



Conquering Canaan

Lesson 10: Samson

(Judges 13:1-16:31)

Once again, the Israelites did not obey God. So, God punished them by giving them to the Philistines for 40 years. During that time, there was a man from the tribe of Dan named Manoah. His wife had not been able to have any children.

Then, the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife and told her that she would have a son. But, she had to obey everything God commanded her. In addition, her son was to live as a Nazarite his whole life. The Nazarite vow involved three things (read Numbers 6:2-8): He must not eat or drink anything from the grape vine, he must not cut his hair, and he must not touch a dead body.

So, Manoah's wife did what God commanded her, had a son, and named him Samson. He would work to save Israel from the Philistines as a judge. Although Samson did many things that were wrong, God gave him great strength and used him to defeat many Philistines.

One day, when Samson went to see the woman he was going to marry, a young lion came roaring at him. But, God gave him the power to tear the lion apart with his bare hands. Later, when he was traveling that road again, he saw a swarm of bees in the lion's dead body, with honey in it. So, Samson ate some of the honey and gave some to his parents.

Later, Samson told the Philistines a riddle. He said that if they could explain the riddle to him within seven days, he would give them 30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothes. But, if they could not, they would have to give these things to him. The riddle said, "Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet" (Judges 14:14).

When they could not explain the riddle, they asked Samson's wife (who was a Philistine) to tell them the answer. So, when Samson finally told her the answer, she told the men – and they won the contest. They answered Samson, "What is

sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?” (Judges 14:18). Then, God gave Samson power to kill 30 Philistine men and he gave their clothes to the other men.

But, after this happened, Samson’s father-in-law took his wife away and gave her to someone else. So, Samson went out and caught 300 foxes. He took torches, turned the foxes tail-to-tail, and tied torches between each pair of tails. Then, he released the foxes into the Philistines’ grain fields so they destroyed the standing grain as well as the grain piles.

When the Philistines found out that this happened because of what Samson’s father-in-law had done, they killed his father-in-law and his wife. But, when Samson found out what the Philistines had done, he tore the people in pieces. Afterward, he stayed in a cave.

The Philistines attacked the people of Judah, looking for Samson. So, the people of Judah found Samson, tied him up, and gave him to the Philistines. But, whenever the Philistines were about to take him, God gave him power to escape and he killed 1,000 Philistine men with the jawbone of a donkey.

Later, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. Then, the Philistine leaders offered to pay her 1,100 pieces of silver if she would find out the secret to Samson’s strength. Finally, Samson told her that he would lose all his strength if his hair was cut off. So, when Samson fell asleep, Delilah had someone shave his head. When he woke up, he was not able to escape! The Philistines gouged out Samson’s eyes and made him serve them.

When the Philistines were worshiping their god Dagon and Samson’s hair had grown back, Samson was brought into the temple to entertain the Philistines. When Samson was leaning between the two main pillars of the temple, he called out to God for the strength to defeat the Philistines. Then, he pushed the two pillars and the temple fell down, killing Samson and 3,000 Philistines. Samson had judged Israel for 20 years.

Study Questions:

- 1) Who was the 13th judge over Israel? Who had captured the Israelites?

- 2) What vow did this man keep during his life?

- 3) What did this vow require him not to do?

- 4) What happened with this man and a lion?

- 5) What did this man do with foxes?

- 6) What did this man do with a donkey's jawbone?

- 7) Who found out this man's secret? What was the secret to his strength?

- 8) How did this man die? How many Philistines were killed?

Memory Verse:

“The Israelites again did what was evil in the Lord’s sight, so the Lord handed them over to the Philistines forty years” (Judges 13:1).

Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about: