



Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus A Discipleship Journey

The OLD TESTAMENT- Their Story is Our Story
Samson - Week 14
Judges Chapters 13-16

Once the Israelites have possession of the Promised Land, they must keep possession. This proves difficult as the pagan nations continue to fight the Israelites. For the next 300 years, the Israelites are led by military heroes, Judges. There are 12 Judges mentioned in the Book of Judges. A pattern forms in that the Israelites are conquered by a pagan nation; they cry to God for help; God raises up a strong military leader who helps them get their land back and over the course of time they fall away from God again.

Samson is one of the Judges. His mother is visited by an angel who tells her she will conceive and bear a son who should be dedicated to God. They should raise him in the Nazarite way, not allowing strong drink nor ever cutting his hair. His father doesn't believe his wife and wants to meet the angel, too. The angel returns and repeats the message for him. Samson is born with the gift of great strength. God uses this great strength against the Philistines. He is the biblical Superman. Unfortunately, like Superman and kryptonite, Samson also has a weakness-women.

Samson uses his great strength against the Philistines a number of times and they plot to kill him. After one such attempt failed, the Philistines asked Delilah to help them. Samson spent time with Delilah, and she asked him over and over the secret was to his strength. He told her lies a number of times. She brought in her Philistine friends to kill him and Samson killed them instead. Finally, he told her the truth; he must never cut his hair. This was his command from God. Samson was tired of Delilah's asking and gave in to her. He let his guard down and let his girl, his society get the better of him. Delilah does cut his hair and Samson is captured and tortured.

The Philistines take a now blind Samson to the temple of their god, Dagon. They continue to torture and make fun of him for their amusement and this drew a great crowd of Philistines; all of the lords and 3,000 men and women on the roof of the temple. Samson made one last request of God-the strength to destroy the temple. God granted this request and Samson was able to use his strength to push over the two center pillars supporting the temple, killing everyone inside, including himself.

We all have talents and special gifts. How often do we think about them as gifts from God? Do we use these gifts for God's work or let society dictate how they are used? Do we let our guard down and let society influence us even when it is not something God would have us do? In the end Samson learned that he was wrong to give in to Delilah and God granted him his last request. We learn the same lesson in our lives. Our talents and gifts are from God and we need to thank Him for them and use them for God's work.

What are your gifts and talents? How have you used them for God's work?

