

# Lesson 09:

## Samson's Early Life

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Judges 13-15

### MEMORY WORK:

Joshua 1:9

### PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I will get into trouble and make God very unhappy when I think too much of myself and act arrogant and full of pride.

## LESSON STARTS HERE

### INTRODUCTION:

Which judge did we talk about last week? (Gideon) Who can tell me something about him? We have talked about how the Israelites obeyed God as long as they had a strong leader. Then they turned away from God and were punished. They prayed to God for help, and He sent another judge to help them so they would obey God again. Today, we are going to learn about a judge who was the strongest man in the world!

### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. After 40 years of peace and safety under Gideon, the Israelites again forgot about God and turned to idols (Judges 13:1). From the small tribe of Dan, God chose an older couple, with no children, to be the parents of a son that they were to raise as another deliverer (judge) for Israel. Manoah and his wife were a little afraid, as well as excited, when an angel appeared to tell them they would have a son.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** The territory of the tribe of Dan was surrounded by five major Philistine city-states, each of which was ruled by ruthless kings (Numbers 1:12,38,39).

2. The angel told Manoah and his wife that their son should be raised to be holy and set apart for God. He was to be a **Nazirite**. The angel told Manoah that his son was to stay away from “strong drink,” i.e., alcoholic beverages, and he was never to cut his hair.

**Nazirite:** A **Nazirite** was a person who was personally committed to not do specific things for a certain period of time. This commitment was usually made by a man's vow to God; in Samson's case, his parents were directed by God to make Samson a Nazirite. According to Numbers 6, the idea behind the Nazirite vow was that that person was to be holy: set apart for the service of God (Numbers 6:2,13,18-21)

3. When their baby boy was born, Manoah and his wife named him Samson. He “grew, and the Lord blessed him” (Judges 13:24). He was a special gift from God, born to godly parents. (Manoah prayed, “Teach us what we shall do for the child.”) But as Samson got older, he became spoiled and impulsive, often doing things that hurt himself and/or other people.
4. Instead of staying away from the enemies of the Israelites (the idol-worshipping peoples around them) as God had commanded, Samson ignored God’s commands and went into their land. Apparently he was accustomed to making demands and getting what he wanted. Samson saw a Philistine woman one day and told his parents that he wanted her for his wife. Samson demanded that his father “get her for me, for she pleases me well” (Judges 14:3b). His parents tried to talk him out of marrying one of their idol-worshipping enemies, but Samson was insistent. Finally they gave in and went with him to Timnah to arrange the marriage.
5. As they came to Timnah, a lion came out on the road toward Samson. Samson grabbed the roaring lion and killed it with his bare hands! He decided not to tell his parents about it.
6. The marriage was arranged, and a great feast was held to celebrate. But Samson became angry with some of his friends and returned to his father’s house in Dan—without his new wife! This was a disgrace for his family and hers. So her father decided to give her to Samson’s best man as a wife.
7. After some time had passed and the time of wheat harvest had come, Samson decided to go back to Timnah and claim the woman he had married. When he found out she had been given to his friend, he became so angry that he caught 300 foxes and tied them together in pairs, by their tails. To each pair of tails he tied a torch, and then set the foxes loose in the grain fields of the Philistines. The grain caught fire and the foxes with torches on their tails completely destroyed all the grain.
8. Shortly after that incident, the Philistines tried to trap Samson. They tied him up, but he broke all the bonds with his great strength. He picked up the jawbone of a donkey from the field and killed 1,000 men with it.
9. God had told the Israelites when they first came to Canaan that they should get rid of all the idol-worshipping people there, but they did not finish the job. Samson killed several thousand Philistines at different times, sometimes from selfish motives, and sometimes because of his pride. In spite of Samson’s mistakes and poor judgment, God caused “everything to work for good” for His people so that they had 20 more years of peace while Samson was a judge. He is mentioned in Hebrews 11 as one of the Old Testament people with great faith from whom we should learn.
10. Samson’s main problem was pride. Samson was the strongest man in the world. But he often forgot to give glory (credit, praise) to God for those blessings. (Draw parallels with popular modern-day prominent people, like wrestlers, professional athletes, TV/movie stars, etc.)
11. Pride is thinking too much of yourself, rather than giving credit to other people, or more importantly to God. (With older children, read the following scriptures: 1 Samuel 2:3; Proverbs 11:2; 16:5; 18:12; 29:23; 1 Corinthians 10:12; Philippians 2:3-4; Romans 12:3; James 4:10.) Jesus is the Son of God—much more powerful than Samson—but He never bragged about Himself and always gave credit to God.

## RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book;)
- Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file. The file for this lesson covers highlights of Samson's entire life. It can be used this week and next. It is labeled 09-10 in the visuals folder.

## SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

### **“Samson” (Click to Hear)**

Author: Unknown\*

(Tune: “Muffin Man”)

O, do you know the strongest man,  
The strongest man,  
The strongest man?

O, do you know the strongest man,  
Who lived in Bible times?

O, Samson was the strongest man  
The strongest man,  
The strongest man.

O, Samson was the strongest man,  
Who lived in Bible times.

# SUNDAY

## LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Samson wigs: Make a headband of poster board or construction paper for each child. Tape 12” lengths of brown or black yarn to the inside of the headbands.
- Sewing cards: Make a large cutout of a lion on cardstock for each child. On the back of the lions, write, “Samson was so strong he killed a lion.” Punch holes around the edges of the lions, and cut strips of yarn long enough for the children to “sew” around the lions. (Lion cutouts provided in activity sheets)
- Cut out drawings/outlines of foxes with visible tails on card stock. Punch holes in each of the tails, and use yarn or string to tie the tails of the foxes together in pairs. (Fox and tail cutouts provided in activity sheets)

# WEDNESDAY NIGHT

## POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday's lesson. briefly (See Review Questions for example questions.)

## LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Foxy Review Game (for four and five year olds): Make 8-10 copies of a drawing of a fox (from a coloring book or online site). Cut all the drawings in half. Write a review question on one half of each fox and the answer on the corresponding half. Help the children read and match the halves correctly. Instead of cutting the foxes in half, you could match pairs of foxes. (Fox cutouts provided in activity sheets)
- Let the children take turns acting out the angel's announcement to Samson's parents about his birth
- Strong Men Exercises – Lead the students in different activities to test their strength and endurance. Begin with things using their own bodies, then test their strength by lifting items of various weights. Consider these ideas:
  - Yoga Poses (check out a tree pose)
  - Push ups
  - Sit ups
  - Jumping Jacks
  - Who can stand on one foot the longest
  - Who can hold their arms up the longest
  - Who can "sit on the wall" the longest
  - Arm wrestling (use your best judgement based on the class)

Discuss how becoming strong takes lots of work for us. Samson was blessed with his strength from God. As long as he kept his vow he kept his strength.

# Review Questions

1. What was Samson's father's name?
  - a. Manoah
2. Samson was raised to be holy and set apart. What was he known as?
  - a. Nazirite
3. As a Nazirite, what was Samson to stay away from?
  - a. Strong drink or alcoholic beverages; and he was never to cut his hair.
4. What did Samson use to kill the lion on the road to Timnah?
  - a. His bare hands
5. How did Samson destroy the wheat harvest of the Philistines?
  - a. He caught 300 foxes, tied them together in pairs, tied a torch to each pair, and let them loose in the grain fields.
6. What did Samson use to kill 1,000 Philistines?
  - a. The jawbone of a donkey
7. How long was Samson a judge?
  - a. 20 years
8. What was Samson's main problem?
  - a. Pride

