

## Judges 16

**Introduction** – There are many literary parallels between Chapters 14-15 and Chapter 16. In both, a woman is ‘seen’ by Samson, she obtains and betrays a secret, Samson is bound, and there is a great slaughter of Philistines. But there is a great contrast. Three times in 14-15 the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Samson. In Chapter 16, amidst Samson’s sin, the Spirit is not mentioned, and then is mentioned as having departed.

**Samson (As Israel) Goes A Whoring** (vv1-3) – Before, representing Israel, Samson went down with pure motives to get a woman to be his bride (14:1); it was of the Lord. This time he ‘sees’ a woman with eyes of lust. And Samson is representing Israel again. Chapter 15 had concluded as each story of deliverance in the book of Judges concludes – *so-and-so* judged Israel for so many years. 16:1 really begins with the same pattern established back in 2:16-17. Samson is being led by his lusts just as Israel has been led by hers.

**A Safe Escape** – Samson goes deep into Philistine territory. He sleeps with a harlot. When he finds out that he is going to be attacked, he thwarts their plans with a pre-emptive strike. He sets the gates of the city on a hill where Hebron could see that Gaza was ripe for the picking. And then he leaves, and sleepy Israel does nothing. While Samson remains super-strong, there is no mention of the Spirit. While Samson may think he got out of that one, he is clearly on the wrong trajectory.

**Delilah The Betrayer** (vv4-5) – Samson continues to forsake his calling and his vows. Delilah will be the one who betrays him this time. She is enticed to turn him over for a great number of pieces of silver. Samson is probably not big and muscular, because Delilah and Samson begin to play guessing games with what kind of magic has brought this amazing power upon him. But the Philistines are not playing a game.

**Playing Games With Sin** (vv6-14) – Samson has fun ridiculing the Philistine’s belief in magic. But we also see Samson playing around with his vow. He mentions ‘seven’ and later even mentions his hair. Samson does not need to fear magic. But he does need to fear compromise, and Delilah playfully pouts and seduces her way to the truth.

**Blinded With Lust** (vv15-21) – Samson’s focus was primarily upon his lusts, and he had lulled himself into thinking he was invincible. Giving in to her vexing, Samson tells her that if his hair is shaved, his strength will leave him. Delilah lulls him to sleep upon her knees (a veiled allusion to his sexual immorality) and like the harlot in proverbs, her “*feet go down to death*” (Prov 5:5). Like Israel, Samson had been raised up out of a barren womb, set apart to be holy, received grace after grace, and deliverance after deliverance. Like Israel, Samson went whoring after other lovers, took God’s grace as license for any sin that pleased him. And like Israel, Samson is sent into exile.

**Sign of Repentance** (v22) – Not only is the mentioning of Samson’s hair growing back a sign of the stupidity of the Philistines, it is a sign of Samson’s humiliation, repentance, and restoration to his vow (when Nazirites had their head shaved for uncleanness, they would then let their hair grow back, returning to their vow). Samson’s strength is returning.

**Provoking the Lord** (vv23-27) – The Philistines call for a great party and their song is their theme. But Dagon had nothing to do with their victory. It was not Dagon’s power, but the Lord’s absence. They bring out Israel’s great *deliverer* and publicly mock him (v25), and we should see the shadows of *Another Deliverer*, betrayed for silver, blinded and mocked by the Roman guards (Luke 22:64).

**Vengeance is Mine** (vv28-31) – But the servant of the Lord will be avenged, for the Lord’s name will be avenged. The Lord answers the prayer of His suffering servant, and so Samson’s death does not picture a suicide, but a victorious self-sacrifice. Once again we are told of the burial of a judge, a memorial of sorts until the day that the Greater Samson would come, die, and leave His grave empty in complete victory over His and our enemies.

**Applications** – As we consider Samson as a man, representing Israel, or representing Christ, there are many applications.

**Flee Temptation** – Chapter 16 begins in Gaza in a harlot’s bed and ends in Gaza in a prison’s mill. Lust is a blindfold from the true perils of sin. The power of lust can destroy the strongest of men (Prov 7:21-27). But Samson represents a people as well, and physical adultery is a picture of spiritual idolatry. We are to see clearly that the strongest of nations and cultures will fall if they go a whoring after pagan cultures.

**The Weakness of Pride** – Self-flattery is rampant in our culture and in our church. First, even though we say that we believe in the depravity of man, we continue to act like *we* deserve it all because *we* accomplished it all. Second, we think we can toy with the temptress and not be entrapped. Men and nations that live like this are only setting themselves up for a big fall.

**Do Not Fear the Philistines (or the Secular Humanists)** – Why is the church so oppressed and suppressed in America and in the world today? We learn here that it is not because of the strength of any other god, including our nations god, demos, or secular humanism. It is the Lord with whom we must wrestle. If we are oppressed, it is because of our faithlessness. We are Ichabod. The glory has departed. When we please our Lord in worship and obedience, the tyrants will be destroyed.

**Repentance and the Mercy of God** – Being humbled and humiliated is often God’s way of bringing us to repentance. His hand of discipline may seem harsh at times, but we must remember that it is better to lose your eyes and save the soul, than keep them, and lose body and soul in hell (Matt 9:47). While delivered into exile, God still calls upon Israel to return, for He is merciful (Jer 3:12).