

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Judges 16:23 *“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’.”*

Judges 16:28 *“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’.”*

Dagon was a god worshipped by the Philistines as a god of grain and the harvest. Temples were built to him and sacrifices made in them often associated with brutality to animals and humans.

The story of Samson the strong man who had led the Israelites for twenty years and who came unstuck when he met Delilah is a powerful one. He was born as part of God’s plan to deliver the Israelites from the dominance of the Philistines. He was given enormous strength but wasted this gift on frivolous demonstrations of his power rather than leading his people against the oppressors and turning them back to the true God.

He spotted and married Delilah, a Philistine, against the advice of his parents. She deceived him so that eventually he was captured by Delilah’s clan and blinded. After he had prayed to God to be given a final chance for revenge the resulting destruction of the temple and many Philistines with it must have been the stuff of epic movies.

The message is clear. However much we stray from God’s word and ways He is always ready to give His grace to the truly repentant.