

Judges 16:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

Analysis

Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

This verse belongs to the Samson cycle addressing Samson, Delilah, and final victory in death. Samson represents both the heights of God-empowered strength and the depths of human weakness through moral compromise. His Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21) set him apart as holy to God, yet his persistent violations of this vow—contact with dead animals (14:8-9), seven-day feast (likely involving wine, 14:10), and finally revealing his hair's secret (16:17)—demonstrate progressive spiritual decline.

Theologically, Samson illustrates how spiritual gifts don't guarantee spiritual maturity. The Spirit of the LORD came upon Samson repeatedly, giving superhuman strength, yet this empowerment didn't produce corresponding moral transformation. His attraction to Philistine women (14:1-3, 16:1, 16:4) directly violated God's command against intermarriage with Canaanites (Deuteronomy 7:3-4). This demonstrates that God can use flawed instruments for His purposes, but this never excuses or endorses sin.

Samson's final prayer—"O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen

me" (16:28)—shows genuine repentance and renewed faith. His death accomplished more than his life (16:30), suggesting that even spectacular failure can be redeemed when we return to God. However, the tragedy is that Samson's potential was largely wasted through moral compromise. His story warns believers that consistent holy living, not merely spectacular spiritual experiences, characterizes faithful discipleship.

Historical Context

Historical Setting: The Book of Judges spans approximately 350-400 years (c. 1375-1050 BCE) during the Late Bronze Age collapse and early Iron Age. This period saw the disintegration of major empires (Hittites, Mycenaeans) and weakening of Egyptian control over Canaan, creating a power vacuum filled by emerging peoples including Philistines (Sea Peoples), Aramaeans, and regional kingdoms. The decentralized tribal structure left Israel vulnerable to external oppression and internal chaos.

Cultural Context: This passage relates to Samson, Delilah, and final victory in death. Canaanite religion dominated the region, centered on Baal (storm/fertility god), Asherah (mother goddess), and Anat (war goddess). Archaeological discoveries at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) have provided extensive information about Canaanite mythology and religious practices. Baal worship involved ritual prostitution, child sacrifice, and fertility rites tied to agricultural seasons. Israel's persistent attraction to these gods demonstrates the strong cultural pressure to conform to surrounding nations' religious practices.

The material culture of this period shows gradual Israelite settlement in the Canaanite hill country, with simpler pottery and architecture than coastal Canaanite cities. Iron technology was beginning to spread, giving military advantage to peoples who mastered it (note the Philistines' iron monopoly, 1 Samuel 13:19-22). The absence of centralized government during the judges period stands in stark contrast to the bureaucratic city-states of Canaan and the imperial administration of Egypt and Mesopotamia. This political structure reflected Israel's theocratic ideal—God as king—yet the repeated cycles of

apostasy showed this ideal required more than political structures; it demanded heart transformation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage about Samson, Delilah, and final victory in death reveal God's character in dealing with persistent human rebellion and incomplete obedience?
2. What patterns of spiritual compromise or incomplete obedience in your own life mirror Israel's failures during the judges period?
3. How does understanding the cyclical nature of sin and deliverance in Judges help you appreciate Christ's perfect and final deliverance from sin's power?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	וְאִשָּׁה	וְאִשָּׁה	וְאִשָּׁה	וְאִשָּׁה	וְאִשָּׁה
Now the house	was full	of men	and women		
H1004	H4390	H582	H802	H8033	H3605
וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל
and all the lords	of the Philistines		were there	and there were	upon the roof
H5633	H6430	H5921			H1406
וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל
about three	thousand	men	and women	that beheld	made sport
H7969	H505	H376	H802	H7200	H7832
וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל	וְכָל
while Samson					
H8123					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 22:8 (Parallel theme): When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.

Joshua 2:8 (Parallel theme): And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

2 Samuel 11:2 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

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