

Samson

Flawed Servant of God

Scriptures: Judges Chapters 13-16 (references below are from Judges); Hebrews 11:32

Background:

Samson was a Nazirite. Nazirites demonstrated total consecration to the Lord by observing an ascetic (self denying) lifestyle: abstained from grape products including wine, non-Kosher foods, haircuts and contact with dead bodies. It was a life-long vow (other Nazirites include Samuel and John the Baptist).

Samson's life purpose was to begin deliverance of Israel from the hands of the wicked Philistines (13:5). Samson led Israel for twenty years, and was included in the "faith hall-of-fame" in Hebrews 11 (verse 32).

Samson was incredibly physically strong but unfortunately morally weak. Despite Samson's flaws he was used to accomplish God's purposes.

Samson's Incredible Feats of Strength:

- Killed a lion with his bare hands (14:6)
- Slaughtered thirty Philistines at one time (14:19)
- Killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (15:15)
- Carried off the huge gates to Gaza (16:3)
- Crushed thousands of Philistines by pushing down the temple pillars (16:25-30)

Samson's Major Flaws – Lust and Anger:

- Married a Philistine woman, who was later killed indirectly as result of Samson's anger (14:1-3; 15:1-6)
- Ate honey from a lion carcass (14:8-9)
- Had sex with a prostitute (16:1)
- Fell for the Philistine Delilah (16:4)
- Other instances of anger (e.g. 15:7-8)

Samson's Death (from Quest Study Bible):

In Samson's death the purpose of his life was realized. God had raised Samson up to punish the sinful Philistines and to begin Israel's deliverance from them. Even on this occasion – in the temple of their god Dagon – the Philistines saw Samson's imprisonment as a sign of Dagon's victory over the God of Israel. But what the Philistines were celebrating, God was working through Samson to halt such blasphemy, punish the Philistines, and destroy the temple of a false god.

Life Lessons from Samson's Story:

- 1) Having good parents and God's blessing does not guarantee us a good life – we also have personal responsibility.
- 2) We should be faithful to our commitments to the Lord (e.g. Nazirite vow); breaking our commitments may have negative consequences.
- 3) Our uncontrolled lusts and anger can get us and others in trouble.
- 4) God has a justified wrath against sin, blasphemy, and worship of false gods.
- 5) God can use flawed people to accomplish His purposes AND
- 6) God can empower us to do super natural accomplishments!