

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

I exalt your name today, for you are the one true God. Dagon, the fertility god of the Philistines, was shown to be helpless before your power. Through the prophet Isaiah, you told your people, “Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me” (Isa 46:9). Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me about the Philistines’ encounter with the ark and the judgeship of Samson. You allowed the ark to be captured in order to teach both the Philistines and the Israelites a lesson about who you really are. The Israelites learned that you couldn’t be used like a good-luck charm, and the Philistines learned that you were greater than their false god Dagon. Both sides were shown that you can fight your own battles and that you will be treated as holy before men (cf. Num 20:12; 1 Sam 6:19–20). The judgeship of Samson is a study in contrasts: (a) he would not cut his hair, but he ate honey from the carcass of a lion, (b) he was devoted to Israel, but he lusted after Philistine women, (c) he had faith in your power (Heb 11:32), but he lived a dissolute and decadent life, (d) he was self-centered and vengeful, but he was willing to give his life to destroy the Philistines. Perhaps the story of Samson is meant to teach me more about you than about Samson. You stirred his spirit (Jdg 13:25), and his desire for the woman in Timnah was “of the LORD,” for you were seeking an occasion against the Philistines (Jdg 14:4). This shows me that you can use even the sinful desires of a flawed individual to accomplish your purpose. How much more could have been achieved if Samson had been faithful to you? He died with his enemies, and once again, sin brought a tragic end to a life of great potential.

Reflection

The fact that you used Samson in spite of his sinful life shows that your blessing does not equal your approval. Too often we mistakenly think that a person’s success in ministry means that you approve of everything they say and do.

Request

Father, help me remember that obedience is better than earthly success, and your approval of my conduct is more important than your blessing of my ministry.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for your patience with Samson. It’s encouraging to know that you will always listen to the prayer of someone whose heart is filled with genuine repentance and faith.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: [“The Lion that on Samson Roared”](#) – John Newton.

Meditation Verse: Judges 14:4.