



# SIN, SWEETNESS AND DEATH

The Story of Samson,  
the “Sun Child”



I asked to speak about Samson – all came from a conversation with a friend about porridge!



*“Out of the strong came forth sweetness..”* from Judges 14v14

- Logo of a dead lion covered in bees
- Oldest unchanged brand in the world
- Golden Syrup launched by Abram Lyle in 1881, in London

**Mail**Online

**'I thought it was sleeping!' Golden syrup fans are shocked by online post pointing out the Lyle's logo is a DEAD lion covered in bees (so had YOU noticed?)**

- Foodies noticed that the logo is of a lion carcass with bees in a viral Reddit post
- It's from a Biblical tale where Samson kills a lion and finds bees in the body
- Logo has remained unchanged since the Golden Syrup brand launched in 1881

Daily Mail - shock headline from July last year (2018)

## The Birth of Samson - Judges 13 v 1 to 5

<sup>1</sup>Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

<sup>2</sup>A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. <sup>3</sup>The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, “You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. <sup>4</sup>Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. <sup>5</sup>You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a **Nazirite**, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

Samson born at a time when Israel was being ruled over by the Philistines  
Long story over 4 chapters of Judges – Judges 13 to 16 – so much in the story

separated / set apart / consecrated

# The Nazirite Vow

Famous Nazirites:

- Samuel
- John the Baptist
- ... and Samson

Nazarite – from Hebrew word נזיר nazir **meaning** "consecrated" or "separated"

## The Nazirite vow – Numbers 6 v 1 - 4

<sup>1</sup>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.

**DON'T DRINK ALCOHOL OR EAT GRAPES**

## The Nazirite vow – Numbers 6 v 5 to 8

<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.

**DON'T CUT YOUR HAIR**

<sup>6</sup>“Throughout the period of their dedication to the LORD, the Nazirite must not go near a dead body. <sup>7</sup> Even if their own father or mother or brother or sister dies, they must not make themselves ceremonially unclean on account of them, because the symbol of their dedication to God is on their head. <sup>8</sup> Throughout the period of their dedication, they are consecrated to the LORD.

**DON'T TOUCH DEAD BODIES**

Samson born at a time when Israel was being ruled by the Philistines. Anointed by God...

BUT Samson had a number weaknesses. One of them was women. And particularly women from other nations, not Israel.





First time we really encounter Samson is when he comes across the lion

## Samson and the lion - Judges 14 v 5 to 9

<sup>5</sup> Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. <sup>6</sup> The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. <sup>7</sup> Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her.

<sup>8</sup> Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass, and in it he saw a swarm of bees and some honey. <sup>9</sup> He scooped out the honey with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion's carcass.

He ate the honey as he went along ... and gave it to his parents! Yuk!

## Samson and his battles with the Philistines

- Poses his riddle, but the men of Timnah threaten his wife so she tells them the answer
- Samson is angry and kills 30 Philistines, and storms off
- His wife is given to another man...
- So Samson sets fire to the Philistines' grain and vineyards
- The Philistines kill his wife and father-in-law
- Samson slaughters more Philistines
- The Philistines threaten the men of Judah
- The men of Judah tie up Samson and give him to the Philistines

Then the riddle comes in... wager with 30 men for 30 linen garments and 30 sets of clothes, "out of the eater, something to eat, out of the strong came something sweet".

These men threatened Samson's wife so she cried for 7 days until he told her the answer. She told the men, and they were able to answer Samson. He got angry as he knew how they'd found out. So he killed 30 other men and gave their clothes to the ones who'd answered the riddle. Samson got angry and stormed home. When he went back, his wife had been given to another man by her father. So then started a number of events between Samson and the Philistines. They kill his wife, he kills loads of Philistines, then runs away to hide in a cave.



Louise likes donkeys – here's a story with a donkey's jawbone in it! Samson has been tied up by 3000 men of Judah = and handed over to the Philistines. Then he broke his ropes, found the jawbone of a donkey and killed 1000 Philistines.

Silent Witness – fascinating ... wonder what Dr Nikki Alexander would think when doing an autopsy... mmm, looks like injury caused by the jawbone of a donkey... mmm another one ... there's nearly a 1000 more? Mmm could be a serial killer!!!



Samson goes off with a prostitute. Then – final part of the story that leads to his downfall - he falls in love with Delilah. She wants to know where his strength comes from. He tries to fool her but telling her lies about what will weaken him... and doesn't tell her the truth about his strength until he finally gives in.

## Samson and Delilah – Judges 16 v 7

7So he told her everything. “No razor has ever been used on my head,” he said, “because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother’s womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.” <sup>18</sup>When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, “Come back once more; he has told me everything.” So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. <sup>19</sup>After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. <sup>20</sup>And his strength left him. <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.

Did Samson maybe think that God had condoned his actions and he could get away with anything?

## But ... God's grace to Samson – Judges 16v22

<sup>22</sup> **But** the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved. ...

<sup>23</sup> Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands."

...

<sup>25</sup> While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them...

...  
<sup>28</sup> Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "**Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.**" <sup>29</sup> Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, <sup>30</sup> Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it.

God was gracious to Samson, even when he didn't deserve it... in one last action, when his strength has come back he destroys the temple and thousands of Philistines... Killed more in his death than when alive. Tragic story, he effectively commits suicide.

BUT ... God can renew our strength when we wait on Him, even if we don't deserve it

## Samson the devoted Nazirite?

*Samson broke his Nazirite vows many times:*

1. Walked through a vineyard full of grapes
2. Touched the lion's dead body – and many other bodies of those he killed!
3. Told Delilah his secret so his hair was shaved and he lost his strength

Samson broke his vows many times. Chased after women. What more could he have achieved if he'd kept his vows?

How many times do we break our vows to God, sin against Him

Chase things we shouldn't?



What does it mean to be a modern Nazirite?

Stay away from ...

1. Pubs?
2. Barbers or hairdressers?
3. Undertakers?



What is God saying to us? What does it mean to be a modern day Nazirite...

## OR?

1. Watch what we drink? - stay able to make good decisions?
2. Be different – radical! Stand out...
3. Run from things that cause death to our relationship with God

Need to stand out like Samson, but not necessarily due to our hair!

Examples of things that cause death. Individual to us.

If you're on a diet, don't go into a cake shop.

## How do we stay set apart?



*Samson is only reported as praying twice:*

1. After killing 1000 Philistines – Judges 16 v 18 – “God, I’m thirsty!”
2. When held captive by the Philistines – Judges 17 v 28 – “Strengthen me once more”

How do we set ourselves apart for God? How do we stay close to God? Samson only appears to have prayed twice

We need to love God more than we love anything else. We’ve made a decision to follow Him, He is worth it

WE HAVE CHOICES – He will give us more than we give up



# SIN, SWEETNESS AND DEATH

Just because it's sweet doesn't  
mean it's good for you

## Questions from the story of Samson

1. What is God asking you to give up (or run from) to live a life devoted to Him?

God is gracious to us

Was gracious to Samson

Doesn't mean it's ok. This is not meant to be made us

Samson could probably have done so much more

Stones ...

2. Are you feeling weary and waiting for God to strengthen you again?