



Samson

Judges 16:20 *“Then she called, “Samson, the Philistines are upon you!” He awoke from his sleep and thought, “I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him.”*

Now we get to have some fun. Sampson is complicated. I know the story of this man. Many kids in church have coloring pages with him in it. Paul thought it worthy to mention Samson’s faith in Hebrews 11. I personally don’t know what to make of this story. To me Samson is marred by fate more than faith. This man was given a gift to win wars for the Lord. Yet, it appears that he chose to use it to win women and taunt the enemy.

The beginning of the Samson story is epic. God came to his parents through an angel. They must do as this angel said to raise the boy right. To set Samson apart from there rest of the children. As David hid in the mist of his brothers, Samson stood out. It says at the end that he judged Israel twenty years. I am wondering if we have the definition of judge all wrong. We tend to think of judging as wisdom, ruling, and guiding. Samson did none of that. What if the judgement was on Israel. That Samson was the perfect picture of a nation given God but refused to do the right things.

Samson grew up a spoiled brat in my view. It fits well with Israel being the spoiled brat nation. God kept helping and calling to them through judge after judge. Maybe they would have

to learn their lesson the hard way as Samson did. It seems that God is doing the judging. The choices of this man caused his own fate. This story leans me towards a chess game of putting the sin of Samson in the right place at the right time to judge the Philistines. Yet, we could say that God judged Samson and Israel too.

Paul never mentions what kind of faith Samson had. This man was told that he would be raised a Nazarite. It is a little obscure what that means. The vow in this story is to the mother. Yet, the boy was to be raised a Nazarite. Throughout the story Samson seems to break several of the Nazarite vows. Did he, himself make that vow? However, clearly Samson understood what it meant. The shaving of his head finally did him in. I will say that when all the chips fell. Samson remembered his God. He seemed to have some faith in the Lord.

In the end, Samson dug deep to sacrifice his life by praying to God. Yet, I am hesitant to say for God. He said he wanted revenge. There is a holiday for the Jewish nation called Purim. It is the celebration of the deliverance from Haman in the book of Esther. Maybe revenge of their enemies is a really big thing? We look at Samson as toying with his lovers and enemies. What if it was all part of God enacting justice on Israel's enemies through Samson?

We know that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson. That he did mighty acts with the power of God. Samson never had the power. God gave it to him. That is why Samson never knew that the Spirit had departed from him. He did not know when it came and he did not know when it left. People tend to look at the story and its actions and judge a character or nation. Yet, it is God who is the maestro. He is the one moving the chess pieces. Let's face it, Samson was in a place to judge the Philistines because of his own sin. He had no power to win.

2 Corinthians 12:9 *“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”*

Yes, Samson abused his salvation. He abused his gifts. Yet, in our weakness God did what needed to be done. We tend to attach Samson's faith to his actions. As sinful fallen creatures (faith or not) we will sin.

James 2:22 *“You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.”*

Samson broke every rule of the Nazirite one by one. Yet he lived by faith. Although we believe we are still not God. Yet, God is still able to use us in our weakness. To tackle our enemies and save our souls. Samson had great faith. Yet, at times, it looks like he believed in his own power. What if he was arrogant (knowing) the power that the Lord had given him. Either way in the end God wins.