

Unbelievable

Episode 8: Fatal Attractions

INTRODUCTION - The Fraternity of Frail Super Heroes

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

THE STORY - Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

Judges 13-16

- **HERE WE GO AGAIN:** Israel continues the pattern of turning away from Yahweh whenever life is calm. But this time, they don't even cry out to him. They are content under the leadership of the Philistines. (13:1; 15:11)
- **THE ANGEL OF YAHWEH:** Who is this human/divine being? (13:15-22)
- **MOM & DAD:** Samson's mom is a strong, intelligent, wise woman of faith. His dad, on the other hand, is a bit of a twit. (13:8-23)
- **NAZIRITE VOW:** Usually a voluntary and temporary vow of dedication to God symbolized by a) avoiding dead bodies, b) avoiding grapes and their juice, and c) avoiding haircuts (Numbers 6), Samson (a.k.a., "little sun" or "Sunny") is called to be a Nazirite from womb to tomb. (13:3-7)
- **MINE! MINE! MINE!:** Is Samson a spoiled brat, getting what he wants, even if it means disregarding his parents? Or is he following God's Spirit and moving outside of the Law in order to accomplish God's will? (14:1-4)
- **LION & HONEY:** Samson kills a lion and later eats honey out of its carcass, breaking Nazirite rule #1 (also see Leviticus 11:39-40). (14:5-9)
- **MARRIAGE MAYHEM:** Samson gets his bride, probably drinking at the feast (Lit., drinking party), thereby breaking Nazirite rule #2, is double-crossed in a bet that he cheats in anyway, kills some Philistines (breaking Nazirite rule #1 again), finds out his wife has meanwhile been given away to his best man, kills some more Philistines and burns their crops, and finds out the Philistines have burned his wife as revenge, so he kills some more Philistines. (14:10-15:8)
- **TURNED IN BY HIS OWN PEOPLE:** Samson's fellow Israelites choose comfort and security above loyalty (to Samson and to God) and turn Samson over to a Philistine lynch mob, but Samson kills them all anyway, using a donkey's jawbone. (15:9-16)
- **WATER FROM A ROCK:** Like Moses, Samson receives miraculous water from a rock when thirsty. (15:17-20)
- **MORE SEX & VIOLENCE:** Samson visits a Philistine prostitute and rips off the gates of the city when he leaves. (16:1-3)
- **DELILAH:** Samson's new love is his match, the *femme fatale par excellence*. Delilah probably comes from *laylah*, meaning "darkness". Loyal to her people (or at least to herself), cunning, resourceful, and focussed. Delilah is not attached to any man (husband, father, brother), but has had to learn how to survive on her own. Samson tells her the secret to his strength, loses it all, and is betrayed to the Philistines.
- **BIG FINISH:** Samson is blinded and forced into hard labour. When brought to a public festival in the temple, Samson prays to God for his strength to return and brings down the building by pushing on the main supports. He dies with his enemies. But even at the end, Samson's motivation is his revenge, not God's glory or his people's deliverance. (16:21-31)

LOOKING DEEPER - Reading Below The Lines

TAKE OUT #1 - Technically, our universe is not 'magical', but it is PERSONAL. We are persons, living by and in the power of divine personhood. (Acts 17:28)

Samson's hair was not a magical source of power, but a symbol of the RELATIONSHIP he had with God. Christ-followers should reject the magical view of the universe in favour of the personal view of the universe.

TAKE OUT #2 - Just because God works with our weaknesses, doesn't mean being weak should be our goal. Our goal should be to strive for maturity in Christ.

God used Samson's sexual weakness to "begin" what needed David to finish (13:5). Let's not settle for less than our potential.

1 Corinthians 14:20; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28;
Hebrews 5:11-6:3; James 1:4

TAKE OUT #3 - God will accomplish his loving will, with or without our help. We have a real choice.

We have free choice, within God's ultimate will. Our Heavenly Father is the captain of the ship. As his children, we have choices to make, a relationship to enjoy, and people we can serve. As his passengers, we will end up where he wants us.

Deuteronomy 1:26; Isaiah 30:15; Matthew 6:10; 23:37; Luke 7:30; Acts 7:51;
Romans 8:28; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 3:8.

CONCLUSION - Admitting Your Power, And Your Weakness

Hebrews 11:32; Romans 8:28

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

WARMING UP...

1. After briefly reviewing this week's message, share one new thing you learned or one thing that most challenged, convicted, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Read about our call to maturity in Ephesians 4:11-16 and Hebrews 5:11-6:3. a) What thought or verse stands out to you the most? Why? b) What is the role of church leadership? c) Whose responsibility is our growth into spiritual maturity? Why? d) Describe the ways that an immature and a mature believer are different. In other words, what are the marks of maturity we should be striving for?

SO WHAT?...

3. How mature are you spiritually? In what areas of your life do you need to "grow up" the most? What do you feel convicted to work on first? Pray for each other about this.

Bruce Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE - Sunday, August 27 / September 3, 2006