

Judges 16

Verse 1 - 3

Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. ² *When it was told* to the Gazites, saying, “Samson has come here,” they surrounded *the place* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, “*Let us wait* until the morning light, then we will kill him.” ³ Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.

Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

See Map 1605



Gaza was the last coastal town on the way down to Egypt. It is located two miles from the Mediterranean coast.

² ***When it was told to the Gazites, saying, “Samson has come here,” they surrounded *the place* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, “Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him.”***

If Samson desired the company of a harlot he didn't need to go deep into Philistine territory to do so. In addition, he was a well-known enemy of the Philistines and had to know he would be discovered.

³ ***Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.***

It was about 30 miles from Gaza to Hebron.

See Map 1610



Again this was an act of super human strength. The text doesn't say that the Spirit of God came upon him in a mighty way but does anyone doubt that was the case.

Thanks to an old guy living at Gezer we have a photo of this event.

See pic 1615



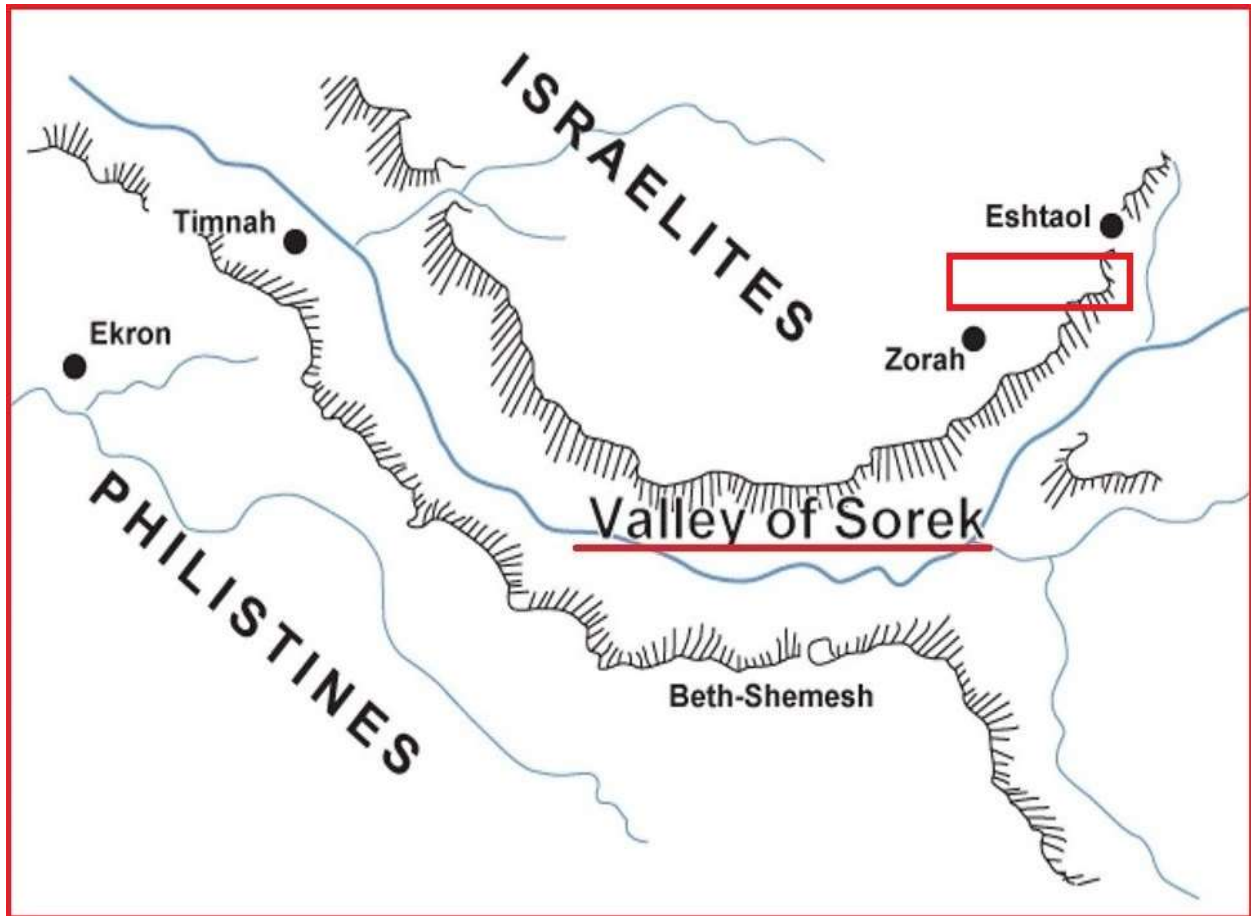
This is a good reason to be nice to old Gezer's. 😊

Verse 4 - 6

⁴ After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. ⁵ The lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and see where his great strength *lies* and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.” ⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you.”

⁴ After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

See map 1620



The valley of Sorek was near Samson's home. He lived between the two towns of Zorah and Eshtaol.

The Valley of Sorek means Grape Valley.

⁵ The lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and see where his great strength *lies* and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver.”

Knowing his past, what is the likelihood that this relationship will last?

The young Philistines threatened his wife in their attempt to get an answer to the riddle that Samson posed to them. Here the older lords of the Philistines offered a more dignified means of getting what they wanted.

The 1100 pieces of silver was worth about 4000 dollars. Multiply that by 5 lords and you have the nice sum of 20,000 dollars.

This was a major fortune during the time of Samson.

⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you.”

Hey Delilah, tell us how you really feel about Samson.

The lords of the Philistines should have given her some tips on how to be subtle because it appears she was clueless. But despite her approach, Gideon played along like this was all a game.

Verse 7 - 9

Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I will become weak and be like any *other* man.” ⁸ Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them. ⁹ Now she had *men* lying in wait in an inner room. And she said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he snapped the cords as a string of tow snaps when it touches fire. So his strength was not discovered.

Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I will become weak and be like any *other* man.

Lie #1

Verse 10 - 12

¹⁰ Then Delilah said to Samson, “Behold, you have deceived me and told me lies; now please tell me how you may be bound.” ¹¹ He said to her, “If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I will become weak and be like any *other* man.” ¹² So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” For the *men* were lying in wait in the inner room. But he snapped the ropes from his arms like a thread.

¹¹ He said to her, “If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I will become weak and be like any *other* man

Lie #2

Verse 13 - 14

¹³ Then Delilah said to Samson, “Up to now you have deceived me and told me lies; tell me how you may be bound.” And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web¹[and fasten it with a pin, then I will become weak and be like any other man.” ¹⁴ So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web]. And she fastened *it* with the pin and said to him, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.

And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web¹[and fasten it with a pin, then I will become weak and be like any other man.”

Lie #3

Verse 15 - 17

¹⁵ Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is.” ¹⁶ It came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death. ¹⁷ So he told her all *that* was in his heart and said to her, “A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and be like any *other* man.”

¹⁵ Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me?

Apparently this woman never spent any time in self-reflection.

¹⁶ It came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

His first wife did the same thing but she was under the pressure of a threat. In this case the woman is looking for a handsome payout.

It seems that Samson has some bad luck when it comes to picking a good woman.

¹⁷ **So he told her all *that was in his heart* and said to her, “A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and be like any *other man.*”**

This was a very foolish thing to do. It is not smart to open our hearts to anyone that we know is deliberately trying to deceive us.

Verse 18 - 22

¹⁸ **When Delilah saw that he had told her all *that was in his heart*, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he has told me all *that is in his heart.*” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands. ¹⁹ She made him sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him. ²⁰ She said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him. ²¹ Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison. ²² However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off.**

¹⁸ **When Delilah saw that he had told her all *that was in his heart*, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he has told me all *that is in his heart.*” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands.**

Jesus said it is not possible to serve two masters.

See Matthew 6:24

²⁴ **“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”**

This is true in our relationship with God and in our relationship with other people. This happens because money has a way of controlling people.

Money often becomes more important than the relationship. In this case the woman wanted the money more than she wanted Samson.

²⁰ She said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

When we break our covenant relationship with God we should not expect God to look the other way. If a spouse cheats on their mate should they expect that nothing will change in the relationship?

²¹ Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison. ²² However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off.

Actions have consequences and Samson suffered a huge humiliation for neglecting to protect the special relationship he had with God.

However, God had not given up on Samson and as he served his time of penance his hair and strength was slowly growing.

Verse 23 – 27

²³ Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said,

“Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands.”

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

**“Our god has given our enemy into our hands,
Even the destroyer of our country,
Who has slain many of us.”**

²⁵ It so happened when they were in high spirits, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may amuse us.” So they called for Samson from the prison, and he entertained them. And they made him stand between the pillars. ²⁶ Then Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand, “Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.” ²⁷ Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing *them*.

²³ Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said,

“Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands.”

There were temples erected to Dagon at Gaza and at Ashdod.

The ancient classical writers described this idol as, "half man and half fish.

See Pic 1625

Dagon



The Philistines believed he was the father of Baal.

There were many towns throughout Palestine that were named after Dagon.

1. Beth-dagon in Judah.

See Joshua 15:40

2. Caphar-dagon in Asher.

See Joshua 19:27

“Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands.”

The Philistines were bragging on Dagon, making him superior to The Lord. God chose to answer those taunts almost immediately.

²⁷ Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing *them*.

Scholars estimate that there were probably about 10,000 people in attendance. This is based on the fact that there were 3,000 on the roof alone.

Verse 28 - 31

²⁸ Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.” ²⁹ Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left. ³⁰ And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life. ³¹ Then his brothers and all his father’s household came down, took him, brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. Thus he had judged Israel twenty years.

²⁸ Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

Samson cried out to God for help knowing this would be his last chance to avenge the Philistines for gouging out his eyes.

Some people question why God would use a person like Samson to be a judge of Israel when most of what he did was based on getting revenge. Well, it takes a very special person to fight against the Philistines without any help from his countrymen.

There is no doubt that Samson was a flawed servant, but that should give us hope in our lives as we struggle with our fallen nature as we live for God.

³⁰ And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life.

We don't know exactly how many Philistines died in this last “battle” with Samson but we are told it was more than he killed during his life.

In 1973, an expedition excavated a temple in the Philistine city of Tel Quasile.

It had two large wooden columns on stone bases only a few feet apart in the center of the temple.

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

The author of Hebrews inscribed his name among the heroes of faith.

See Hebrews 11:32 - 34

³² And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of righteousness*, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.