

## SAMSON

*(Judges 13:1 – 16:30)*

**Purpose:** To teach the importance of surrendering our lives completely to the Lord.

Samson was born with a job to do, for God had called him and set him apart for a special work. God had chosen Samson to deliver the Israelites from their enemies – the wicked Godless Philistines.

The length of Samson's hair is an important part of our story, for it was a symbol to the people of Israel that here was a Nazarite, a man dedicated to God. And it was a symbol of the great strength God had given Samson to help him accomplish his task against the Philistines.

The Philistines were afraid of Samson, and they hated him. Except for this one man, they had subdued the whole nation of Israel. And now Samson was becoming quite a problem.

Somehow, the Philistines decided, they would have to capture this strong man of Israel, so they gathered together a thousand men for the one purpose of taking Samson captive.

But when Samson found a jawbone nearby, that's all he needed to take care of every single one of them.

Another time, when Samson had gone into the City of Gaza, the Philistines tried to capture him by locking the gates to the city.

Samson simply tore down the gates and carried them twenty miles [32 km], to show his enemies how helpless they were against the strength that God had given him. Samson seemed unconquerable.

But sad to say, Samson did have a weakness in spite of all his strength, and her name was Delilah.

She was clever and she was pretty, but Delilah was a Philistine, and the Philistines were enemies of God's people. Samson was on dangerous ground!

The Philistine rulers watched every move Samson made, and when they saw how often he visited Delilah they realized that here was the opportunity they were waiting for.

Everybody could see that Samson loved Delilah, and he wasn't paying much attention to anything else. Now the Philistines saw a way to trap their hated enemy.

It didn't take the rulers long to talk things over with Delilah. And when they offered her money, Delilah agreed to try to find out the secret of Samson's strength.

Of course Samson didn't know that. He wasn't even suspicious when Delilah asked him what made him so much stronger than other men, or when she wondered if there was any way his great strength could be taken from him.

Samson was flattered by the questions and he didn't take any of it too seriously. He made up a ridiculous story about how he'd be helpless if he were tied with some tough vines.

He even fell asleep and gave Delilah a chance to tie him up that way. But Delilah began to wonder. Had Samson really told her the truth? Well, there was one way to find out. She called out, *"Wake up Samson! The Philistines are coming to take you!"*

And when Samson jumped to his feet, snapping the cords that bound him, Delilah knew she had failed to find his secret. Samson was just as strong as ever!

Delilah pouted, and acted very hurt toward Samson hoping he would tell her the real secret of his strength.

Samson felt sorry for Delilah, but he refused to tell her the truth. And he made up more stories just as far-fetched as the first.

But Delilah was a very clever woman. She knew Samson loved her, and if only she would keep on trying, Samson's weakness for her might betray his strength.

Samson was strong, not because of his muscles, but because the spirit of God would come upon him. And he knew that if he ever cut his hair – which was a symbol of his dedication to God – God's blessing on his life would be taken away.

Samson knew it was wrong, but to show Delilah he loved her, he told her about his hair. And Delilah seemed to know that Samson had finally told her the truth.

The next time Samson fell asleep, Delilah had a man come into the room to cut the hair from Samson's head.

And as the Philistines watched nearby...

...the symbol of all Samson believed in fell softly to the floor. When Samson awoke this time, his great strength was gone. Samson was captured. He was treated cruelly and his eyes were put out, and finally...

...he was chained to a millstone and forced to grind their grain. Samson was treated like he was an animal.

But Samson's greatest hurt was in his heart. He was tortured by the fact that he had failed in the mission God had given him...

...and blind and useless though he was, Samson gave himself again to God.

He pleaded with God to forgive him. He prayed that somehow God would use him for the deliverance of His people.

Finally there came a time when the Philistines gathered together to celebrate the capture of their hated enemy.

They shouted praises to their god of stone for delivering Samson into their hands...

...and they called for Samson to be brought before them to be made to dance before them.

Their taunts and jeers were as cruel lashes to Samson as he was led through the crowd by a small boy.

He was chained to the pillars in the middle of the building. And it was here Samson lifted up those blind, sightless eyes and cried out, *“Oh Lord God, remember me only this once, and let me die with the Philistines!”*

And God heard Samson...

...and the spirit of God came mightily upon him, and Samson pushed against the pillars to which he was chained...

...and the stone began to crack and the massive walls began to shake...

...and there was confusion and panic as the balconies fell...

...and the roof of the temple came crashing down...

...and the lords of the Philistines, together with thousands of their people were buried beneath tons of stone, along with their heathen god. *“So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life”* and God’s purpose to deliver His people from oppression was accomplished. But what about Samson?

Samson had been called of God to be His servant. Samson’s whole life belonged to God, and God used everything that Samson gave Him, even to his last prayer.

It was the part of his life that Samson tried to keep for himself that brought tragedy and death.

How important it is that we surrender our lives completely to God!

*“I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* (Romans 12:1)