

The High Cost of Sin

As we conclude our study in the book of Judges and look at the final chapter of Sampson's life, let us be reminded about the high cost of sin with all of its shame and close by looking at the power of God with all of its glory.

I. Sampson's great escape: Judges 16:1-3

Chapter 15 ends by saying, "Sampson judged Israel for 20 years."

Twenty years have passed as we get into chapter 16 and this time, he travels deep into Philistine territory to a city called Gaza. The name "Gaza" means strong, so it would be safe to assume that the city was a heavily fortified.

No more lengthy marriage ceremonies for Sampson. He has found a way to gratify his lust quickly and easily without long term commitments. While he is there, word quickly spread that Sampson is in town. The Philistines surround the place and plan to kill him at dawn.

Verse 3 says, "Sampson lied down and arose at midnight."

When Sampson gets to the gate which is locked, he simply rips the doors & posts from the gate with violent force and carries the whole thing on his shoulders to the top of a hill.

Why did the author of Judges decide to include this event in the story? And how did he uproot the gate without the Philistines hearing the noise? For the first question, I believe this information shows that Sampson has not changed in fact, he's morally worse than before. Second, Sampson believes he is invincible. Why else would he boldly enter the land of the Philistines in plain sight? Third, the writer wants us to see that Sampson is still public enemy number one. All these factors will prepare us for what happens next in the story.

II. Sampson falls in Love: 16:4

For the first time it's recorded that Sampson is in love. This time the enemy has learned their lesson. They know that a battle with Sampson would be foolish. They also know that his strength comes from an unknown source. Apparently, they know that Sampson has a weakness for women. Did they remember how his wife gave the answer to his riddle in chapter 14? In verse 5, five Philistine rulers offer Delilah a bribe. Judges 3:3

Delilah's approach was quick and to the point. "Please tell me where your great strength lies." Sampson's has to know what she'll do with this information. Four times Sampson is asked this question and four times he gives a false answer.

Vs 21, "Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison."

In vs 22, the author throws in this detail, "However the hair of his head began to grow again after he had been shaven." There's still hope.

III. Sampson and the Temple of Doom:

The Philistines celebrated their victory by worshiping an idol called “Dagon.” The celebration took place in a very large building holding thousands of people and 3 thousand more on the roof.

Verse 3 says that “When their hearts were merry,” they said, “Bring out Sampson to entertain us.” So they called out Sampson from the prison and he performed for them.”

In Vs 26, Sampson asked a young man who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so I can lean on them.”

He prays for his strength to return one last time in verse 28, so that he might get his revenge on the Philistines. Although Sampson died, more Philistines were killed at his death than he had killed in his life. The people in that building were the cream of the crop. They were the “lords of the Philistines.”

Samson teaches us about the High Cost of Sin: What did Sin cost him?

- #1. Sin cost Samson strength**
- #2. Sin cost Samson his sight**
- #3. Sin cost Samson his freedom**
- #4. Sin cost Sampson his self-respect**
- #5. Sin cost Sampson his life**

Close: I’ve decided to close with something positive and we do have something positive in Heb 11:32.

Surprisingly, Sampson’s story does not end in the rubble of the Philistine temple but ends all the way in the book of Hebrews. In Heb 11:32, we find Samson’s name tucked away in a long list of great Bible heroes.

You might be thinking of the same question that I had. How did his name get in there?

Here’s my thought. The fact that Samson shows up Hebrews is not so much of a tribute to him, but it’s more of a tribute to God’s mercy and grace.

Dan 9:9, “To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.”