their son will be set apart for the Lord's work, but how will he provide for himself?

But the Angel of the Lord does not answer that question, He only repeats what he instructed the woman.

God's Word already instructed Manoah in **Deut. 6:6-7**

6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Sometimes we as parents want to have the future revealed to us, what will our kids be, what will they do, will they be successful, or dead beats?

But God's Word instructs us to raise them knowing God's Word, and to be focused on teaching them truth.

Manoah, already has instructions on how to raise his son, all that is necessary is found in God's Word.

And Manoah was satisfied with the response he got from the Angel of the Lord, and wanting to be a good host he offers a meal.

God's people should be known for their hospitality.

You cannot come under my roof without Jess offering you some food.

But the Messenger of God here refuses the offer, but suggests that Manoah offer a burnt offering to the Lord.

Their son was a gift from the Lord, and a burnt offering was an offering that stated the worshipper was wholly dedicated to the Lord.

Manoah interjects before the offering, and boldly asks the Messenger's name, it is "wonderful."

Remember Isaiah the prophet declared one of the Messiah's names will be Wonderful in **Isa 9:6**

**And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Surely, this is the Son of God in our story...

The offering is consumed, and notice Manoah's fear in verse 22, "We will surely die, because we have seen God!"

And lucky for Manoah, his wife who seems to be the spiritual leader in this home, calms him with reason.

"Why would God kill us before we could accomplish the task He is asking of us?"

So we read now in verse 24...

**24 So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.
25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.**

Samson means "Sunny" or "brightness" and will become God's light upon the darkness of the land.

He surely was a bright spot in Manoah and his wife's life.

We see the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him and set him apart.

Understand, this is the key to Samson's success, not his long hair.

His hair was simply a symbol of his dedication to God.

It is something to consider, that Samson perhaps was not that great in stature as we see in modern art or film, he may have been an average man's size, we see it is only when the Spirit of God comes upon him does his strength come to him.

Remember God uses the weak things to bring His name Glory.

God perhaps would not get the glory if Samson was a beef cake, yoked and built for battle.

This is something to consider here, we do not get anything in the records of his size, just that the Spirit of God comes upon him....

Now, remember this man was called to deliver Israel from the Philistines, yet we see him fraternizing with the enemy next...

Samson's Philistine Wife

14:1 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of

the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

3 Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?"

And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well."

4 But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord — that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

We see here immediately in Samson's career that although he was a man of faith, he was unfaithful.

Samson was raised to honor God, in a godly home, and his parents warn him here of following his passions.

Samson living by sight here, he dishonors his parents and demands that they get the girl who pleases his eyes.

Samson's passions overrule the Word of God which spoke about the heathen nations in Canaan, **Deut. 7:1**

3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

What folly when a man is caught in the passion of the lust of the eyes rather than believing the Word of God.

Samson, the youth was showing to be a man who lived only for himself.

He is totally disregarding the nation he was called to deliver, and demands his parents get him the woman.

You see it was the parent's job in antiquity to handle the ordeal of marriage for their children.

And we see here the folly in Manoah's parenting here.

He and his wife seemingly have spoiled their special son, this is a child led home.

And when the children rule the home, the home is unbiblical and heading for ruin.

I am sure Manoah thought letting Samson be the center of attention and catering to his every needs, was a good thing.

They perhaps at first thought they were loving him as they catered to his every demand.

**Prov. 13:24 He who spares his rod hates his son,
But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.**

Listen, if you have a household that is run around the happiness of a child, if you make every decision based upon a child's wants, if you let the child dictate what you do and how you spend your money, if you allow a child to make demands of you.

You are spoiling the child, and when they are grown, they will either become your lifelong dependent or they will live a reckless life of rebellion.

We are entrusted to these little lives to raise them in the way they should go.

Deut. 6:1-2 “Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2 that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Notice this instruction is for the grandparents as well.

Our main objective in life is to raise them up in the ways of God.

Now, grandparents have a huge role in this as well.

We just had a grandma buy our kids season passes to Knott’s Berry Farm, and it was a very cool thing to do, and we were blessed by it.

But our Sofia, prayed the night after we went down there for the first time.

“God, help Grandma not to spend so much money on us, we have our own money Lord.”

I thought that was special, because too many kids today could care less about spending all of Grandma and Grandpa's money.

We have to be careful not to spoil the child, don't let your kids rule over you, it is unbiblical and it hurts the household.

So Manoah can't control his hormonal teenage son, and he caves to his demands....

5 So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.

Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. 6 And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

Now this is an interesting place for a Nazarite to be, in a Vineyard.

Perhaps this was God sending a warning to Samson, not to go any further.

But Samson as he is away from his parents, kills this lion with his bare hands.

Again notice it was not his impressive size or strength that gained the victory, but the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.

He kept this a secret, perhaps because he knew better than to be in a vineyard.

We see more compromise in the man Samson as he continues on...

7 Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. 8 After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion. 9 He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

Now, there is some debate as to whether Samson should be touching the dead carcass of a lion, because the Nazarite vow only simply states if a person dies and touches them they are defiled.

But the fact that he kept it a secret speaks to some degree he was hiding this for a reason.

His appetite, the lust of the flesh has now caused this man to fall further away into rebellion against the God who called him and set him apart.

10 So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. 11 And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

This is interesting here, we see Samson was a loner.

And we will see this all throughout this account.

All the other judges were able to lead others into battle.

Now it really seems like Samson was a momma's boy, who was so full of himself, that nobody wanted to be around him.

He seems to be the type that flaunted his gifts, and perhaps liked to be flexing in front of a mirror with himself rather than socialize with others that he looked down upon.

He is found friendless here, so his enemies produce friends for him at the feast. Hired friends.

Understand, a leader must be friendly to be able to lead others.

This man Samson is narcissistic and it does not seem to bother him one bit he has hired friends.

2 Cor. 6:14-15 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

And "Sunny's" light is now dimming as he is being friendly with the enemy.

He plays games with them next...

12 Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you

thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. 13 But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing."

Which would be very costly for either side....

And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."

14 So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet."

Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

15 But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? Is that not so?"

16 Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me."

And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained it to my father or my mother; so should I explain it to you?" 17 Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people. 18

So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down:

"What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them:

"If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!"

We see here now, the proud Samson loses control of his tongue and in arrogance he poses this riddle.

And he uses a reference to his own hidden sin.

This really shows he did not take his Nazarite vow very seriously, and made jokes and fun out of his compromise.

Now these hired friends of Samson are not truly friends, and any time the people of God make unholy alliances they usually pay for it some way or another.

It is the body of Christ alone that we are bound to in Koinonia, and holy and deep fellowship, rooted and grounded in selfless love.

When we try to befriend the world, they know nothing of this kind of connection, and they will use you, and take what they can from you.

Here the uncircumcised Philistines threaten Samson's wife, and they convince her to manipulate her spiritually dense fiancé.

And it says for seven days she wept on her husband and on the seventh day, she finally cracked him.

It is probably because the seventh day was the day that they consummated the marriage.

And Samson was letting his passions overwhelm his reason once again.

He lets up, and tells her the answer, for which she immediately tells her countrymen.

And Samson, in a moment of whit, gives them another poem, for which he refers to his bride as a heifer.

But remember God is sovereign, and even in Samson's failure, He will use him...

Remember what was written in verse 4...

4 that it was of the Lord — that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

God was using this man's folly to deliver Israel

Look at verse 19 now...

19 Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. 20 And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

Samson leaves the wedding hot in his anger, and God's Spirit came upon him, he went a good distance to Ashkelon, and killed thirty men and took their clothes to keep his end of the bargain.

And he left his bride in anger and went home to his mommy and daddy.

He knows momma will coddle him and protect him from feeling the consequences of his choices.

And in verse 20, Samson's wife was given to one of his fake Philistine friends, the one who was his best man.

And some time will pass, and Samson the irrational, will remember and regret his emotional decision to leave his woman, and he tries to go be with her again.

Samson Defeats the Philistines

15:1 After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into her room." But her father would not permit him to go in.

2 Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."

3 And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" 4 Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes (Or Jackals); and he took torches, turned the foxes tail

to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves.

Although he never consummated his relationship, Samson assumed he was legally married and went with a gift to see his wife.

But the woman he loved was with another man.

Samson was so enraged he refused the offer of a younger more beautiful bride.

So Samson in a mighty display of skill and quick action, was able to gather up 300 jackals, and put them in pairs and tied a torch to their tails, and let them burn down the Philistine grain, vineyards and orchards.

But we will see next violence breeds violence and this triggers a tit for tat battle.

6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?"

And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

7 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." 8 So he attacked them hip and thigh

with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

His wife and her family are murdered, and Samson is forced to avenge this horrible deed.

It says he attacked hip and thigh, which was an idiom that meant various things, it could mean vicious, or a wrestling term, or that he piled the bodies upon each other.

After this incredible battle, he goes to the cleft of Etam, perhaps finally mom and dad cut him off.

They gave him the right kind of ultimatum, "if you go to the Philistines again, you are not welcome back here."

So he is living comfortably in a cave.

This is healthy for parents, to let their children live with the consequences of their choices, or they may never learn.

So while Samson is in the cave, the Philistines deploy their armies.

9 Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?"

So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us."

11 Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do

you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?"

And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

12 But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines."

Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves."

We do see for the first time humility and care for his brethren in this season of cave living.

He does not want his brethren to attack him, because he does not want to kill the men of Judah as he did to the Philistines.

So they agree to a method of arrest next...

13 So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

Now, this scene really speaks to the spiritual state of Israel at this time.

Here they have a mighty hero, that God has set apart, yet they are content to be oppressed.

They rather appease the Philistines, who they claim rule over them, than please their True King, their God.

And to Samson's shame, he is a poor leader, perhaps his ego, and his desire to work alone, causes him to fail to gather the people behind him.

Think about this, this is Israel's most powerful judge, and not one person has the stomach for a fight.

Apathy is the greatest enemy of the people of God.

14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. 15 He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. 16 Then Samson said:

"With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!"

17 And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.

18 Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the Lord and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" 19 So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore,

which is in Lehi to this day. 20 And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

So Samson's own people saw him as a troublemaker, instead of a hero.

They brought him bound with new ropes to their enemy, they just wanted to be left alone.

This is the only time during Samson's judgeship that Israel is seen gathering an army of any kind, and it was to arrest their own.

Samson was a poor leader indeed.

Poor leadership, during a season of apathy are the pathway to folly.

Even in this incident, as Samson tore the fresh ropes, no Israelites rallied to him in battle.

They watched him pick up a fresh, solid jawbone of a donkey, and slaughter a thousand men.

And no one wanted to share in the victory here.

And we see once again a glimpse of Samson's machismo as he makes a song about himself.

And he named the place Ramath Lehi, or literally Jawbone Height.

This guy loves himself.

But we see here God reminds him that he is only a man, and his thirst overcomes him.

And Samson is forced to cry out to God for water.

And God supernaturally supplies it for him out of a hollow place.

Samson's spirit is returned to him and he named that place En Hakkore or Spring of the Caller.

And in verse 20 we get the summery statement that he judged Israel 20 years.

So in the next chapter we will see the great folly of this super hero of a man...

Once again, Samson will be found in enemy territory entertained by the enemy...

Samson and Delilah

16:1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. 2 When the Gazites were told, "Samson has come here!" they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him." 3 And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

Samson once again controlled by his lusts, he is a slave to his passions.

How could he lead others if he could not master himself?

So many gifted and promising leaders within the church are sat on the bench because they can never master their passions.

They are always handicapped by their passions and pleasures.

Many are enslaved to their screens and their virtual lovers, and God eventually gives them over to their passions, and they remain fruitless all their lives.

Samson the Nazarite is ensnared in darkness, this man named "Sunny" spends his time in dark places and with sinful woman.

And this will be his ruin.

Gaza was about forty miles into enemy territory, and word got out that the Philistine enemy was in the city.

They decided to wait until morning to find him, as the 20-30 foot gates were closed at night.

But Samson leaves in the middle of the night, and he picked up the huge doors, with their giant posts, and bars, and carried them forty miles to Hebron.

He literally possessed the gate of his enemy, which then was a metaphor for defeating your enemy.

And after this, Samson's passions led him to another woman, whose name would never be forgotten.

4 Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her,

"Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver."

6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you."

7 And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

8 So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them. 9 Now men were lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with."

11 So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

If they knew anything of this man, they would know that they already tried this, but they are hopeful that he is telling his mistress the truth.

12 Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And men were lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

13 Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with."

And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom" —

14 So she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

Now, once again we see the slow compromise of Samson, as he gives away that it has to do with his hair...

Now it seems each of these times Delilah was playful with him to see if it was true, the Philistines never show themselves.

They never came out from their hiding spot, and they lose interest in Delilah's help, and leave, she will have to go call them back.

You see money is a powerful persuader, and she is desperate for riches.

She wants that silver, and next we read...

15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies." 16 And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death,

Prov. 25:24 It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

His soul was vexed to death by this woman... and it says in verse 17...

17 that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart." So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand. 19 Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. 20 And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself

free!" But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

21 Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.

22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

He gave his heart away, and was betrayed.

She has the locks of hair cut off his head, and the great Samson became a weakling.

Israel's great hero has his eyes taken from him, and he is blinded and given over to the worse kind of slavery, pushing a grinder stone in prison.

The sad statement at the end of verse 20, "he did not know the Lord had departed from him."

His power was from the Lord, and he broke his vow to the Lord, and the Spirit departed from him.

And this man named "Sunny" is no longer able to see light, and darkness is now his only reality.

But we see a glimpse of light here as we are told his hair began to grow again.

Samson Dies with the Philistines

23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said:

"Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!"

24 When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said:

"Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead."

25 So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. 26 Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them."

This man who killed thousands of Philistines is now such a little of a threat to his enemy that they have a boy guarding him.

Again, I think Samson was a scrawny guy, and only when the Spirit of God came upon him did he have any strength.

He was a momma's boy, protected and coddled, and apart from God, I don't see anything manly about this man Samson.

And it seems as though his great humiliation has allowed his ego to be dealt with, and it took him losing his eye sight to finally see things clearly.

2 Cor. 12:10 For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Samson was not humbled or weak enough to be used to his potential.

Yet we see now, in his humiliation, he is even willing to give his own life, to deliver his people.

27 Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there — about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.

28 Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!" 29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. 30 Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.

31 And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.

And at Samson's death only is he really used to his potential with the Lord.

This was such a weakening blow to the Philistines that we see Samson's family was able to freely come and recover his lifeless body from the ruins.

And where Samson first was Overcome with the Spirit in the beginning of his life, in Zorah, his life now ends their too.

This man had such a great potential, he could have been the greatest hero of Israel.

His decline perhaps started with his parents, who seemingly spoiled their child, Samson never grew to be a man, and he was protected and sheltered.

We see his personal decline begin when he disagreed with his parents, and went against the will of God for his life.

He married a pagan girl, who appealed only to his fleshly passions.

He then defiled himself and continued to disregard the Word of God, and he let his emotions and feelings drive his decision making.

He was a man with no reasoning skills or discipline.

He indulged in sin, while claiming to be a Nazarite.

**Prov. 25:28 Whoever has no rule over his own spirit
Is like a city broken down, without walls.**

I imagine some of us here tonight are playing with sin, justifying it by the pleasures it produces.

“How can something that feels so good be so bad?”

Please consider this man Samson before us tonight as an example.

Your sins will find you out.

All of us who claim Jesus as our Savior, have His Spirit living in us, but we can hinder His work in our lives.

1 Thess. 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

Don't toy around with compromise, shake off that apathy, and press into the fullness of all that God has for you.

Listen, you have so much potential to be used of God, any man or woman wholly surrendered to the Lord Jesus, is a mighty tool in the hands of God.

Stop, whatever it is, the path is not worth it, come back to Jesus, cling to Him and His Word.

It is only through obedience that blessing and success are assured to us.

If you are struggling tonight with anything, we are here for you.

Trust me, we are all men and women with like passions.

And daily we have to ask the Lord to deliver us from the evil one, and lead us not unto temptation.

Get prayer tonight, during this last song, come forward and get prayer from one of the elders that will be up here.

Let's pray...