

## **BOUND IS FREE**

### **Judges 13 & Romans 6-8**

The story starts out very similar to Abraham and Sarah's story. They could not have children. Their names were Zorah and Manoah. Those names might not ring a bell for you but their son's name might. God intervened in Zorah and Manoah's lives and gave them a son named Samson.

God made a request of Manoah ... Samson's mom ... though ... **"Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean"** (Judges 13:4).

This request is not much different than what a doctor would tell a pregnant woman today ... "You are pregnant, do not drink alcohol or do drugs." Why? Why would the angel or the doctor say that? Because it affects the baby ... right? Manoah was not to drink any fermented drink, nor was she to eat any unclean food. Not necessarily because it would hurt the baby's health but because of what the baby was to become.

The angel had another request that might seem really weird ... "His hair is never to be cut."

I grew up in the 60's ... and if you were from the 60's you know it was the era of the hippies. Long hair was in! Except in our home. Mom and Dad were not sold on the long hair to say the least. Dad had the tendency of calling boys with long hair little girls. Of course, I wanted long hair like all the other boys. So I pulled out the old Samson story ... "Samson had long hair and he was a judge of God." I don't remember Dad's exact words but I think it was something like "When you become a judge of God you can have long hair."

Why would the angel tell Manoah to never cut Samson's hair? Because he was to be a Nazarite. A Nazarite was an Israelite who committed themselves wholly to the vow described in **NUMBERS 6**. Here is what it says in **VERSES 1-4** ... **The LORD said to Moses,** <sup>2</sup>**"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of dedication to the LORD as a**

Nazirite, <sup>3</sup> they must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. <sup>4</sup> As long as they remain under their Nazirite vow, they must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins. ... <sup>5</sup> “During the entire period of their Nazirite vow, no razor may be used on their head. They must be holy until the period of their dedication to the LORD is over; they must let their hair grow long.

This becomes extremely important later in the story. **As long as Samson obeyed what God told him concerning the Nazirite vow** ... he was extremely strong. In fact ... **14:6** tells us that Samson tore apart a lion with his bare hands.

Now we get to the part I want us to think a little more deeply about. In **CHAPTER 16** the word of God tells us that Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistines had for some time tried to kill Samson but he was so strong that they could not do it. So they bribed Delilah to find out what made Samson so strong.

Listen to **16:5** ... <sup>5</sup> The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, “See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. (That we might bound him) Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver.”

Three times Delilah asked Samson what it took to subdue him ... to bind him to where he could not get loose ... and three times Samson told her a lie:

- If you tie me up with 7 fresh bowstrings I can be subdued. And so she did ... and when the Philistines came to kill him he snapped them like they were wet noodles. And he killed the Philistines
- If you tie me up with new ropes I can be subdued. Delilah ties him up ... the Philistines come to kill him ... he breaks them and kills the Philistines.
- If you weave the 7 braids of my hair into the fabric of a loom, then I can be subdued. She did it ... they came ... they died.

As long as Samson kept his commitment to God through his Nazirite vow ... he could not be bound or subdued. He could not be overpowered. Delilah could have chained him with log chains and the power of God would have broken those chains loose.

**But that is not the end of the story!** I wish it was ... but it is not. **CHAPTER 16** tells us that Delilah kept nagging Samson day after day about how he could be bound and subdued and ... finally ... Samson ... really forgetting where his true power came from ... gave in to temptation and told her that if his hair was cut he could be bound. Samson falls asleep on Delilah's lap ... Delilah cuts his hair ... and the Philistines come.

Listen to what happens next ... **16:20-21** ... <sup>20</sup> Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him. <sup>21</sup> Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison.

You have seen grinding grains I imagine. There is this rock on top of another ... with a long rod to which they would tie a mule or cow and the animal would walk in circles all day long ... grinding the grain between the two rocks. That is what Samson was reduced to ... an animal ... bound to a rod and rock. **(Show Graphic)**

Samson went from someone that could not be bound because of his commitment to God ... to someone that was bound for the rest of his life.

There is something we need to understand here ... Samson is not any different than you or me. All of us have been bound. And the reason is the same reason that Samson was bound and subdued ... and that is because of disobedience. The difference is that Samson was physically bound by his disobedience. We have been bound spiritually by our disobedience. Our very souls have been bound by sin.

**ROMANS 7:23-24** says it this way ... <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

The fact is ... I do not want to end up like Samson! I want some good news ... and I am sure you do as well! Well guess what ... there is some good news!

Listen to ... **ROMANS 8:1-4a (The Message)** ... With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved. Those who enter

into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death. God went for the jugular when he sent his own Son. He didn't deal with the problem as something remote and unimportant. In his Son, Jesus, he personally took on the human condition, entered the disordered mess of struggling humanity in order to set it right once and for all.

We don't have to be like Samson! We can be set free from those chains that bind us! **PSALM 107:14** ... He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness, and broke away their chains.

[Listen to this video ... Break Every Chain by Jesus Culture Lyrics](#)

The Apostle Paul tells us that because the chains of sin have been broken by Jesus Christ ... we are set free. We are no longer bound to sin!

He says it this way in **ROMANS 6:2-7 (The Message)** ... If we've left the country where sin is sovereign, how can we still live in our old house there? Or didn't you realize we packed up and left there for good? That is what happened in baptism. When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace—a new life in a new land! That's what baptism into the life of Jesus means. When we are lowered into the water, it is like the burial of Jesus; when we are raised up out of the water, it is like the resurrection of Jesus. Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father so that we can see where we're going in our new grace-sovereign country. Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call!

We have been set free from the chains of sin.

**BUT LISTEN ... WE ARE NOT SET FREE TO DO WHAT WE WANT!**

Did you notice the title of the sermon this morning ... *Bound is Free*. Just because Christ broke the chains of sin does not mean that we can do anything we want now! We are still bound! But we are bound to something that gives us freedom from sin and destruction!

We are bound to a life of righteousness! **ROMANS 6:16-18 (The Message)** ... You know well enough from your own experience that there are some acts of so-called freedom that destroy freedom. Offer yourselves to sin, for instance, and it's your last free act. But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the freedom never quits. All your lives you've let sin tell you what to do. But thank God you've started listening to a new master, one whose commands set you free to live openly in *his* freedom!

Because of Samson's disobedience ... he was bound by the chains of sin and ended up living the life of an ox ... grinding grain for the rest of his life. I don't want that to be my story! And thanks be to God ... it did not end up as Samson's final story either.

I am not sure what Samson thought about all the time he was walking in circles day after day and year after year grinding bushel after bushel of grain. Maybe he was thinking about his commitment to God and how he messed up. He might have even come to the point that he repented of his disobedience.

I would like to think so because of the way the story actually ended. Samson was led into the Temple of Dagon (Philistine god) for the people to make fun of him. He placed his hands on two of the supporting pillars of the Temple and with one last commitment to God ... and with the power of God returning ... he shoved the pillars away and the Temple collapsed on the pagan worshippers and killed them! His life ended serving God's purpose.

He went from being bound by the Philistines due to his disobedience back to being bound to God's purpose!

Are you bound right now by sin? Do you need to be set free from sin and bound to righteousness? Christ's blood has set you up for that! He was bound to the cross so that you might be bound to righteousness! He has made the offer ... will you accept?

