

## **A reading from Judges (Judges 16:4-31) – week 3- July 5th**

<sup>4-5</sup> Some time later he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek (Grapes). Her name was Delilah. The Philistine tyrants approached her and said, “Seduce him. Discover what’s behind his great strength and how we can tie him up and humble him. Each man’s company will give you a hundred shekels of silver.”

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

<sup>7</sup> Samson told her, “If they were to tie me up with seven bowstrings—the kind made from fresh animal tendons, not dried out—then I would become weak, just like anyone else.”

<sup>8-9</sup> The Philistine tyrants brought her seven bowstrings, not dried out, and she tied him up with them. The men were waiting in ambush in her room. Then she said, “The Philistines are on you, Samson!” He snapped the cords as though they were mere threads. The secret of his strength was still a secret.

<sup>10</sup> Delilah said, “Come now, Samson—you’re playing with me, making up stories. Be serious; tell me how you can be tied up.”

<sup>11</sup> He told her, “If you were to tie me up tight with new ropes, ropes never used for work, then I would be helpless, just like anybody else.”

<sup>12</sup> So Delilah got some new ropes and tied him up. She said, “The Philistines are on you, Samson!” The men were hidden in the next room. He snapped the ropes from his arms like threads.

<sup>13-14</sup> Delilah said to Samson, “You’re still playing games with me, teasing me with lies. Tell me how you can be tied up.”

He said to her, “If you wove the seven braids of my hair into the fabric on the loom and drew it tight, then I would be as helpless as any other mortal.”

When she had him fast asleep, Delilah took the seven braids of his hair and wove them into the fabric on the loom and drew it tight. Then she said, “The

Philistines are on you, Samson!” He woke from his sleep and ripped loose from both the loom and fabric!

<sup>15</sup> She said, “How can you say ‘I love you’ when you won’t even trust me? Three times now you’ve toyed with me, like a cat with a mouse, refusing to tell me the secret of your great strength.”

<sup>16-17</sup> She kept at it day after day, nagging and tormenting him. Finally, he was fed up—he couldn’t take another minute of it. He spilled it.

He told her, “A razor has never touched my head. I’ve been God’s Nazirite from conception. If I were shaved, my strength would leave me; I would be as helpless as any other mortal.”

<sup>18</sup> When Delilah realized that he had told her his secret, she sent for the Philistine tyrants, telling them, “Come quickly—this time he’s told me the truth.” They came, bringing the bribe money.

<sup>19</sup> When she got him to sleep, his head on her lap, she motioned to a man to cut off the seven braids of his hair. Immediately he began to grow weak. His strength drained from him.

<sup>20</sup> Then she said, “The Philistines are on you, Samson!” He woke up, thinking, “I’ll go out, like always, and shake free.” He didn’t realize that God had abandoned him.

<sup>21-22</sup> The Philistines grabbed him, gouged out his eyes, and took him down to Gaza. They shackled him in irons and put him to the work of grinding in the prison. But his hair, though cut off, began to grow again.

<sup>23-24</sup> The Philistine tyrants got together to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They celebrated, saying,

Our god has given us  
Samson our enemy!

And when the people saw him, they joined in, cheering their god,

Our god has given  
Our enemy to us,

The one who ravaged our country,  
Piling high the corpses among us.

<sup>25-27</sup> Then this: Everyone was feeling high and someone said, “Get Samson! Let him show us his stuff!” They got Samson from the prison and he put on a show for them.

They had him standing between the pillars. Samson said to the young man who was acting as his guide, “Put me where I can touch the pillars that hold up the temple so I can rest against them.” The building was packed with men and women, including all the Philistine tyrants. And there were at least three thousand in the stands watching Samson’s performance.

<sup>28</sup> And Samson cried out to God:

Master, God!

Oh, please, look on me again,

Oh, please, give strength yet once more.

God!

With one avenging blow let me be avenged

On the Philistines for my two eyes!

<sup>29-30</sup> Then Samson reached out to the two central pillars that held up the building and pushed against them, one with his right arm, the other with his left. Saying, “Let me die with the Philistines,” Samson pushed hard with all his might. The building crashed on the tyrants and all the people in it. He killed more people in his death than he had killed in his life.

\* \* \*

<sup>31</sup> His brothers and all his relatives went down to get his body. They carried him back and buried him in the tomb of Manoah his father, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

He judged Israel for twenty years.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**