

JUDGES 16:28 -- SAMSON'S LAST CRY AND HEROIC DEATH AS HE DIES WITH THE PHILISTINES

Jdg 16:28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

The Biblical Setting: - Chapters 13-16 encompass the life of Samson, which began with God's calling to a godly Danite couple, Manoah and his wife, who was barren and had no children. The Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and told her that indeed she was barren and had borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son! The Angel went on to say to be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. Also that no razor was to come on the head of her son as he was to be a Nazarite to God from the womb. – A LIFE LONG VOW! - And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. However Samson lived a life checkered by sin as his physical lust for women often caused him to commit grievous sin ("a he-man with a she-weakness"). His strength which he had lost by sin, is at the end of his life, recovered by prayer. He died praying. Although his prayer was for vengeance, he killed more of the Philistine enemy at his death, than he did during his whole lifetime. We see God recognizes his faithfulness in that he is included in the "hall of faith" chapter 11 in the Book of Hebrews. **Heb 11:32** *And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:*

How justly the God of Israel brought sudden destruction upon them by the hands of Samson.

Thousands of the Philistines had got together, to attend their lords in the sacrifices and joys of this day, and to be the spectators of this comedy; but it proved to them a fatal tragedy, for they were all slain, and buried in the ruins of the house: whether it was a temple or a theatre, or whether it was some slight building run up for the purpose, is uncertain.

Who were destroyed? All the *lords of the Philistines* (**Jdg 16:27**), who had by bribes corrupted Delilah to betray Samson to them. Evil pursued those sinners. Many of the people likewise, to the number of 3000, and among them a great many women, one of whom, it is likely, was that harlot of Gaza mentioned, **Jdg 16:1**. Samson had been drawn into sin by the Philistine women, and now a great slaughter is made among them, as was by Moses's order among the women of Midian, because it was they that *caused the children of Israel to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor*, **Num 31:16**.

When they were destroyed:

- **When they were merry, secure, and jovial, and far from apprehending themselves in any danger.** When they saw Samson lay hold of the pillars, we may suppose, his doing so served them for a jest, and they made sport with that too: *What will this feeble Jew do?* How are sinners brought to desolation in a moment! They are lifted up in pride and mirth, that their fall may be the more dreadful. Let us never envy the mirth of wicked people, but infer from this instance that their triumphing is short and their joy but for a moment.
- **It was when they were praising Dagon their god, and giving that honor to him which is due to God only,** which is no less than treason against the King of kings, his crown and dignity. Justly therefore is the blood of these traitors mingled with their sacrifices. Belshazzar was cut off when he was praising his man-made gods, **Dan 5:4**.
- **It was when they were making sport with an Israelite, a Nazarite, and insulting over him, persecuting him whom God had smitten.** Nothing fills the measure of the iniquity of any person or people faster than mocking and misusing the servants of God, yea, though it is by their own folly that they are brought low. Those know not what they do, nor whom they affront, that make sport with a good man.

How they were destroyed: Samson pulled the house down upon them, God no doubt putting it into his heart, as a public person, thus to avenge God's quarrel with them, Israel's, and his own.

Jdg 16:28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

He gained strength to do it by prayer, That strength which he had lost by sin he, like a true penitent, recovers by prayer; as David, who, when he had provoked the Spirit of grace to withdraw, prayed (Psa 51:12), *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit*. It most likely was only a mental prayer, and that his voice was not heard (for it was made in a noisy clamorous crowd of Philistines); but, though his voice was not heard of men, **yet his prayer was heard of God and graciously answered,** and though he lived not to give an account himself of this his prayer, as Nehemiah did of his, yet **God not only accepted it in heaven, but, by revealing it to the inspired penmen, provided for the registering of it in his church.**

He **prayed to God to remember him and strengthen him this once,** thereby owning that his strength for what he had already done he had from God, and begged it might be afforded to **him once more, to give them a parting blow.** That it was not from a principle of passion or personal revenge, **but from a holy zeal for the glory of God and Israel, that he desired to do this, appears from God's accepting and answering the prayer.** Samson died praying, so did our blessed Savior; but Samson prayed for vengeance, Christ for forgiveness.

He gained opportunity to do it by leaning on the two pillars which were the chief supports of the building, and were, it seems, so near together that he could take hold of them both at one time, v. 26, 29. Having hold of them, he bore them down with all his might, crying aloud, *Let me die with the Philistines*, v. 30. - *While inflicting the wound he dies*. The vast concourse of people that were upon the roof looking down through it to see the sport, we may suppose, contributed to the fall of it. A weight so much greater than ever it was designed to carry might perhaps have sunk of itself, at least it made the fall more fatal to those within: and indeed few of either could escape being either stifled or crushed to death. This was done, not by any natural strength of Samson, but by the almighty power of God, and is not only marvelous, but miraculous, in our eyes. Now in this,

- **The Philistines were greatly mortified. All their lords and great men were killed,** and abundance of their people, and this in the midst of their triumph; the temple of Dagon (as many think the house was) was pulled down, and Dagon buried in it. This would give a great check to the insolence of the survivors, and, if Israel had but had so much sense and spirit left them as to improve the advantages of this juncture, they might now have thrown off the Philistines' yoke.
- **Samson may very well be justified, and brought in not guilty of any sinful murder either of himself or the Philistines.** He was a public person, a declared enemy to the Philistines, against whom he might therefore take all advantages. They were now in the most barbarous manner making war upon him; all present were aiding and abetting, and justly die with him. Nor was he a *self-murderer*, in it; for it was not his own life that he aimed at, though he had too much reason to be weary of it, but the lives of Israel's enemies, for the reaching of which he bravely resigned his own, *not counting it dear to him, so that he might finish his course with honor*.
- **God was very much glorified in pardoning Samson's great transgressions,** of which this was an evidence. It has been said that the prince's giving a commission to one convicted amounts to a pardon. Yet, *Psa 99:8 You answered them, O LORD our God; You were to them God-Who-Forgives*, and, by suffering his champion to die in fetters, warned all to take heed of those lusts which war against the soul. However, we have good reason to hope that though Samson died with the Philistines he had not his everlasting portion with them. *The Lord knows those that are his*.
- **Christ was plainly typified.** He pulled down the devil's kingdom, as Samson did Dagon's temple; and, when he died, he obtained the most glorious victory over the powers of darkness. Then when his arms were stretched out upon the cross, as Samson's to the two pillars, he gave a fatal shake to the gates of hell. **Hebrews 2:14-15** *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."*

- **Herein exceeded Samson, that he not only died with the Philistines, but rose again to triumph over them.**

SUMMARY:

The story of Samson concludes,

- With an account of his burial. His brothers and all his father's household, animated by the glories that attended his death, came and found out his body among the slain, brought it honorably to his own country, and buried it in the place of his fathers' sepulchers, the Philistines being in such a consternation that they dare not oppose it.
- With the repetition of the account we had before of the continuance of his government: *He judged Israel twenty years;* and, if they had not been as mean and sneaking as he was brave and daring, he may have left Israel clear of the Philistines' yoke. They might have been easy, safe, and happy, if they would but have given God and their judges leave to make them so.
- We see here another example of God's grace and mercy – a life checkered with sin, but we also God's grace in answering Samson's dying prayer. How encouraging for us sinners!! *Jer 15:19 Therefore thus says the LORD: "If you return, Then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me; **If you take out the precious from the vile,** You shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, But you must not return to them.*
- Samson ended well! **Should not that be our prayer and our goal?**
- Even as the Apostle Paul said, *Php 3:12-14* ***"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. [13] Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, [14] I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

PASS ME NOT – Frances J. Crosby – Joslin Grove Choral Society

*Pass me not, O gentle Savior, Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.*

Refrain:

*Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry,
While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.*

*Thou the spring of all my comfort, More than life to me,
Whom have I on earth beside Thee, Whom in Heav'n but Thee.*

Refrain (2x)