

## Hope in times of darkness

### Samson and Delilah

Slide 1 The best Christian Memes

[thebestchristianmemes](#)



Its almost Christmas again, time to dust of the tree.

And thinking about Christmas, its nice to get the inside running on that silent night!

Well Samson too had a few troubles getting it right for his great love, Delilah

Lets read the first few verses to set the scene

Slide 2 v 4- Judges 16 v 1 & 4-5

**16:1** One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her. **4:**Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. **5** The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels<sup>[a]</sup> of silver."

I remember growing up with the very word Delilah being a symbol of a temptress,  
Is that true for anyone else's experience  
The encyclopedia Britannica puts it this way

Slide 3 Delilah as temptress

**Delilah**, in the [Old Testament](#), the central figure of [Samson's](#) last love story (Judges 16). She was a [Philistine](#) who, bribed to entrap Samson, [coaxed](#) him into revealing that the secret of his strength was his long hair, whereupon she took advantage of his confidence to betray him to his enemies. Her name has since become synonymous with a voluptuous, treacherous woman.

I have to ask 'Is this a fair description'? It did Samson have something to do with the problem.

First he with a women of ill repute them as a Judge, who's job it is to lead the Israelites to freedom from the philistines, instead he falls in love with a Philistine spy no less .

Who is it who's messed up here?

Lets read the story and see

Slide 4

Judges 16: v 6-9

<sup>6</sup> So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued."

<sup>7</sup> Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man."

<sup>8</sup> Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she tied him with them. <sup>9</sup> With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the bowstrings as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

So ok Samson is fooled by love. Us blokes aren't always good at this romance stuff, but hopefully, we learn from our mistakes! Read on!

Slide 5. Judges 16: 10-12

<sup>10</sup> Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied."

<sup>11</sup> He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man."

<sup>12</sup> So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.

Talk about a slow learner, but obviously he now knows about Delilah being a secret agent, right?

Lets read on

Slide 6 Judges 16:12 -14

<sup>13</sup> Delilah then said to Samson, "All this time you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied."

He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric <sup>14</sup> and <sup>[g]</sup> tightened it with the pin.

Again she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric.

Really. 3 times Delilah tried to trick him into sharing top secret info, surely by now he's awake to Delilah being a Philistine secret.

So what will he do?

Slide 7 Judges 16: 17-21

<sup>15</sup> Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." <sup>16</sup> With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it.

<sup>17</sup> So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."

<sup>18</sup> When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, "Come back once more; he has told me everything." So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. <sup>19</sup> After putting him to sleep on her

lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him.<sup>[h]</sup> And his strength left him.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

What did he do, knowing she is a spy trying to capture him, He tells her the truth!

Well, I know we blokes can be a bit romantically thick, but this is going a bit far, really!

Lets recap

Delilia was a secret agent, and in my opinion seemed to do her job well. He is Judge, a Hebrew religious and political leader mandated to lead his people towards God. He has 'relations' with all sorts of women, including a known enemy spy. Who messed up here?

Why do we blame Delilah

Maybe this story is really about Samson's foolishness, his pride, his inability to follow Gods path.

We should start a line of male shampoo products.

If you really want to be thick, sorry if you really want thick hair, Samson Shampoo for the ultimate ladies man!!

But the story does not end there does it, There is another twist in the plot

Slide 8

Judges 16: 22-31

<sup>21</sup> Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison. <sup>22</sup> But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

## The Death of Samson

<sup>23</sup> Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands."

<sup>24</sup> When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying,

"Our god has delivered our enemy  
into our hands,  
the one who laid waste our land  
and multiplied our slain."

<sup>25</sup> While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them.

When they stood him among the pillars, <sup>26</sup> Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them." <sup>27</sup> Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. <sup>28</sup> Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." <sup>29</sup> Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, <sup>30</sup> Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it.

And to think, I remember having the story of Samson in my children's bible, what were my parents thinking?

Let's be open for a moment to look at the story from a different perspective

To look at it as a story of redemption, a redemption that happens at many levels,

Samson, was an Israelite judge, which simply means being both a religious and political leader, ordained by birth to lead his people towards god.

Talk about being part of the entitled generation. Perhaps even a bit overwhelmed by his own ego

Samson, had the world at his feet, but lost sight of his calling, falling into darkness, literally, he had his eyes put out.

In the end, he remembered who he was, who he was called to be, he remembered God

One of the amazing things about the bible is the way God speaks through it, reaching each of us, each hearing what we may need to hear.

Let's briefly explore what a few other people have said

Doniwen Pietersen suggests (<https://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/vee/v43n1/16.pdf>)

Doniwen interestingly suggests Samson's issue is more than trusting Delilah, perhaps his issue is that he doesn't take her seriously, trusting too much in his own self-belief, Samson was too enamoured of his own power, to even notice what was going on.

Perhaps this story subtly challenged the ancient Hebrew, and in turn, our societies stereotypical sense of power. Challenging us to remember the power of vulnerability over, well just plain power. Fast forward a thousand years, a theme Jesus would again bring to the fore. In both his life and in his choosing a vulnerable death on a cross

Perhaps Samson can also be understood as an antihero, the very antithesis of Godly leadership

An example of who not to be. Self-absorbed rather than caring, power over rather than power in support of.

Importantly whatever was Samson's problems, somehow, even his misdeeds can get used by God, a redemption story

Perhaps a message for us, is whatever our faults, whatever we see when we honestly look in the mirror, whatever darkness that can bind our soul, whatever loss can overwhelm us... there is a solution

Redemption. We are never too lost, even when we can't find light in the darkness. God acts to redeem. God remembers us, if we are open. There is hope in God.

Let's not oversimplify this, It doesn't mean everything will always go right in our world, Look at Samson. But we can always experience, God's love, God's Grace, hope in God

Sometimes we need to face our darkness, our losing our way, our love of other things. And we might find what we really seek - purpose, love, hope, trust in God above. Whatever it is that our soul seeks in God.

Redemption from failure to be our authentic self, that chooses the values and direction of God, revealed in Jesus.

Redemption towards God

A redemption that is always experienced as given, never earned.

I would like to close with a reflection by Richard Rohr, (published by The Centre for Action and Contemplation, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023)  
as a way forward in our journeys.

Somehow our experiences, our mistakes, our dead ends are not abhorrent to God but the very stuff of salvation.

**References:**

[1] Adapted from Richard Rohr, preface to *Near Occasions of Grace* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), xvi.