

Samson the Strong Man

Born as a Nazirite with supernatural strength, Samson battles the Philistines but struggles with his own weaknesses and passions.

Judges 13:1-25 • Judges 14:1-20 • Judges 15:1-20

CHARACTERS: Samson, Manoah, Samson's mother, The Philistines

THEMES: God's gift of strength, Human weakness, Purpose despite failures

AGAIN THE ISRAELITES did evil, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

An angel of the Lord appeared to a barren woman of the tribe of Dan. 'You will conceive and have a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from birth. He will begin the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines.'

The child was born and named Samson. The Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him.

Samson was immensely strong—able to tear a lion apart with his bare hands, kill thirty Philistines in anger, and catch three hundred foxes. But his strength was matched by his weaknesses: he desired Philistine women, lost his temper easily, and played dangerous games with his God-given power.

When the Philistines burned his wife and her family, Samson attacked them viciously. He struck them hip and thigh with great slaughter, then went and stayed in a cave.

The Philistines camped in Judah, demanding Samson. Three thousand men of Judah went to the cave. 'Don't you realize the Philistines rule over us? What have you done to us?'

'I merely did to them what they did to me,' Samson answered.

His own people bound him with new ropes and handed him over. But as he approached the Philistines, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. The ropes fell away, he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and with it he struck down a thousand men.

Samson judged Israel for twenty years. Yet his greatest victory—and his tragic fall—were still to come.

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