

## Monday Morning Rewind – July 26, 2010

Good afternoon! On Sabbath we delved into the story of Samson to remind us of where the secret of our strength really lies.

To set the stage for the lessons Samson's story teaches, it's important to understand this premise: **That which is blessed and chosen by God is to be the head and not the tail, to always be at the top, never at the bottom. (Deut. 28:13)** Israel was God's chosen people. They were set aside by God to accomplish a special purpose, and what God chooses He blesses.

Sadly, Israel had a history of rebellion and wanting to be like everyone else. Judges 13 opens with the statement, "Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord." (Judges 13:1) God chose to discipline Israel at the hands of the Philistines for 40 years. Then he set Samson aside as His chosen instrument to deliver Israel from Philistine oppression.

Samson was to be a Nazirite, an Israelite who lived an abstemious lifestyle in consecration to God for the purpose of some special service. He was not to shave his head or touch anything dead among other things. (See Numbers 6:2-21 for details concerning the Nazirite vow.) There were two different types of Naziritism, the temporary and the perpetual, of which the first was far more common. We know of only three of the perpetual class: Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist.

Samson was definitely *not* to be like everybody else. He belonged to God in a special way and **that which belongs to God, you treat with great care and respect.** When you belong to God, you deserve the best diet, the best drink, the best education—the best of everything because you're on special assignment from God, and are to be the head and not the tail—always at the top and never at the bottom.

Samson's gift from God was super human strength, but his weakness was lust and self-sufficiency. Examples of his strength are found in Judges 14:5, 6; 15:3-8, 14-16.

Samson could control the Philistines with his strength, but he couldn't control his own passions. You can be the strongest man in the world but if you are morally weak, you are "as any other man." **What makes you different is the strength of your walk with God.**

By the time Samson made a love connection with Delilah, a Philistine, his enemies knew he could be seduced into giving up the secret of his strength. Rewind to Judges 16:4,5 to see their strategy. Samson's strength could not be taken from him; he would have to surrender it on his own. As long as Samson stayed in covenant relationship to God, the Philistines were no match for him; He was invincible. And as long as we stay in covenant relationship with God we are invincible too. "No weapon forged against [us] will prevail" (Isa. 54:17). We can do all things through Christ and Satan is no match for us. But we must never forget or surrender the secret of our strength.

Power couldn't be taken from Samson, but the Philistines knew that Samson was morally weak, and that he could be seduced into their hands by a pretty girl. Moral of the story? *Be careful who you lock lips with!* (Rewind to Proverbs 5:3-4; 6:25; 7:21-23.) The lesson here is: **You're either a fool for the Lord, or made a fool by the devil.** You choose.

The seduction of Samson to surrender the secret of his strength is recorded in vivid detail in Judges 16:6-21. He finally did what the Philistines needed him to do—give up his uniqueness and sever his connection to his God. You and I must learn from this that unless we renew our strength in God every day, subduing ourselves before Him in obedience, self gets stronger, making us morally and spiritually weaker. **It is only when self is weak that you are strong.** (See 2 Cor. 12:10.)

Samson was lulled to sleep physically and spiritually in the lap of the enemy. Dependence on self and the lack of consequences as he got bolder and farther away from his mission and calling, caused him to drop his guard. He came to his senses too late. When, in Judges 16:20, he said "I'll go out as before and shake myself free," Samson presumed on a relationship with God that he had not done anything to strengthen or protect. He took for granted that nothing would change and everything would stay the same. What a fatal mistake!

**When you don't walk with God every day, sooner or later you're going to take a wrong turn and the farther you get from the source of your strength, the weaker you become—like everybody else.** You can be doing the same religious ritual week in and week out and not realize the absence of the Holy Spirit!

**The source of Samson's strength was his oneness with God**—of which his hair was merely a symbol. [See 1 Cor. 6:15-17] As long as Samson was united to God, he was one with God in spirit. When he chose to unite himself with Delilah, he in essence chose another god over the true God. Samson exchanged the spirit of God for the spirit of Delilah, who represented the Philistines and their god Dagon. What Dagon couldn't take, Samson gave him in the lap of Delilah.

Even as Samson's hair was not to be cut, so his reliance on God was never to be severed. A hair cut either by his own hand or another's would mean a broken promise and the lost covering of God's protection.

Samson took off his spiritual armor. He failed to be authentic. He forgot who he was and didn't live up to what God created him to be.

In what areas of your Christian life are you being "lured" into surrendering the secret of your strength? Are you being tempted to be "like everybody else" in your relationships? Your worship or identity as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian? Your diet or choices of entertainment? Your finances or integrity?

Don't give up your uniqueness. Don't settle for ordinary when God has called you to be extraordinary. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. The secret of your strength is not a what, but who—Christ. With Him you can do anything, without him, he says, "you can do nothing." Jesus is your strength today. Those who hope in and depend on the Lord shall renew their strength. Don't let the world bait you, trick you, deceive you, or seduce you into giving up your relationship with God. And don't let old hurts, imagined slights, or the past shortcomings of *the church* deceive you into accepting chains of bitterness that keep you from being who God needs you to be right now.

You've been blessed and chosen by God to be the head and not the tail; to always be at the top, never at the bottom. And this you will be if you will be about your Father's business, and remember the secret of your strength. —Pastor Randy

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2 Chron. 7:14

*"The need is great. The key is prayer. The time is now."*