Life of Samson – Winter 2026
Pleasant View Church of Christ

Lesson X – Razor*
(Judges 16:4-22)

A. Circumstances for the Razor (4-5)

-Once again, a woman led him to divulge a secret. (**14:15-18**)

Valley of Sorek

-Likely refers to the fertile valley that marked the border between the territories of Judah and Dan.

-The valley was Samson's home region where Zorah, Eshtaol, Timnah, and Ekron were located.

1. Iniquity of Samson

Delilah – Name is likely derived from Aramaic *d + layelah* ("of the night")

-Delilah is never called a Philistine woman, but her location and close contact with their leaders indicate she was likely one of them.

-Foreign women had a peculiar fascination for Samson (**14:1; 16:1**).

2. Inquiry about Samson

"lords of the Philistines"

-There were five of them: (**Judges 3:3; Josh 13:3**)

*Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron

-Instead of threatening the woman, as the wedding guests had done (**14:15**), the five rulers promised Delilah a fortune.

-While the exact value of 5,500 pieces of silver is unknown, it would have been substantial.

-Their desire was to "bind and humble" Samson. The verb here is used of the hard labor the Egyptians imposed on the Israelites in **Gen 15:13** & **Ex 1:11–12**

4 After this he ***loved a woman*** in the **Valley of Sorek**,
whose name was **Delilah**. 5 And the **lords** of the
Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Seduce
him, and ***see where his great strength lies***, and by
what means we may overpower him, that we may
bind him to humble him. And we will *each give you*
1,100 pieces of silver."
6 So **Delilah** said to Samson, "Please tell me where
your great strength lies, and how you might be
bound, that one could subdue you."
7 **Samson** said to her, "If they ***bind me with seven***
fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, then I
shall become weak and be like any other man."
8 Then the **lords** of the **Philistines** brought up to her
seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and
she bound him with them. 9 Now she had men lying
in ambush in an inner chamber. And she said to him,
"The **Philistines** are upon you, **Samson**!" But ***he***
snapped the bowstrings, as a thread of flax snaps
when it touches the fire. So the secret of his
strength was not known.
10 Then **Delilah** said to **Samson**, "Behold, you have
mocked me and ***told me lies***. Please tell me how you
might be bound." 11 And he said to her, "If they ***bind***
me with new ropes that have not been used, then I
shall become weak and be like any other man." 12 So
Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them
and said to him, "The **Philistines** are upon you,
Samson!" And the men lying in ambush were in an
inner chamber. But ***he snapped the ropes off his***
arms like a thread.
13 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have
mocked me and ***told me lies***. Tell me how you might
be bound." And he said to her, "If you ***weave the***
seven locks of my head with the web and fasten it
tight with the pin, then I shall become weak and be
like any other man." 14 So while he slept, **Delilah** took
the seven locks of his head and wove them into the
web. And she made them tight with the pin and said
to him, "The **Philistines** are upon you, Samson!" But
he awoke from his sleep and ***pulled away the pin,***
the loom, and the web.

B. Concealing of the Razor (6-14)

1. Prevarication* in His Actions

**Speak or act in an evasive way*

Samson lied three times to Delilah about the secret of his strength

Bind me with seven fresh bowstrings (7)

-The ease with which Samson snapped the cords is described in terms similar to those in **15:14**.

Bind me with new ropes...not been used (11)

-The men of Judah had previously bound Samson with new ropes (15:13)

Weave the seven locks of my head (13)

-The absurdity of this method—that Samson would be made helpless if seven locks of his hair were combined into fabric woven on a loom and then pinned—may have prompted Delilah to think that Samson had finally given her correct information.

2. Pride in His Action

-Lying to Delilah about what to do to take away his strength only gave him an opportunity to show off his great strength when he would break out of the various bonds he was put in by Delilah.

3. Peril of His Actions

-Samson's action here reflects those who want to play as close to the edge of the cliff as possible. Those with that attitude will eventually fall off the cliff.

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*Outline for Life of Samson: *Butler, John G. (1992). Samson: The Weak Strong Man (Bible Biography Series, Number Six). Clinton, IA: LBC Publications*

C. Coming of the Razor (15-19)

1. Complaint

Delilah used the same tactic as did the woman of Timnah - **Judges 14:16**

2. Coercion

"day after day"

3. Confession

Judges 14:17

-Samson's dedication to his Nazirite vow was inconsistent at best.

-He had been careless about keeping his distance from the grapes and dead bodies (**14:5–9**).

-He kept his long hair as the symbol of his dedication to God. This was the specific point the angel had spoken of (**13:5**)

-This may have superseded the other Nazirite restrictions in importance (**1Sam 1:11**)

4. Communication

"called the lords of the Philistines."

"She made him sleep on her knees"

-This may indicate that Delilah drugged Samson in some way to put him to sleep.

5. Clipping

"shave off the seven locks"

15 And she said to him, "***How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times***, and you have not told me where your great strength lies."
16 And when ***she pressed him hard*** with her words ***day after day***, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death.
17 And ***he told her all his heart***, and said to her, "A razor has never come upon my head, for ***I have been a*** **Nazirite** ***to God from my mother's womb***. ***If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me***, and I shall become weak and be like any other man."
18 When **Delilah** saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and ***called the*** **lords** ***of the*** **Philistines**, saying, "Come up again, for he has told me all his heart." Then the **lords** of the **Philistines** came up to her and ***brought the money in their hands***.
19 ***She made him sleep on her knees***. And she called a man and had him ***shave off the seven locks of his head***. Then she began to torment him, and ***his strength left him***.
20 And she said, "The **Philistines** are upon you, **Samson**!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But ***he did not know that the LORD had left him***.
21 And the **Philistines** seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza ***and bound him with bronze shackles***. And he ***ground at the mill in the prison***.
22 But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

D. Cost of the Razor (19-22)

1. Cost Him Strength

"his strength left him"

2. Cost Him God

"the LORD had left him"

-King Saul also forfeited the right to the power of the Spirit (**1Sam 16:14**) and ended his life in tragedy.

3. Cost Him Discernment

"he did not know"

4. Cost Him Sight

"gouged out his eyes"

-Samson later asked God that he be avenged for them taking his eyes (**16:28**)

5. Cost Him Honor

"brought him down to Gaza"

-This was the site of Samson's earlier triumph (**16:1-3**)

6. Cost Him Freedom

"bound him with bronze shackles"

7. Cost Him Comfort

"ground at the mill in the prison"

-If this was grinding corn with a hand mill, then this would be considered a woman's work.

-Turning a larger millstone would have normally been the work of a donkey (**15:15-16**)

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Circumstances of the Razor (4-5)

Judges 14:15–18 (ESV)
15 On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?" 16 And Samson's wife wept over him and said, "You only hate me; you do not love me. You have put a riddle to my people, and you have not told me what it is." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?" 17 She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her people. 18 And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

"What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
you would not have found out my riddle."

Foreign Women

Judges 14:1 (ESV)
1 Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines.

Judges 16:1 (ESV)
1 Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her.

Lords of the Philistines

Judges 3:3 (ESV)
3 These are the nations: the five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sidonians and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath.

Joshua 13:3 (ESV)
3 (from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron, it is counted as Canaanite; there are five rulers of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron), and those of the Avvim,

Bind and Humble

Genesis 15:13 (ESV)
13 Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.

Exodus 1:11–12 (ESV)
11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel.

Concealing of the Razor (6-14)

Bind me with seven fresh bowstrings (7)

Judges 15:14 (ESV)
14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands.

Bind me with new ropes...not been used (11)

Judges 15:13 (ESV)
13 They said to him, “No; we will only bind you and give you into their hands. We will surely not kill you.” So they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

Coming of the Razor (15-19)

Complaint

Judges 14:16 (ESV)
16 And Samson’s wife wept over him and said, “You only hate me; you do not love me. You have put a riddle to my people, and you have not told me what it is.” And he said to her, “Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?”

Confession

Judges 14:17 (ESV)
17 She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her people.

Grapes and Dead Bodies

Judges 14:5–9 (ESV)
5 Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. 6 Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. 7 Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she was right in Samson's eyes.
8 After some days he returned to take her. And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. 9 He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went. And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion.

Long Hair

Judges 13:5 (ESV)
5 for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines."

1 Samuel 1:11 (ESV)
11 And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

Cost of the Razor

Cost Him God

1 Samuel 16:14 (ESV)
14 Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.

Cost Him Sight

Judges 16:28 (ESV)
28 Then Samson called to the LORD and said, “O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.”

Cost Him Honor

Judges 16:1–3 (ESV)
1 Samson went to Gaza, and there he saw a prostitute, and he went in to her. 2 The Gazites were told, “Samson has come here.” And they surrounded the place and set an ambush for him all night at the gate of the city. They kept quiet all night, saying, “Let us wait till the light of the morning; then we will kill him.” 3 But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron.

Cost Him Comfort

Judges 15:15–16 (ESV)
15 And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men. 16 And Samson said,

“With the jawbone of a donkey,
heaps upon heaps,
with the jawbone of a donkey
have I struck down a thousand men.”