

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Hebrews 11:32 “And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of...Samson...”

Quote: “True faith does not contradict its words by its conduct.” Anonymous

In the providence of God, Samson was born to a woman who had been barren. He was predestined by God to be a Nazarite.¹ Nazarite means to “separate; to consecrate,” and it referred to a person who pledged to give up worldly occupations and pleasures, and to dedicate himself to God’s service. He was to eat or drink nothing produced by a grape vine. He was not to cut his hair. He was not to go near a dead body.¹ In time it would be Samson’s role to begin to deliver Israel from Philistine oppression that was brought about by God to punish Israel for their evil acts.

In spite of being raised in God-fearing home where he was taught by his parents about his God-given role,² Samson, the loner, lived a deplorable lifestyle. He was driven by the power of passion. His great conflicts began when he desired a Philistine wife. En route to the wedding, he went into vineyards in Timnah. While there, he killed a lion that attacked him, but he did not tell his parents. That makes one wonder if he had eaten grapes, and felt guilty for violating his vow. On a return trip, he again went to the vineyard to view the dead lion. Bees had made a nest in the corpse and he took some of the honey, clearly breaking his vow. At the wedding, Samson made a riddle around his exploit with the lion. In so doing, he showed how lightly he viewed his vow. Some Philistines forced his wife to get the solution to the riddle that Samson bet they could not answer. He lost the bet, and then slew thirty men to pay off his debt. He was so upset with his wife that he left her. Thinking that Samson had gone for good, her father gave her to another man. Enraged, Samson burned the Philistines’ crops. They responded by burning his wife and her father. Samson avenged her death with a great slaughter. When the Philistines thought that they had him cornered, he slew a thousand of them. Due to a great thirst that overcame him, Samson prayed his first recorded prayer, giving God the glory for the victory and asking Him for water.

Giving in once again to his passions, he visited a harlot. When his enemies thought that they had him trapped, he escaped by carrying off the gates of the city. In spite of Samson’s passion and impulsiveness, God used him for His overarching purpose—to begin the liberation of His people prophesied years earlier, but that would not come to fruition until after Samson’s death.

Judges 15 gives the impression that Israel was content to live under Philistine bondage and did not want to risk retaliation over Samson’s exploits. It also reveals that Samson was not driven by a desire to glorify God, but to vindicate himself. The Philistines said to the men of Judah, “‘We have come up to arrest Samson, to *do to him as he has done to us.*’ Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, ‘Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?’ And he said to them, ‘*As they did to me, so I have done to them.*’”

Samson’s self-gratifying exploits finally got the best of

Samson’s Worldliness

him when he fell in love with Delilah! She pressured him to tell her the secret of his strength. After lying several times, Samson told her that he was a Nazarite, a man separated unto God’s service. He told her that if his hair, a symbol of his vow, was cut he would lose his strength. As he slept, Delilah had his hair cut. Samson’s sins had caught up with him. He said, “‘I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!’ *But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.*” They put out his eyes, and forced him to grind grain like an animal. They brought him to the temple of Dagon to gloat over him. Samson prayed for strength to exact revenge for his eyes. By destroying the temple of Dagon, he slew more Philistines in his death than he had slain in battle! His great victories were tainted by selfishness and failure to live up to his oath! He experienced the power of God, but was brought low by the power of sin! *Worldliness and purity involve choices!* May God give us the grace to pursue purity for His praise!

¹ Numbers 6:1-21 ² Judges 13