

## A LAD SHALL HOLD HIM BY THE HAND

The nation of Israel had fallen into a state of apostasy; idolatry and sin was rampant. The Philistines moved into the land, and had become an instrument of God's chastisement upon a wayward nation. They brought their pagan customs, their profanity and wickedness. They exercised their military might, oppressed and dominated the nation. Israel was desperate for a deliverer. One day the Angel of the Lord appeared to a barren woman, foretelling the birth of a son. Her husband, named Manoah, was from the tribe of Dan (meaning righteous judgment); Judges 13:1-20. A union of barrenness and righteous judgment would produce Samson. God's Spirit began to move him at times; Judges 13:25; he grew and the Lord blessed him. Samson was known for his extraordinary strength and his long hair. But his strength was not derived from his hair; his God-given gift was the result of his relationship to God as a Nazarite; see Numbers 6:1-8. A Nazarite was totally separated unto the Lord; this was the "secret" of his anointing. This vow was taken voluntarily, and included abstinence from wine: he would not come under the intoxication of the natural pleasures of life. And his covering of hair would be "uncut", symbolizing dedication and consecration unto God. This vow also included a separation from "dead bodies".

Samson had "Olympian" abilities, but this "ironman" was morally weak. He asked his parents for a Philistine wife; he longed for intimacy with a daughter of uncircumcised people. Scripture records that Samson "went down" a total of six times, a clear picture of a man's gradual progression into bondage; Judges 14:1, 5, 7, 19; 15:8, 16:21. First, he went "down" when he saw (considered, gazed upon) a daughter of the Philistines; then he took others (his parents) "down" to the vineyards (congregations) there in Timnath. He continued his "downward" descent, entering into a relationship with her. Later, Samson slays a lion, and "turns aside", taking "honey" out of its dead carcass, breaking his Nazarite vow. (Politically and spiritually speaking, there is a false sweetness that can come even from a dead lion's body)! Samson goes "down" again to the top of a rock called "Etam", (the lair of voracious birds and ravenous beasts); his descent landed him in the habitations of demons. Finally, going "down" to Gaza, he was enslaved by his passion for a harlot named Delilah, who seduces him. She weaves upon the "seven locks" of his head from her loom, while he is sleeping, a "web with a pin"; Judges 16:13-14. What had previously been consecrated to Jehovah God, was now in the hands of a harlot.

All during this time God loved the prideful Samson, even as He loves all who are backslidden and lost. God was pleased to bless Samson with gifts, and waited to see if he would turn from his compromise. God grieved over Samson's condition; if he continued in his careless disobedience, he would end up with a cruel taskmaster. And like the culture of apostates, Samson loved beautiful "external coverings", while his inner condition remained ragged; see Judges 14:12-13. Samson could perform great feats of strength; he knew how to "wow" the crowds with signs and wonders. He tore a lion, a type of satan, one like a "roaring lion"; 1 Peter 5:8; he also caught 300 foxes (deceivers, false prophets, enemies); see Ezek. 13:4; Song of Sol. 2:15; Luke 13:32. He "unhinged" and carried doors of the gate of the city uphill to "Hebron", which is the place of communion. "Cords" which were tied upon him melted like flax burnt with fire. He killed 1,000 Philistines at Ramath-Lehi with "the uplifting of a new jawbone", a picture of the power of the spoken word. But he could not slay his lust and his passions (dangerous

“fire”)! Samson told Delilah “all his heart” and fell asleep on the lap of the whore; see Revelation 17-18. Proverbs 7:26 reminds us that “Many strong men have been slain by her”. Samson, like some who are the recipients of God’s gifts, have come under the influence of seducing spirits, which hide in the chamber of the harlot’s house. The Philistine lords want Samson, and so they entice Delilah with a promised payment of silver (a false redemption) for her services. And because Samson has chosen to be intimate with her, the harlot has been able to wear him down, urging him daily and vexing his soul unto death; Judges 16:16-17. But NOW THE BARBER COMES, shaving off the seven locks of his head (the principle of the Seven Fold Spirit of God); see Isaiah 11:1-2. And like Samson, an apostate church or nation shall suffer the same consequences: they shall be like a sheep being sheared. We shall reap what we have sown; carelessness and self indulgence carries a price tag. Samson had treated the calling and the anointing of God as a trivial thing. The Lord and His anointing had departed from him, and he was not even aware of it; Judges 16:20. God’s protection had been withdrawn. But even in desperate circumstances, redemption was possible for Samson. Our righteous Judge is also a Father. And the Father of the “prodigal” still watches and waits for His wayward son to return to Him; Luke 15:20.

Samson becomes weak and defenseless; he cannot prevail against the onslaught which had been planned against him for some time. The Philistines emerge, capture him, put out his eyes, and bring him down to Gaza (a Philistine stronghold). They bind him with fetters of brass (judgment), and now he grinds (goes about in circles with no spiritual progress); he becomes a captive in the prison house. Now that the anointing is gone, he has taken the role of a public clown, an “entertainer” for the pleasure of the Philistines. (When the presence and anointing of the Lord is absent from a ministry, it is reduced to entertainment). But Samson’s hair began to grow again, and a “lad holds him by the hand”; Judges 16:26. The Hebrew word “lad” is rendered a “young servant”, who is unnamed and unknown to us. But he is strategically placed and appointed by God to guide Samson to the place where he would ultimately realize his greatest triumph over the Philistines. As in the book of Acts 9:10-12, God has one like Ananias, whose vision is clear, who walks upon a street called “straight” (the plumbline of God’s righteousness). He ministers to the blinded Saul, restores him, and sees him filled with the Holy Spirit.

Samson said “O Lord God, REMEMBER ME...LET ME DIE, and “HE BOWED HIMSELF”; Judges 16:21-30. In a final act of courage, he was finally willing to die to self, Mark 8:35-36, and he bowed in humility and repentance, with the spiritual “eyes of his understanding being enlightened”; Ephesians 1:18. This story is a clear reminder of God’s unchanging law: whatever a man, a ministry, a nation sows, that shall they also reap; Galatians 6:7-8. It also reveals God’s mercy during loss and devastation. True repentance is honored, and prayer was answered. Samson took hold of the two pillars (of seduction and deceit) which supported the Philistines’ house of darkness, and pulled them down; Judges 16:29-30. Samson is mentioned in the “hall of faith” chapter in Hebrews 11:32. Jesus Himself has spoiled the house of the enemy and all of his cohorts shall fall to the ground. And, consistent with His character, He has a remnant (unknown to the others), standing by to guide and direct a blind religious establishment, to help bring restoration to an apostate nation. A lad shall lead “Samson” and hold him by the hand!

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