



Lesson: Summer Review: Samson's Might

This week we continue our selective study on the book of Judges. Judges describes to us how God's people were living in the Promised Land. As mentioned last week, it is important to note that Judges has a repetitive cycle to it, and it will be helpful to know in terms of teaching and remembering the book.

The Cycle:

- God's people live in disobedience leading to God's discipline, usually through famine or an invading force.
- The Israelites have enough of this discipline and cry out to God for deliverance.
- God provides deliverance by way of a judge.
- The judge rules over Israel during which time God's people remain faithful to Him.
- The judge passes away, God's people slip back into disobedience, and the cycle repeats.

This week we learn about Samson and his might. Samson was a special judge in that he defeated Israel's enemies by himself; Samson did not have an army to help him as some of the other judges had. Samson fights against the cruel Philistines. God gives Samson an incredible amount of strength, but Samson lives a reckless life, which will be his undoing next week. But this week we want to look at just how strong Samson is and how he helps deliver God's people from the cruelty of the Philistines.

Scripture: Judges 13-16 (selected portions)

Story: *Vos Child's Story Bible*, Chapter 62; *Gospel Story Book Bible*, Pages 96-97; *The Beginner's Bible*, Pages 148-153

Teaching Points:

- God is faithful and never changes. God keeps His promises.
- God is sovereign (or in control).
- Man is sinful.
- God is kind and merciful.
- God talks with man.
- God wants people to know He is a great God.
- God is holy. God wants His people to be holy.
- God is all knowing.
- God does not need any help.
- God saves His people.
- God provides for His people.

Scripture Memory and Hand Motions for May:

"The Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them." Judges 2:16

- **The Lord** (point upwards)
- **Raised up** (take both arms, palms up, and lift up towards sky)
- **Judges** (act like you are hitting a gavel)
- **Who saved them** (put wrists together, and then break apart like you're breaking free)
- **Out of the hand** (point to the inside of your hand)
- **Of those who plundered them.** (Forcefully reach out and act as though you're grabbing something)

Story

Review

Last week we learned about a judge named Gideon. God used Gideon to deliver his people from the Midianites. Gideon had an army of only 300 men who defeated a very, very large army with some unusual weapons. Gideon eventually died, and once he did the Israelites, God's people, quickly began worshipping other gods. God was not happy with this and allowed the Philistines to conquer His people. The Israelites did not like the Philistines because the Philistines were mean to the Israelites. God then raised up another judge to deliver His people.

Samson Is Born

Our story begins with a lady who had wanted a baby for a very long time, but she could not have one. Then one day an angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You are going to have a boy baby, and he will be a very special baby. This boy is to be set aside and used only for the Lord. As a sign of this dedication to the Lord, his hair must never be cut. And when he grows up, he will begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines." Just as the angel had said, all of this came true. A baby boy was born, and his name was Samson. As he grew older, Samson became very strong. He was a great leader in Israel and the Philistines were afraid of him. God had given Samson that great strength.

The Ferocious Lion

The Bible says one day Samson was walking toward a village. Suddenly out of nowhere a ferocious lion came running towards him. The lion roared and revealed its large and sharp teeth! As the lion ran towards Samson, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him with power so that Samson fought the lion with his bare hands! Samson overcame the lion and killed it.

One day Samson decided he wanted to get married, but he did not want to marry any of the Israelite women. He told his parents, "Find me a wife! But no one from Israel!" The parents complained to themselves and then to him, "How are we going to find you a wife? We do not know anyone but Israelites!" Eventually Samson found a woman he loved, but she was a Philistine. Remember, Philistine's hated God and the Israelites. Samson's parents decided to visit this Philistine woman. As they were coming home from their visit, Samson noticed something. Off to the side of the road was the lion he killed, and there were bees swarming all around it. Inside the lion honeybees had built a hive. Samson loved honey, so he reached into the dead lion and grabbed some honey. He ate the honey and gave some to his parents to eat too.

A Hard Riddle

A few months later Samson married the Philistine woman and there was a big party after his wedding. Samson invited many people and they celebrated for a week. At this party everyone told riddles. Samson told a riddle about the lion and the honey. His riddle went like this, "Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Samson offered a reward if anyone could answer the riddle; he said, "If you answer my riddle by the end of the week, I will give you 30 shirts and 30 robes. But! If you do not answer the riddle by the end of the week, then you have to give me 30 shirts and 30 robes." Several people at the party wanted to answer the riddle, especially the Philistine men. The whole week the Philistine men tried to answer the riddle, but they could not. They were becoming very scared and angry. On the very last day of the party the Philistine men went to Samson's wife and said, "You have to find out the answer to the riddle. If you don't, we will hurt your family." Samson's wife became scared. She begged and pleaded with Samson to tell her the answer. At first, he did not want to tell her the answer, but Samson finally gave in because he could not stand to hear her complain.

Samson's wife went and told the Philistine men. The men quickly ran to Samson and said, "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" Samson became very, very angry. He knew his wife had betrayed him. Samson gave the Philistine men the 30 shirts and 30 robes, but he stormed off after he did it. He did not talk to his wife for a very long time because he was so mad.

300 Foxes

Eventually Samson's anger went away, and he went to apologize to her. He had been so angry and had not spoken to her for a very, very long time. Samson went back to where his wife was living in a Philistine village. He brought presents with him just to be extra nice. When Samson arrived in the village, he found his wife's father working in the field and asked where he could find her. The father told Samson, "I thought you did not love her anymore and did not want to be married to her any longer. So, we decided she could marry another guy!" Samson quickly became angry, and said, "Now it is not my fault if the Philistines pay for this." Samson went and did something unbelievable; he caught 300 foxes! He tied them tail-to-tail and put a piece of dry wood between them. Then he set the wood on fire and let the foxes go into the fields of the Philistines. The fields and all the vineyards were burned to the ground. The Philistines had no more grain or fruit to harvest.

The Philistines were very angry. They shouted, "Who did this?" Someone replied back, "Samson!" The Philistines knew they could not beat up Samson, for he was too strong. So, the Philistines hurt Samson's wife and her father. This made Samson even angrier; Samson went and picked a big fight with a lot of Philistines and beat them up. Finally, when the fight was over, Samson was tired, lonely, and did not want to be around anyone. He went back to his hometown and found a cave at the top of a very high mountain. Samson lived in the cave for some time.

The Jawbone of a Donkey

When more Philistine men found out that Samson had beaten up so many Philistines, they went looking for him. There were many, many Philistines out looking for Samson. These rough and wild Philistines scared God's people. When the Israelites heard the Philistines only wanted Samson, some of Israelites started looking for Samson too. Three thousand men from God's people gathered together to find Samson. Once they found Samson in his cave they asked, "Why have you done all these things to the Philistines? Don't you see that you've made trouble for us?" Samson answered back, "I have treated them just as they have treated me." The men of Israel said, "We've come to tie you up and give you over to the Philistines." Samson probably laughed, but he let the Israelites tie him up. The Israelites then gave Samson over to the Philistines. The Philistines wanted very badly to catch Samson and put him in prison so that he wouldn't bother them anymore. The Bible says Samson was tied with two strong ropes. Once the Philistines saw Samson tied up, they came running and shouting toward him. Then the Spirit of the Lord came over Samson in power and the ropes on his arms became like thin little strings and just fell off. Then Samson saw a bone lying on the ground. It was the bone of a dead animal. Quickly Samson reached down and grabbed the bone and with his great strength he struck the Philistines. Samson killed 1,000 Philistines that day.

The City Gates

A few weeks later Samson went back into one of the cities of the Philistines. The name of the city was Gaza. During this time in the Bible cities had high walls and very big, thick gates that they closed at night. Samson entered the city during the day. The city rulers found out and made a plan. "We will close the gates at nightfall, and then in the morning when he tries to leave, we will catch him and throw him in prison!" said the city leaders. However, in the middle of the night Samson decided he was ready to go home. He got up and saw the gates completely shut, but that did not stop Samson. Samson walked up to the gates and tore the doors off the hinges. He carried the huge doors for thirty miles until he was back in his hometown.

Samson was a very mighty and strong judge for Israel. Samson got his strength from God. Samson defended Israel during these very troublesome years. You can imagine how much the Philistines wanted to get rid of Samson! They knew about his great strength and wanted to find out where it came from. The Philistines did not like God, and they did not like the Israelites either. The Philistines did not understand that God had given Samson the strength and that God was using Samson to defend his people. Next week we learn that this does not stop the Philistines from trying to hurt Samson.

Questions for Review

Have the kids answer “Yes” if it is true, or “no” with the correct answer if it is false.

- God wants us to worship and love Him. (Yes)
- God will never leave us. (Yes)
- Samson could not cut his fingernails. (No! Samson could not cut his hair.)
- God made Samson super strong. (Yes)
- Samson killed a possum. (No! Samson killed a lion.)
- Samson was angry and tied 300 fox tails together and set them on fire. (Yes)
- The Philistines hated Samson and wanted to put him in prison. (Yes)
- The Philistines captured Samson and put him in prison. (No! Samson killed 1,000 Philistines.)
- Samson went into the city of Gaza and the city leaders tried to trap him. (Yes)
- Samson tore off the city gates and carried them 30 miles away. (Yes)
- Samson got his super strength from God. (Yes)
- God always loves us. (Yes)
- God always keeps His promises. (Yes)