**Samson and Delilah**

Chapter 16 of Judges chronicles the last part of Samson’s life and begins in a similar fashion to chapter 14 as he was led astray because of a physical attraction to yet another Philistine woman. Samson seemed to adhere to the rule of separation of church and state as he compartmentalized his personal life and his religious calling. He apparently saw no inconsistency between his immoral behavior and duties as a judge of Israel. Some Philistines observed him spending the night with a prostitute and planned to kill him at dawn. He thwarted their efforts by getting up in the middle of the night and using his great strength to remove the city gates so he could escape.

Once again he was beguiled by a woman, falling in love (or lust) with Delilah who lived in the Valley of Sorek which was in the Philistine region bordering the province of Dan. Just as they had done previously with Samson’s wife, the Philistine rulers went to Delilah asking her to find out a secret, this time the key to his strength. Instead of threatening her with death as they had with Samson’s wife, they appealed to her greed by offering her a fortune in silver. On 3 separate occasions, she asked him how he could be subdued and he toyed with her, suggesting means of tying him up from which he could easily break free. Just as his wife had done, Delilah nagged him until he told the truth about his strength. He said that his strength would leave him if his hair was cut. That would mean a complete break from his Nazarite vow which his connection to the Holy Spirit which was in turn the source of his strength.

When the Philistines burst in to capture him, he assumed that he could easily break free as before only to discover his strength was gone. Verse 20 says that he did not know that the Lord had left him. He was seized by the Philistines who gouged out his eyes, put him in chains and took him to Gaza. Later they had a celebration to offer a sacrifice to their pagan god Dagon. By this time Samson hair had regrown which represented the renewal of his Nazarite vow (see Num. chapter 6). They brought out Samson to entertain the crowd and he was located between 2 pillars that held up the temple. Samson prayed fervently to God asking for the return of his strength one last time. Grasping the 2 pillars, he pulled them down which caused the temple to collapse, killing Samson along with the Philistine rulers and all the people there. Verse 30 says that he killed more Philistines with his death than he had while he was alive.

This account reminds me of the saying once saved always saved. While Samson broke his vow, God did not abandon him, instead He restored him when Samson prayed to Him. In John chapter 10 verse 28 Jesus spoke of the saved saying “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand”. While our salvation is assured, a perpetual right relationship with God is not. We can and do stray and God is faithful to restore our relationship when we repent, however we will miss out on blessings he desires for us while we are estranged. Matthew Henry wrote that our spiritual gifts weaken during these times and we are often unaware.

Last week we discussed how Samson is viewed as a type of Christ. Just as Jesus was betrayed for silver, so was Samson. In this last chapter devoted to him, we see him with arms outstretched holding the pillars giving us an image similar to Jesus with His arms outstretched on the cross. Samson killed more with his death than during his life, Jesus saved all who accept Him with His death and resurrection (see 1st Cor. Chapter 15).