

## Samson Part 3

Samson meets and falls in love with Delilah.

We're still in the same area as the Gazaen prostitute, Samson meets Delilah who is from Sorek, on the border between Philistine country and the Israeli county known as Dan,

This is the first woman of whom the Bible says, 'he loved her'. The woman from Timnah only 'pleased Samson well' whereas Delilah, he loved, though he did not marry Delilah. It's likely that if that question arose it was Delilah that would have snuffed that candle out, it seems that his passion for Delilah was unrequited. We can see that when fairly early on in that relationship, the lords of the Philistines were without any negotiation able to convince her to extract from Samson his deepest innermost secret; the source of his supernatural powers for a tidy sum of 1,100 pieces of silver. There doesn't seem to be much deliberation there does there? The offer isn't dressed up or sugar coated: 'by what means we may overpower him to afflict him.' There's no reassurances about Samson's welfare sought or offered. Deal on!

Delilah gets straight to work on her boyfriend, using all her female wiles to elicit his innermost secret. Samson had been here before so he tested Delilah with a false answer, new bowstrings; she gets the Philistines to provide the requisite props which she applies as Samson sleeps and wakes him with an alarm. Samson is able to shake the strings off with ease.

Same happens with new ropes and tangling his hair into a loom, same result. That bag of silver was slipping away. Delilah goes into overdrive. 'How can you say you love me ... when ... ? Still no reply. Days later, Delilah is still in nagging mode until Samson's soul was vexed to death. He truly loved her and trusted Delilah with this innermost secret because clearly he did love her. Upon what basis did he trust her? She'd proven twice that she was wanting his destruction, so what was Samson thinking about, trusting this wily vixen with his survival secrets?

Ever been in a one way unrequited relationship? Something about this girl that had Samson besotted. All the alarm bells silenced, he'd give her both kidneys if she needed them; but she wouldn't walk to the end of the street for him. Eventually she managed to get hold of this innermost secret and straight away put into motion the plan to enable the Philistines to overpower and take her lover. She gets payment up front and gets a servant to give Samson a haircut whilst he slept. Delilah wakes Samson with an alarm, he awakes and goes into fight mode but this time with no strength because God had left him. That's the last we hear of Delilah; she'd got what she wants, she was off. The Philistines arrest Samson and immediately gouge out his eyes; Samson's left blind and he's set to work tethered to a grinding stone like a donkey.

Why did God leave Samson? God had ignored so many of Samson's indiscretions / rebellions; what was it about the length of Samson's hair that proved to be the last straw on the camel's back? Maybe it wasn't his hair that was the issue. Maybe God was angry about how He'd been pretty much disregarded and Delilah was the centre of Samson's affection and adoration. Samson was born with the express purpose of freeing Israel from its oppressor. He was given muscles on muscles, a 24 pack, not just a 6 pack and filled with testosterone and Holy Spirit in equal measures. Samson paid little regard to his vocation. His focus was on experiencing lustful gratification with Philistine girls and when he hit a problem he'd go on a killing spree which in turn resulted in the Philistine authorities

plotting and trying to arrest him.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-7, James 4:7 and 1 Corinthians 6:17-18. It's the antithesis of Samson.

The Philistine feast - God quickly puts down a challenge from a jerk that has the stupidity to threaten Him. Let's read 2 Kings 18:32-34 & then chapter 19:35-37 and there are many other similar examples in the Bible. Back to the story; a feast is arranged to worship their god Dagon, thanking him for his help in overcoming Samson. Well that wouldn't have gone down well with God. In attendance were all the lords of the Philistines, anyone who was anyone was there, 3000 in total. With drinks on the house things got pretty raucous. 'Bring out Samson so we can have a laugh.'

Samson is brought into the hall and he prays his 2nd recorded prayer. He prays for the return of his strength to avenge what the Philistines had done to his eyes. Nothing to do with how they had oppressed Israel for 40 years or the worship of this strange god; it was his eyes that Samson was most annoyed with. Maybe with questionable motive, Samson prayed the right prayer and God answered it. Then you can imagine, much to the bemusement of the crowd Samson starts to push on the central pillar supporting the roof of this huge building. Ridicule turns to fear to outright panic when then the pillar starts to wobble and then tumble with all those people inside it.

In summary, Samson's previous victims were random Philistines that happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. This was different. The deceased included local and national government officials, the military, nobility and businessmen. With them gone, it's likely that civil society would have crumbled: this was the beginning of the demise of the Philistine occupation of Israel as promised to Manoah and his wife just prior to Samson's birth.

We're not told how, whether that sparked a rebellion of the Jews or of the Philistine military.

Single-handedly Samson demolishes the temple killing all 3,000 attendees, more than he's killed during the rest of his life previously.

Lessons from Samson.

Deal with your addiction or even better ask God through His Holy Spirit to work with you on that. If God is not front and centre of your life, God's will will still be done but expect a bumpy ride. If you think you don't have an addiction, thank God for His protection but don't be complacent, Satan knows you better than you think, he knows your weaknesses and wants to exploit them to bring about your destruction and downfall. Have an honest think about your strengths and weaknesses.

Samson was a man with flaws. He was arrogant and disregarded God's laws and regulations. He developed a sex addiction. He had a fierce and murderous temper. He made no attempt to address these flaws, rather he constantly sought to indulge them. And yet God was still able to use Samson to start to bring about His deliverance of Israel from the Philistines.

We see a similar theme in the book of Jonah.

Had Samson been more compliant and obedient to God's will, maybe His life might have taken a different path. Example Jephthah in Judges 11:1-6 and verses 29-31. Jephthah was an outcast and a gang leader going out on robbing raids. He was so good at it, the elders turned to him to lead Israel's rebellion against the Ammonites. Soon afterwards he found God and made a crazy vow.

So how did this flawed man make it into the 'Hall of Fame' in Hebrews 11:32? Let's read Jeremiah 31:18-20 and Hebrews 12:6.

In some ways, Samson's life is an allegory of Israel. He was chosen and set aside by God, for God. However, he did not live up to his calling but instead sought pleasure with foreign women. God was patient and overlooked his indiscretions and in the end the women he sought turned on him and helped to engineer his captivity. He was blinded and imprisoned but eventually in a moment of desperation, he turned back to God and asked for his strength to be returned to help him overcome his enemies. Some believe that the Jews, having disregarded God's covenant and laws, were captured and blinded but according to prophecy, will one day call upon God who will come to their rescue.