

# SAMSON, JUDGE OF ISRAEL

[BIBLE TEXT](#): Judges 16:4-31

LESSON 195 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation" (Exodus 15:2)..

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### Judges 16:4-31

<sup>4</sup> And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah.

<sup>5</sup> And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.

<sup>6</sup> And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.

<sup>7</sup> And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

<sup>8</sup> Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

<sup>9</sup> Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.

<sup>10</sup> And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound.

<sup>11</sup> And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### NOTES:

The peace and prosperity of the Israelites lasted as long as they served God faithfully. When they were on the Lord's side, they were brave and could conquer other nations. God had promised that if they obeyed Him He would make them the head and the other nations the tail. Too often Israel was the tail, in subjection to heathen nations who did not love God. Their condition was always the judgment for their sins.

### **The Beginning of Deliverance**

Samson was one of the judges God raised up to free the Israelites from bondage. God had promised Samson's mother that her son would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. As he grew up he became very strong, perhaps stronger than any other man had ever been. The Spirit of God would come upon him at times, even while he was growing up, and he would do things that other people could not do.

The Philistines were sinners, and God's judgment had been pronounced upon them. They had had a chance to repent but had refused to yield to God. Now their punishment was beginning to come upon them through the hand of Samson.

### **Fight Against Sin**

God's children today must always fight against sin. We do not go to battle to destroy the sinner physically, but we oppose wrongdoing wherever we find it. We try to lead the sinner to Jesus so that he will repent and be saved, but we cannot overlook his sins or take any part in them. We must take our stand upon the truths of God's Word and declare war against evil. "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil" (Proverbs 8:13).

Samson had several occasions to destroy some of the Philistines; and, singlehanded, he killed many of the enemy. The Philistines became worried about the strength of Samson. How could they take him prisoner? How could they break his strength?

The Philistines sent an entire army to capture the lone man who had brought such great destruction among them. When the Israelites saw the army of the Philistines coming, they became frightened. Instead of going to the help of Samson, they sent three thousand men of Judah to bind him and deliver him into the hands of the Philistines. They said to Samson• "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou halt done unto us?" Why should the deeds of Samson bring the fury of the enemy upon them, endangering all the Israelites?

### **Compromise**

That was a cowardly way to look at the problem. God had raised up Samson to begin the deliverance of Israel; and if the Israelites had fought with him, they might have had a quick victory over the Philistines. Instead, the Israelites were content to dwell among the sinners, in bondage to them. They were afraid to stand for what they knew to be right.

<sup>12</sup> Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And *there were* liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

<sup>13</sup> And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web.

<sup>14</sup> And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.

<sup>15</sup> And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*.

<sup>16</sup> And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed unto death;

<sup>17</sup> That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.

<sup>18</sup> And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

<sup>19</sup> And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and

A person might avoid some temporary embarrassment or persecution by siding in with sinners, but God is watching. The judgment He will send, in the end, upon those who compromise with sin will be much harder to bear than the little suffering one might have to endure now for his stand for the truth.

### The Jawbone

The Israelites turned against their deliverer, and bound Samson with new ropes and let the Philistines have him for a prisoner. But God had raised up Samson to begin the deliverance of Israel, and He gave Samson the strength to break those ropes as though they were burned flax.

Samson picked up the first thing he saw to use as a weapon against the Philistines. It was the jawbone of an ass. With that bone alone Samson killed one thousand Philistines. God was beginning to deliver Israel through the strength of one brave man. We have heard it said that with God on our side we are a majority although we stand alone.

Samson had won a great battle. Now he was thirsty. What would become of him if he could find no water? Would his victory be in vain, and must he die of thirst? Samson called upon God for help, and help came in the form of water in the jawbone. Samson drank and gained strength for more battles.

### Sword of the Spirit

We can compare this jawbone with the Word of God, the weapon of the Christian in his fight against sin. The Apostle Paul wrote: "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17); and again: "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). God wants us to use His Word to combat evil. If Satan tempts us to do something, we can answer him, "God's Word tells me not to do that; therefore I will not." When Jesus was tempted of the devil, His defense was, "It is written." Satan is powerless against the commandments of God.

We not only have a weapon in the Word of God but from the Word we gain strength. One time when the Prophet Jeremiah felt he was almost the only person in the world who loved and obeyed God, he found a part of the Bible; and he said: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15: 16). He had not eaten the paper upon which the words were written, but what he had read he had remembered and treasured in his heart. It gave him new courage to continue to live for God.

### A Nazarite

We cannot say how much greater would have been Samson's victories than they now were if he had always lived to please God. His mother had consecrated him to God's service, as a Nazarite, before he was born; and if he had fulfilled those consecrations he would have lived a holy, useful life for God and man. Think of the blessings which would have been upon him if he had kept that spiritual strength as well as the physical strength!

Children of godly parents have a wonderful heritage, and also a tremendous responsibility. If our parents have consecrated us to the Lord we have a good start toward salvation and godly living. Those blessings begin from the time we are born. But if we refuse to walk in the way God plans for us we will suffer even sorer punishment than those who know not the Gospel. God will certainly send conviction upon children in answer to the prayers of their parents,

his strength went from him.

<sup>20</sup> And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

<sup>21</sup> But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

<sup>22</sup> Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

<sup>23</sup> Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

<sup>24</sup> And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

<sup>25</sup> And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

<sup>26</sup> And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

<sup>27</sup> Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

<sup>28</sup> And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at

but He cannot save anyone against his will. Everyone must repent for himself; and if he refuses to do so, he will be eternally lost in spite of the prayers of his parents.

A part of the Nazarite vow was to let the hair grow long, and God had made a special commandment in the case of Samson that no razor was to come upon his head. Not everyone who let his hair grow, under a vow, had the strength of Samson. but it does seem that there was some connection between his hair and his strength. So long as his hair remained long, the Philistines could not overpower him.

### **Making Friends with a Philistine**

Samson opened himself to enemy attack when he went among the Philistines and met Delilah. When they heard that he was among them, the Philistines bribed Delilah to betray him into their hands. Pretending to love him, she begged him to tell her the secret of his strength. Samson said that if he were bound with seven green withes (tough twigs such as willows) he would be as weak as any other man. The enemy was there immediately to bind him with withes; but when Delilah exclaimed, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," he arose and broke his bonds as though they had been burned. And he escaped.

Samson should have stayed away from Delilah. especially after he knew that she had betrayed him. But he went back again; and again she tried to learn his secret. This time he told her that if he were bound with new ropes which had never been used, he would be powerless. The Philistines bound him with new ropes while he slept, but when he awoke he broke them as though they were threads. Samson seemed to enjoy fooling the Philistines with these strange tales, but he was trifling with danger, and was soon going to be in the hands of the enemy because of his trifling.

Day after day Delilah begged him to tell her his secret, and finally her tears prevailed. He told her the truth, that he was under a Nazarite vow and no razor had ever come upon his head, and that if his hair were cut, he would *be* as any other man. She caused his hair to be cut and the next time his enemies came upon him he was powerless.

### **Yielding to Temptation**

Anyone who plays with temptation can expect to be overcome by it in the end. The Word of God warns us: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Samson yielded to temptation instead of turning from it, and he was captured by the Philistines and condemned to hard labor in the prison house. His eyes were put out and he sat in darkness.

We can see the distress that comes upon a backslider because of his turning from God. The man who pleases the Lord overcomes his enemy; but when he turns his back upon the Savior, Satan is his master and makes him work hard for his wages of eternal death. The backslider loses the glorious light of the Gospel and sits in the blackness of sin, blinded to the good things God has for those who love Him.

### **Repentance**

Samson had time to think about God while he slaved away in the prison house. He was like the prodigal son who "came to himself" in the swine pen in a foreign land after he had wasted his money in sin. Samson realized that his sins had brought this trouble upon him, and he turned his heart to God.

Samson's hair began to grow, and with it came strength from God. One day when the Philistines were praising their false god for

once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

<sup>29</sup> And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

<sup>30</sup> And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

<sup>31</sup> Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

delivering Samson into their hands, Samson was brought before them so that they could make fun of him. Many people had gathered in the great auditorium where the celebration was to be held, and there were three thousand persons on the roof. Among that heathen throng Samson lifted his heart to the God of Israel, and prayed: "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me. I pray thee, only this once." God heard his prayer and rewarded his faith. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we read that it was through faith that Samson "out of weakness" was "made strong."

A Return to God's Call

Samson asked to be led near to the central pillars of that great house, supposedly to lean against them-to rest. But God had called him to the task of destroying the Philistines, and in this final hour Samson again took up the burden of that work. He called upon God for strength, and with a mighty heave he brought the building tumbling down upon that great company of people. Thousands were killed. Samson died with them, but at his death he killed more than he had in his life, and Israel was avenged of their enemies.

### QUESTIONS

- 1 What was unusual about Samson?
- 2 What was the purpose for which he was made a judge?
- 3 How did Samson do that work?
- 4 How do we know that the Israelites did not stand by Samson?
- 5 What caused Samson to lose his strength?
- 6 What did the Philistines do to Samson after they captured him?
- 7 Describe the last day of Samson's life.
- 8 Why did Samson again have strength?