

# Bible Stories

## SAMSON

### The Megalomaniacal Deliverer

Judges 13:2-5

October 15, 2022

We have now gone several rounds in the spin cycle with Israel.

- They abandon Yahweh
- They are given into the hands of an enemy nation
- They cry
- Yahweh sends them a deliverer

#### **Which brings us to Samson – Judges 13:1–16:31.**

Israel **NEEDED** a hero and God chose Samson, *“to begin the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines.”*

Right from the beginning Samson was set aside by God. He was to be a Nazirite all his life {see Numbers 6:1-21}.

Samson was unique, distinctive, special and the Israelites adored him. He came to believe that he could do whatever he wanted without consequence. Here is his story.

**Judges 14-15** tells us of Samson’s first interaction with the Philistines. He saw a beautiful Philistine girl and told his parents to get her for him as his wife, because *“she pleases me.”*

The SDA Bible Commentary makes this interesting observation: *“Even in this unfortunate marriage God was overruling the course of events for the furtherance of His own designs.”* – namely, the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines. God ordained that Samson would begin the deliverance of Israel – that was His overarching will. He did not, however, ordain the sins Samson committed, the way he went about doing things, or his willful, selfish, and prideful acts – those, God allowed because free choice is so important to Him. God used Samson’s faulty character and deliberate bad choices to accomplish HIS goals.

As Samson and his parents made their way to Timnah, he encountered a young lion in a vineyard. Samson tore the lion apart with his bare hands. Task completed, he met the young woman and sometime later married her. On the way, to the marriage feast, Samson came across the carcass of the lion and discovered that bees had set up house and were producing honey. He scooped some honey out of the body of the lion and continued on his way – enjoying the honey as he went – Ewww!

At the wedding feast Samson told this riddle:

*“From the eater came out food, From the strong came out sweet.”*

And then made a bet with 30 young Philistine wedding guests that they wouldn’t be able to figure out the riddle. He gave them 7 days. The bet was 30 everyday garments and 30 fancy garments.

For 3 days the young men pondered the riddle, but without success, so on the 4<sup>th</sup> day they went to Samson’s new wife and threatened her, *“Entice your husband and tell us the riddle, or we will burn you and your father’s house with fire.....”*

For the next 3 days Samson’s new wife wept. She accused him of not loving her because if he did, he would tell her the answer to the riddle. Nearly nagged to death, Samson finally explained the riddle ---- and she told the 30 young men. As the sun went down on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the men of the city said to Samson:

*“What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?”*

Samson accused them of cheating. To vent his anger, he went to Ashkelon, killed 30 men and took their belongings to pay off the bet, then he went home. His new wife was given to his best man.

Sometime later, during wheat harvest, Samson returned to Timnah because he wanted to sleep with his wife. Her father met him at the door, ***“I thought you hated her, so I gave her to your companion. Her younger sister is more beautiful than she is, why not take her instead.”***

Less than happy, Samson responded, ***“Listen, whatever evil I do to the Philistines from now on, I am not to blame.”***

Samson captured 300 foxes, turned them tail to tail, put a torch between them, lit the torches and released the foxes into the standing grain – destroying everything – clear up to the vineyards and olive groves.

Upon finding out who was responsible for the disaster, the Philistines went to Timnah and burned Samson’s wife and her father to death.

**Samson:** *If that is how you are going to be, I will not rest until I have taken revenge on you.*

He gave them a thorough beating then went and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

The Philistines took their revenge out on Judah, so, 3000 men from Judah went to see Samson at Etam,

**Men of Judah:** *Don’t you know that the Philistines rule over us? What have you done to us?*

**Samson:** *I just did to them what they did to me*

**Men of Judah:** *We have come to bind you and hand you over to the Philistines.*

**Samson:** *Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves.*

**Men of Judah:** *We will only bind you and hand you over to them - we will not kill you.*

The men of Judah bound Samson with new ropes and went to meet the Philistines at Lehi. The Bible tells us that the Spirit of God came over Samson. The ropes that bound him ***“melted”*** from his hands. He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey and killed 1000 Philistines with it.

Good grief and we haven’t even talked about Delilah yet! That part of the story is found in Judges 16

Sometime later Samson went to Gaza and had sex with a prostitute. The Philistines were told he was in town and surrounded the house in order to ambush him in the morning. Unfortunately for them, Samson got up in the middle of the night, took hold of the city gates, tore them loose, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of Hebron – nearly 40 miles away.

After this.....

Samson fell in ***“lust”*** with Delilah and kept coming back night after night to be with her. Eventually, the 5 rulers of the Philistines approached Delilah and offered her 1100 pieces of silver if she discovered the secret of Samson’s strength and passed that information on to them - She was only too happy to oblige.

**Night 1:**

**Delilah:** *Please tell me what makes your strength so great, and with what can you be tied up to subdue you?*

**Samson:** *If you tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings, I will become weak like everyone else.*

7 fresh bowstrings were brought to Delilah and she tied Samson up. With the ambush set, Delilah shouted, ***“The Philistines are upon you Samson!”*** He snapped the bowstrings with ease and the secret of his strength remained unknown.

**Night 2:**

**Delilah:** *Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Please tell me how you can be bound.*

**Samson:** *If they tie me tightly with new ropes that have not been used, I will become weak and be like everyone else.*

Delilah took new ropes and tied Samson up. Once the ambush was again set, she cried, ***“The Philistines are upon you, Samson!”*** But he snapped them from his arms like thread.

**Night 3:**

**Delilah:** *Until now you have mocked me and told lies to me. Tell me how you can be bound.*

**Samson:** *If you weave the seven braids on my head into the web of the loom.....*

Delilah wove Samson's braids tightly with the batten into the web of the loom, then cried out, ***"The Philistines are upon you, Samson!"*** Samson woke up and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

**Delilah:** *How can you say that you love when you have continued to mock me these 3 times? Why won't you tell me what I want to know?*

She nagged and pestered him day after day until ***"his soul grew impatient to the point of death,"*** and he finally told her his secret: ***"A razor has never touched my head, for I am a Nazirite of God from birth. If I am shaved my strength will leave me, and I will become weak, like everyone else."***

You know the rest of the story. Delilah informed the Philistine rulers and that night, as Samson slept, they quietly shaved off his 7 braids. In the morning, Delilah shook Samson awake, ***"The Philistines are upon you!"*** she shouted.

He said to himself, ***"no problem, I'll just go out like every other time and shake myself free,"*** but he did not know that Yahweh had left him.

- Had Samson's head been shaven without fault on his part, his strength would have remained. But his course had shown contempt for the favor and authority of God as much as if he had in disdain himself severed his locks from his head. Therefore, God left him to endure the results of his own folly (ST Oct. 13, 1881). {2BC 1007.7}

This time the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes, and took him to Gaza. They put him in bronze shackles, and he became a grinder in the prison.

No doubt the Philistines rejoiced in their triumph over Samson, but their victory would be short-lived because, ***"the hair of his head began to grow back."***

### **What do we do with this story?**

The extraordinary gifts given to Samson were to be used in the plans and purposes of God and for **HIS** glory. Unfortunately, the only thing Samson seemed interested in were his own plans and purposes and personal glory. He was proud – proud of:

- His physical power.
- His position as a leader in Hebrew society.
- His set apart-ness.
- His abilities and prowess

Pride led Samson to believe that he could live a life devoid of God and yet remain ***"set part"*** for the service of God. He did not see that his actions, more than his claims, reflected the true condition of his heart.

He was supposed to be the deliverer of Israel, but instead:

- He lost the sense of the sacredness of his work
- He took what he wanted
- He was controlled by lust
- When denied, he exacted revenge, leaving carnage and death in his path.
  - Samson in his peril had the same source of strength as had Joseph. He could choose the right or the wrong as he pleased. But instead of taking hold of the strength of God, he permitted the wild passions of his nature to have full sway. The reasoning powers were perverted, the morals corrupted. God had called Samson to a position of great responsibility, honor, and usefulness; but he must first learn to govern by first learning to obey the laws of God. Joseph was a free moral agent. Good and evil were before him. He could choose the path of purity, holiness, and honor, or the path of immorality and degradation. He chose the right way, and God approved. Samson, under similar temptations, which he had brought upon himself, gave loose rein to passion. The path which he entered upon he found to end in shame, disaster, and death. What a contrast to the history of Joseph! (ST Oct. 13, 1881). {2BC 1007.1}

Amazingly, despite completely misusing and abusing the gifts God had given him for his own self-gratification, when Samson repented, God restored him AND restored his strength.

In his final moments, the Bible tells us: ***"...Samson 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."*** (Judges 16:30)

Samson finally did, at the end of his life, what God had intended for him to do all throughout his life, break the hold of the Philistines.