

Helpless, Sightless, Glorious!

Judges 16:1-3

Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her. The Gazites were told, "Samson has come here." And they surrounded the place and set an ambush for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, "Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him." But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and

took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron.

We know by now that Samson does not learn. We will expect increasing recklessness and danger, and an outstanding act of supernatural strength, and we will get them.

- Tim Keller



Judges 16:4-6

After this **he loved** a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “**Seduce him**, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him. And we will each give you **1,100 pieces of silver.**” So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound, that one could subdue you.”

Judges 16:7-9

Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.” Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now she had men lying in ambush in an inner chamber. And she said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he snapped the bowstrings, as a thread of flax snaps when it touches the fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

Judges 16:10-12

Then Delilah said to Samson, “Behold, you have mocked me and told me lies. Please tell me how you might be bound.” And he said to her, “If they bind me with new ropes that have not been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.” So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And the men lying in ambush were in an inner chamber. But he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

They say to each other: I am with you because I love you, but they mean: I am with you because you are so useful to me. Doubtless there was a lot of passion and romance here- but it was all done out of a motive of self-enhancement, rather than self-giving for the growth of the other. Samson was using Delilah to get sexual love and the thrill of danger. She was using him to get fortune and fame. It is a pretty obvious taking instead of giving, on both sides.

- Tim Keller



Judges 16:13-14

Then Delilah said to Samson, “Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me how you might be bound.” And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web and fasten it tight with the pin, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.” So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head and wove them into the web. And she made them tight with the pin and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!”

Judges 16:15-16

And 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 you have not told me where your great strength lies.” And when **she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death.**

Judges 16:17

And **he told her all his heart**, and said to her, “A razor has never come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak and be like any other man.”

This is the paradox. The brave man who could strangle a lion cannot control himself. He can break the fetters with which his enemies bind him, but he ends up the prisoner of his own appetites.

- David Jackman



Judges 16:18-20

...she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up again, for he has told me all his heart.” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands. She made him sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and **his strength left him**... he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.”

Judges 16:20

But he did not know that **the LORD**
had left him.

While Samson talks about his strength,
the inspired author talks about the Lord!

- David Jackman



3 Vows Of The Nazarite in Numbers 6

No Contact With Dead Bodies

Judges 14:8-9 ...bees in the body of the lion, and honey. He scraped it out...eating as he went. And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate.

No Drinking

Judges 14:8-9 His father went down to the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there, for so the young men used to do.

No Razor

Judges 16:19 And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head

He had come to believe that his strength was simply his; that no matter what he did or how he lived he would not lose it. His self-deception was not just psychological, but theological. Samson was unable to see how dependent he was on God's grace. He had come to see his strength as an inalienable right, not a gift of God's mercy.

- Tim Keller



Judges 16:21

And the Philistines seized him and **gouged out his eyes** and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison.

Judges 14:3

But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for **she is right in my eyes.**”

Judges 16:23-24

Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to rejoice, and they said, **“Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand.”** And when the people saw him, they praised their god. For they said, “Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has killed many of us.”

We know it was the absence of Yahweh, not the power of Dagon that accounts for Samson's shame. But Samson's shame has become Yahweh's shame, for praise that belongs to Yahweh alone is being heaped at the lifeless feet of a helpless image, and because Yahweh's servant has been humiliated Yahweh also suffers humiliation.

- Dale Ralph Davis



Judges 16:25-27

And when their hearts were merry, they said, “Call Samson, that he may entertain us...” They made him stand between the pillars. And Samson said to the young man who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.” Now the house was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about 3,000 men and women, who looked on while Samson entertained.

Judges 16:28

Then Samson called to the LORD and said, “**O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once,**

Judges 16:29-30a

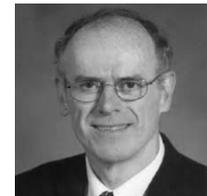
that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.” And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines.”

Judges 16:30b

Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it. **So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.**

Of course, there will be objections. Someone will argue that Israel– like Samson– does not deserve Yahweh’s help. So what else is new? Those who marshal such objections are frequently those who have little if any sense of their own depravity. And what of the Christian who has stupidly and miserably failed his Lord? Should he not find hope in seeing that being cast down does not mean being cast off? Should he not rejoice that he can call on Yahweh even from Dagon’s temple?

- Dale Ralph Davis



Judges 16:31

Then his brothers and all his family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had judged Israel twenty years.

The God who brings his people out of Egypt will surely fill every lesser need. Samson had to rename the place: Jawbone Hill became Caller's Spring. God's servants often do that, whenever they realize their endurance does not come from their own adrenaline but from Yahweh's refreshing grace.

- Dale Ralph Davis

