



# MESSIAH

## JOHNS CREEK

### FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Christian Worship Lectionary		
FIRST LESSON	<b>Judges 16:22-31</b>	What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Jesus' words of warning form a perfect picture of Samson
SECOND LESSON	<b>Romans 12:1-8</b>	Jesus did not heed Satan's temptation or Peter's command. He denied himself and carried his cross to the hill of his death and our eternal life.
GOSPEL LESSON	<b>Matthew 16:21-26</b>	When Jesus spoke most clearly about his cross, Peter spoke Satan's words of compromise
PSALM	121	

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

O Lord Jesus Christ, preserve the congregation of believers with your never-failing mercy. Help us avoid whatever is wicked and harmful, and guide us in the way that leads to our salvation; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

#### VERSE OF THE DAY:

Alleluia. Your words became a joy to me, and the delight of my heart. Alleluia. (Jeremiah 15:16 cf. RSV)

#### THEME OF THE DAY:

The Church is militant: first the cross, then the crown. The Prayer and Verse of the Day center the lessons. Today Christ tells us that for him and for us, going God's way means death must come before life. He calls on us to deny ourselves and follow him on the way of the cross. Those words offend our sinful flesh and make our Old Adam cry with Peter, "Never!" They make us accuse God with Jeremiah. So today the Church prays for the never-failing mercy of Christ that we might avoid such wicked and harmful thoughts and instead be guided on the cross-laden path to salvation. Then, and only then, do these words of Christ cease offending our flesh and become a joy and delight for our heart

#### LAST SUNDAY'S SERMON:

[A good death is it's own reward](#)

**BACKGROUND:**

- As we read so often (7 times) in the book of Judges the Israelites “did evil in the eyes of the Lord” so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.
- THE angel of the Lord (this is how Jesus is described before He was born in Bethlehem) appears to Manoah and announces though she is barren she will give birth to a son who will deliver the Israelites from the Philistines.
- **13:22 “We are doomed to die!” he said to his wife. “We have seen God!”**
- His momma names this gift from God “Samson” (similar to the Hebrew word for sun) He is to be her sunny boy who removes the shadow of disgrace of barrenness and shadow of disgrace caused by the Philistines.
- Samson was a Nazarite from birth. That meant that he was to abstain from all alcohol, never cut his hair, and not touch any dead bodies.
- Samson broke every single one of his Nazarite vows.
  1. *He touches the dead body of a lion*
  2. *He gets drunk or at least throws a drinking party*
  3. *He lets Delilah cut his hair.*
    - *“Delilah is an intriguing name. In form it appears to be a Hebrew name. This opens the possibility that Delilah was not a Philistine, but one of Samson’s own people. The last four letters of Delilah’s name spell “night” in Hebrew, with all its connotations of darkness and mystery. The first three letters can mean “bring low” in the sense of “humiliate”. At the same time, the same three letters may be used to describe the amorous, coquettish behavior of a woman out to get her man.” - PB*
    - *if Delilah were walking around today she would be wearing a pair of hot pink shorts with the word “juicy” on the butt.*
- He marries a Philistine. this is something God forbid in **Deuteronomy 7** ***When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you— 2 and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. 3 Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.***
- Samson tore the gates off a city and carried them to the top of a hill to mock the townsmen of the prostitute. He toyed with Delilah about the secret of his strength. *“...he was using his God-given strength, not to serve the Lord and his people, but to aid himself in his selfish, fleshly pursuits. He had also become conceited, as though it were his own strength and not a gift from God. -BHC*
- The mighty Samson has been captured. He has been betrayed by Delilah. His hair has been cut his eyes have been gouged out he has been placed in bronze shackles. He now grinds grain in prison.
  - *“round and round Samson walked in darkness grinding grain. What irony! He who had made donkeys of the Philistines at Lehi was a donkey. He who carried away the gates at Gaza was locked in prison. He who set fire to the standing grain of the Philistines was making flour for their bread.” PB*
  - *Someone has said that v. 21 pictures the blinding, binding, and grinding results of sin. - Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*

# Exegesis of Revelation 7:1-8<sup>1</sup>

23 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.” 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, “Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the one who laid waste our land and multiplied our slain.”

23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to  
 1 ! → 2 סַרְנֵי → → 3 פְּלִשְׁתִּים 4 נֶאֱסָפוּ 5 לְ זִבְחָה 6 זָבַח 7 גָּדוֹל 8 לְ זִבְחָה 9 לְ

“Dagon their god and to rejoice, and they said, “Our god has given  
 10 דָּגוֹן 11 אֱלֹהֵי 12 הֵם 13 וְ 14 לְ 15 שְׂמַחָה 16 וְ 17 יֹאמְרוּ 18 נוֹ 19 אֱלֹהֵי 20 נָתַן 21

• Samson our enemy into our hand.” 24 And when the people saw •  
 24 אֶת 25 שְׂמֵשׁוֹן 26 אֶת 27 נוֹ 28 אֹיְבֵי 29 נוֹ 30 בְּ 31 אֱלֹהֵי 32 יְדָ 33 וְ 34 אֶת 35 הַ 36 עַם 37 יִרְאוּ 38 אֶת 39

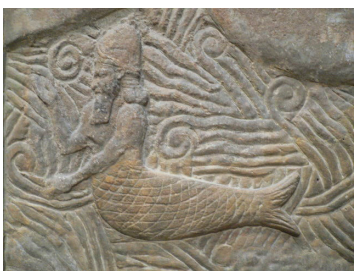
him, • they praised • their god. For they said, “Our god has  
 4 וְ 5 אֱלֹהֵי 6 נוֹ 7 אָמְרוּ 8 כִּי 9 אֱלֹהֵי 10 הֵם 11 אֶת 12 יְהִלְלוּ 13 וְ 14 אֱלֹהֵי 15 נוֹ 16 אָמְרוּ 17

given • our enemy into our hand • •, the ravager of our country, •  
 14 נָתַן 15 אֶת 16 נוֹ 17 אֹיְבֵי 18 נוֹ 19 בְּ 20 אֱלֹהֵי 21 אֶת 22 הַ 23 עַרְבָּן 24 אֶת 25 מְחַרְבֵי 26 נוֹ 27 אֶרֶץ 28 נוֹ 29

who has killed many of us.”  
 29 אֲשֶׁר 30 חָלְלָה 31 אֶת 32 הַרְבֵּה 33 אֶת 34



•**Philistines** - This powerful tribe made frequent incursions against the Hebrews. There was almost perpetual war between them. They sometimes held the tribes, especially the southern tribes, in degrading servitude (*Judg. 15:11; 1 Sam. 13:19-22*); at other times they were defeated with great slaughter (*1 Sam. 14:1-47; 17*). These hostilities did not cease till the time of Hezekiah (*2 Kings 18:8*), when they were entirely subdued. They still, however, occupied their territory, and always showed their old hatred to Israel (*Ezek. 25:15-17*). They were finally conquered by the Romans. Easton, M.G., 1893. *Easton’s Bible dictionary*.



•**Dagon**—little fish; diminutive from dag = a fish, the fish-god; the national god of the Philistines (*Judg. 16:23*). This idol had the body of a fish with the head and hands of a man. It was an Assyrio-Babylonian deity, the worship of which was introduced among the Philistines through Chaldea. The most famous of the temples of Dagon were at Gaza (*Judg. 16:23-30*) and Ashdod (*1 Sam. 5:1-7*). (See **FISH**.) Easton, M.G., 1893. *Easton’s Bible dictionary*.

<sup>1</sup> For ease of study among non-Hebrew students we will use English standard Version with Hebrew Interlinear

- הָלַל (*hā·lāl*): v.; ≡ Str 1984; TWOT 499—1. LN 33.354–33.364 (piel) **praise**, cheer, brag on, extol, i.e., extol the greatness or excellence of a person, object, or event; (pual) **be praised**, be worthy of praise (2Sa 22:4; 1Ch 16:25; Ps 18:4; 48:2; 78:63; 96:4; 113:3; 145:3; Pr 12:8; Eze 26:17+), note: also verbal song and singing with the same themes; (hitp) **boast in**, praise, glory in, i.e., express words of excellence, with a focus on the confidence one has in the object, person, or event - DBL
  - Qal. Piel - simple/intensive ongoing action
  - *Instead of bringing glory to the God of Israel, Samson gave the enemy opportunity to honor their false gods. - Be available*
- תָּרַב (*hārēb*) I, **dry up; be in ruins; lay waste; make desolate**. The verb *hārab* originally meant “to be dry.” Secondly it and its derivatives denoted, on the one hand, the heat which caused dryness, and on the other, the desolation of waste areas, the devastation caused by wars. - TWOT
  - Hiphil - causative action
    - I find it interesting that the description of what Samson had done to those who worship a fish was that he caused their land to dry up.



**Instead of bringing glory to God Samson brought glory to Dagon. How can we become guilty of the same sin?**

25 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.

25 And when their hearts were  
 1 וְ 2 יְהִי 3 בִּי 8 ׀ 7 לְבָבִי •

merry, they said, “ Call Samson, that he may entertain us.”  
 4 טוֹב 9 וְ 10 יֹאמְרוּ 11 קְרֹאוּ 12 לְ 13 שְׁמֹשׁוֹן 14 וְ 15 יִשְׁחַק 16 לְ 17 אֵלֵינוּ •

So they called Samson out of the prison, and he entertained  
 18 וְ 19 יִקְרְאוּ 20 לְ 21 שְׁמֹשׁוֹן 22 מִ 23 בֵּית 24 הַ 25 אֲסִירִים 28 וְ 29 יִצְחַק

• them.  
 30 לְ 31 פְּנֵי 32 הֵם

- **high spirits** - likely a polite way to say they were wasted
- **entertain** - שָׂחַק (*śā·ḥāq*): v.; ≡ Str 7832; TWOT 1905c—1. LN 25.135–25.145 (qal) **laugh**, be amused, i.e., make sounds which express a feeling or attitude of pleasure or amusement over a situation (Ecc 3:4+); 2. LN 33.406–33.411 (qal) **laugh at**, mock, scoff, i.e., communicate through words and laughing sounds, making fun of an object, implying lack of concern over the object, or anger and disrespect for the object - DBL
- **performed** צָחַק (*śāḥaq*) **laugh** (Qal); **play, mock** (Piel). The simple stem of *śāḥaq* conveys the idea of laughter, whether in joy or incredulity. The stronger Piel stem connotes positively, play and sport, or negatively, mockery and derision. - TWOT



**Who were the Philistines mocking?**

When they **stood** him among the pillars, 26 Samson **said** to the servant who held his hand, “**Put** me where I can **feel** the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.” 27 Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson **perform**.

• They made • him **stand** between the pillars .<sup>26</sup> And  
 33 ו → 34 אֹתָּהּ 35 וְיָעִמְדוּ 36 בֵּין 37 הָ 38 עַמֻּדִים 39 וְ

Samson **said** to the young man who held him by the hand • ,  
 3 שְׁמִשּׁוֹן 4 וְאָמַר 5 אֵל 6 הָ 7 נַעַר ← 8 הָ 9 מְחִזֵּק • 10 בְּ 11 יָד

“ **Let** • me • **feel** • the pillars on which the  
 12 הַנִּיחָה 13 אֹתָּהּ 14 וְ 15 הַיְמִשְׁ 16 וְ 17 אֶת 18 הָ 19 עַמֻּדִים → 20 אֲשֶׁר 21 הַ

house rests • • , that I may lean against them.”<sup>27</sup> Now the  
 26 הַ 27 בֵּית 28 נִכּוֹן 29 עַל 30 יְהִים 31 אֲשֶׁן → 32 עַל 33 יְהִים 1 2 הַ

house was full of • men and • women. • All the lords of the  
 3 הַ 4 מְלֵא 5 הָ 6 אֲנָשִׁים 7 וְ 8 הָ 9 נָשִׁים 10 כָּל 11 הָ 12 סָרְנֵי → 13 הָ

Philistines were there , and on the roof there were about  
 14 פְּלִשְׁתִּים • 15 שָׁמָּה 16 וְ 17 עַל 18 הָ 19 גַּג • • 20 בְּ

3,000 men and women , who looked on while  
 20 אֲלֵפִים 21 שְׁלֹשָׁת 22 וְ 23 אִישׁ 24 וְ 25 אִשָּׁה → 26 הָ 27 רְאִים ← 28 בְּ

Samson **entertained**.  
 29 שְׁמִשּׁוֹן 30 שָׂחֵק

- “let me feel the pillars” - he speaks with an imperative command but the sight or lack there-of this fallen hero is anything but commanding. He needs a servant to lead him because his eyes have been gouged out.
- “that i may lean against them” - the implication is that he is too weak to stand on his own and needs the strength of the pillars to keep himself standing.
- “all the rulers of the Philistines” סָרְנֵי (seren) I, lord, tyrant. (ASV, RSV similarly.) A Philistine loan word, *seren* always appears in the plural and designates the five lords of the Philistine pentapolis (Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza). Although the Philistine states were totally independent, they could and did cooperate when common cause or design necessitated. They conspired with Delilah to subdue Samson, an action which God eventually turned to their death (Jud 16:5ff.). - TWOT

**?** Watching this scene from our vantage point in history, what comfort and assurance can we be given from this pagan celebration?

28 Then Samson **prayed** to the Lord, “O Sovereign Lord, **remember** me. O God, please **strengthen** me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.” 29 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, 30 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. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

28 Then Samson **called** to the LORD and **said** , “ O • Lord  
 1 אֲדֹנָי יְיָ 8 אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל 2 יְקַרְאֵנִי 4 אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה 5 וְיַצְרֵם 6 וְיַצְרֵם 7 יְאִמְרָה 8

GOD , please **remember** me and please **strengthen** me only • this •  
 10 הַיְהוָה 13 נָא 11 זְכֹר 12 נִי 14 וְנָא 17 חַזֵּק 15 נִי 18 אֶדְהֶה 21 הַ 22 זֶה 19 הַ

once , O God , that I may be avenged • • on the  
 20 פְּעַם 23 הַ 24 אֱלֹהִים 25 וְ 26 אֲנַקְמָה 27 נִקְמָה 28 אַחַת 33 מְ 34

Philistines for my two eyes.” 29 And Samson **grasped** • the two  
 34 פְּלִשְׁתִּים 29 מְ 32 יְ 30 עֵינַי 31 שְׁמֹנֶה 1 וְ 3 שְׁמֹנֶה 2 יְלִפְתָּה 4 אֶת 6

• middle pillars on • which the house rested, and he **leaned** his  
 7 הַ 8 תְּוֹדֶה 6 עַמּוּדַי 13 עַל 14 יְהֵם 9 אֲשֶׁר 10 הַ 11 בַּיִת 12 נִכּוֹן 15 וְ 16 יִסְמְדֶה 17

weight against them , • his right hand on the one and • his  
 17 עַל 18 יְהֵם 20 בְּ 22 וְ 21 יְמִינִי 19 אַחַד 23 וְ 25 בְּ 27 וְ

left hand on the other . 30 And Samson **said** , “Let me  
 26 שְׁמֹנֶה 24 אַחַד 1 וְ 3 שְׁמֹנֶה 2 יְאִמְרָה 4 נַפְשִׁי 5 וְ 6

**die** with the Philistines.” Then he **bowed** with all his strength, and  
 4 תָּמוּת 7 עַם 8 פְּלִשְׁתִּים 9 וְ 10 יִט 11 בְּ • • 12 כַּח 13 וְ

the house **fell** upon the lords and upon all the people who  
 15 הַ 16 בַּיִת 14 יָפַל 17 עַל 18 הַ 19 סָרְנִים 20 וְ 21 עַל 22 כָּל 23 הַ 24 עַם 25

were in it . So the dead whom he killed at his death **were**  
 • 26 בְּ 27 וְ 28 וְ 30 הַ 31 מֵתִים 32 אֲשֶׁר 33 הָמִית 34 בְּ 36 וְ 35 מוֹת 29 יְהִיוּ

more than those whom he had killed during his life . 31 Then his  
 37 רַבִּים 38 מְ 39 אֲשֶׁר • 40 הָמִית 41 בְּ 43 וְ 42 חַיִּי 1 וְ 4

- **“Remember me”** זָכַר (*zakar* (269c); a prim. root; *remember* - NASB)
  - Qal. impv. again he speaks a command but it is clearly spoken in humility.
  - This was Samson’s moment of repentance. Here at his lowest point he stands the tallest. Despite his blindness he sees more clearly than he ever has. Samson begs the Sovereign LORD to remember him to not forget him though God ought to turn his back on him and pronounce I do not know you. Samson wants to be known by the LORD
  - See how he addresses the LORD. He calls him **Sovereign** thereby acknowledging that he is subject to the LORD and that the LORD is above all. He calls him **LORD**. This is the special name for God that no one today knows how to pronounce. It is the name of promise covenant the name of the one who sets His people free from slavery and delivers them from death.
- **“Please strengthen”** הָזַק (*hāzaq*) **be(come) strong, strengthen, prevail, harden, be courageous, be sore** (meaning be severe). The basic meaning of this word in the Qal stem is “be(come) strong.” In general, the Piel is causative of the Qal, “make strong,” “strengthen.- TWOT
  - Piel impv. yet again he speaks a command but it is still clearly spoken in humility.
  - Samson pleads for the opportunity to be of service one more time. He is asking that he be reinstated as the LORD’s chosen instrument of punishment for the Blaspheming Philistines. His desire for strength is no longer to amuse himself but rather to serve the LORD; to do what he was born to do.
- **“get revenge”** נָקַם (*nāqam*) **take vengeance, revenge, avenge oneself, be avenged, be punished** Although this root, including its derivatives, is only used about seventy times in the OT, it expresses a truth that is theologically important, but greatly misunderstood. Vengeance and revenge are ideas that would appear to have no good ethical validity whether coming from God or man. But such is not the case when the use of this root is properly understood in its OT setting and NT application. The concept of divine vengeance must be understood in the light of OT teaching about the holiness and justice of God and its effect on man as a sinner. In terms of the presuppositions of some modern “Christian” theologies, such a God of vengeance will be labeled unchristian and unethical. Understood in the full orb of biblical revelation, balanced as it is by the mercy of God, divine vengeance is seen to be a necessary aspect of the history of redemption. - TWOT
  - It still sounds as though Samson has his own interests in mind. We would rather hear him ask to give glory to God. But sadly our hero is flawed. He is not the comic book version superhero he is a man who struggled with sin like the rest of us do.
  - It is also worth noting that Samson was the LORD’s chosen servant who was to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Therefore any action taken against Samson was an action taken against the LORD Himself. To gouge out Samson’s eyes was an insult to God. Perhaps I judge Samson too harshly when I say his prayer is selfish. Perhaps he is asking for revenge against those who stole the eyes away from the LORD’s servant. All of Samson was a Nazirite that is all of Samson was set apart by God... including his eyes.



### Is Samson’s request to “get revenge for his eyes” selfish?

- **“Let me die with the Philistines”** - still he prays to the LORD “let me die” literally “let die my soul”. נָפַשׁ (*nepeš*) **life, soul, creature, person** - TWOT When we hear the Hebrew words we cannot help but think of Jesus who after He had completed the work that His Father had put before Him He prayed “Father into your hands I commit my spirit” [Luke 23:46](#). Samson is

asking for his soul to put in the LORD's hands. He asking for the permission and blessing to finish the work set before him so that he can go home to heaven.



### Does this request remind you of anyone?

- נָטָה (nāṭâ) **extend, stretch out, spread out, pitch, turn, pervert, incline, bend, bow.** - TWOT
  - *When they saw Samson lay hold of the pillars, we may suppose, his doing so served them for a jest, and they made sport with that too: What will this feeble Jew do? How are sinners brought to desolation in a moment! They are lifted up in pride and mirth, that their fall may be the more dreadful. Let us never envy the mirth of wicked people, but infer from this instance that their triumphing is short and their joy but for a moment.* - [Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume](#)
- **“so the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.”**
  - out of all the amazing things he did in his life to a lion or with a jawbone of an ass, this is the greatest of them all. At long last Samson was not just living for himself.
  - “Samson died better than he lived” - PB
  - *The author seems to delight in the irony that he who was brought into that building as an entertainer literally brought the house down upon the revelers. In this final act of defiance, Samson slew more of the Philistines than he had slain during his lifetime. At the same time, this final blow wiped out the entire leadership of the Philistine people (16:28-30) - . [The Books of History](#)*

**Hebrews 11** <sup>1</sup> Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. <sup>2</sup> This is what the ancients were commended for. ...

<sup>31</sup> By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

<sup>32</sup> And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.



### What encouragement can we take from this list of heroes of faith?