

# SAMSON

## Part 1 -- A Man of Faith

**Introduction; Most people admire strong men.**

A. Great warriors have always been admired and cheered.

1. Sports heroes have also been admired. Many have been honored for their skill. Many others are recognized for their strength.
2. Strong men have often become movie stars. Men like Steve Reeves in the 60's and Arnold Swartzaneggar in the 70 & 80 were popular action stars.
3. Today it is Rocky Johnson (the Rock) who is the strong action star. Men like this become heroes to many and have an influence on their generation.
4. Many of the myths and stories of the past involve large and strong men. Heracles in ancient Greece (Hercules in Rome) and Paul Bunyan in the American NW are examples.

B. There are even strong men in scripture.

1. *Gen 6:4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.*
2. *Gen 10:8-11 Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. <sup>9</sup>He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD."<sup>10</sup> And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. <sup>11</sup>From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah...*
3. *2 Sam 23:9-10 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. <sup>10</sup>He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.*
4. Under the new covenant there is again an emphasis on strength, but it is **spiritual strength**. It is the strength to do right and stand up for what is right.
5. *1 Cor 16:13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*
6. *Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

C. Samson is another **strong man** in scripture.

1. He was strong physically because he had supernatural strength from God. Jehovah called him to be a judge of Israel. He was also a Nazarite from his mother's womb. God gave him great strength to fight the Philistines.
2. Because the scripture records so many of his failings, many do not consider him to be a man of faith and a servant of God. However scripture assures us he was.
3. **Hebrews 11:31-40**; In what we sometimes call the, 'Role Call of Heroes of Faith', we see Samson mentioned. He is one of the heroes of faith that encourage us to be faithful too. Therefore we must see faith in his life.
4. There is also sin in his life and we will consider, Samson, the Man of Sin, next week.

D. Today though, we will consider, **Samson, the Man of Faith.**

## I. Samson was a man called by Jehovah.

### A. He served the Lord in the period of the Judges.

1. There were 12 men whom God called as military leaders in this period. Samson was the last one. They were raised up by God in times of necessity.
2. Israel had no central government. They were unified only by their lineage from Abraham and the worship of God and the tabernacle.
3. When they sinned God allowed another nation to oppress them. When they repented God raised up a deliverer to save them from their enemies. This cycle happened 12 times.

### B. Samson's birth was by the will of God. Samson was chosen before birth to serve God.

1. **Judges 13:1-5**; Samson's birth was prophesied. He was to be a Nazarite from his mother's womb. This was very unusual.
2. In **Numbers 6:1-8**, we see that one choose to be a Nazarite and take the vow. The vow was for a specific period of time. During that time the person had to;
  - a. Not drink any wine nor any product from grapes nor even eat fresh grapes or raisins.
  - b. Not cut his hair at all. Since Samson was a lifetime Nazarite, he must have had very long hair. This may not have included the beard.
  - c. And he could not have gone near a dead body. Even if it was his father or mother, he could not go near a dead body.
  - d. Samuel and John the baptizer also seem to have been lifetime Nazarites. They were also selected by God before birth. They may have been dedicated in the womb or they may have taken the vow themselves later.
3. **Judges 13:24, 25**; Notice that the Lord blessed Samson. His Spirit moved him as he got older. Samson allowed God's Spirit to lead him. This probably refers to Samson's desire to fight the Philistines.

### C. There are other examples of Samson being led by the Spirit of God.

1. **Judges 14:1-6**; In this story Jehovah is using Samson's weakness for the Philistine women to strike at the enemies of God's people.
2. In verse 6 God's Spirit came upon Samson to protect him. God will use this event later to allow Samson to strike at the Philistines.
3. In **Judges 15:11** we see that the Philistines ruled over Judah. God is not ready to completely remove the Philistines from being a thorn in the side of Israel yet. This will not be done for another 60 to 80 years by David. So God set up situations so Samson can punish them and Judah not be fully responsible.
4. **Judges 14:10-20**; It was common to pass the time with riddles and stories since there was no TV and other forms of entertainment. Samson's riddle is God's occasion to strike at the Philistines —vs 4, 19.
5. **Judges 15:9-17**; The Philistines are angry with Samson and threaten Judah. The men of Judah come to get Samson for them. Since Samson is acting alone and out of anger at the Philistines the people of Judah are not in real danger from them.
6. Samson goes willingly. He trusts in God. In verse 14 the Spirit of God comes upon him again and he kills 1000 Philistines.
7. We wonder about the part of the Nazarite vow that does not allow him to go near a dead body. Samson piles the bodies up in heaps and counts them. It may be that God excuses this rule because of the purpose He has called Samson for.

### D. We see then that God choose Samson and God was with him.

## II. God listens to and helps Samson.

- A. Since God chose Samson from his mother's womb He listens to Samson and helps him.

1. **Judges 15:18-20**; Samson uses so much energy in killing the thousand Philistines that he has no energy to get away.
2. He cries out to Jehovah. He recognizes that his victory is from the Lord. He knows that the Lord can help him. He asks for help and Jehovah answers.

#### B. Samson's most well known sin was with Delilah.

1. He had a weakness for the Philistine women. God did not make him this way, but God used it to help Judah and eventually teach Samson.
2. **Judges 16**; Verses 6 to 20 is the occasion of Delilah learning Samson's weakness. She persists in asking Him where his strength lies. After several attempts he tells her.
3. **Verses 15-22**; Samson's hair is cut off. He does not realize it at first but finds out the hard way. He is imprisoned by the Philistines, blinded by them and made to grind in prison.
4. **Verses 23-27**; Samson is ridiculed by the Philistines. They praise their gods for giving them victory over Samson and the God of Israel. They bring him out in full view of the people at their temple to mock Him.

#### C. Yet God will listen to Samson one more time.

1. **Judges 16:28-31**; Samson's hair has begun to grow back —vs 22. However it was not just his long hair that gave him strength. No other Nazarite had his strength. Even lifetime Nazarites like Samuel and John the baptizer did not have it. It was a special gift from Jehovah.
2. Samson goes to God in prayer one more time. He asks to be remembered by the Lord, Jehovah. He asks for strength to punish the Philistines. God answers Him.
3. Because the temple is so full and even on the roof, pushing two pillars down caused them all to collapse. More are killed at this time than in his twenty years of judging Israel.
4. We see that Samson does not ask for his own deliverance. He accepts the consequences of his sins and asks to die with the Philistines. Many would pray for God to deliver them. Yet Samson asks to punish God's enemies.

#### D. We see again that God was with Samson and answered his prayers.

### III. Lets consider why Samson was a man of faith.

#### A. First, he accepted being chosen by God.

1. He was chosen even before being born. He could have rejected God and the Nazarite vow. Yet he did not. He kept it. He told Delilah about the vow.
2. He let God's Spirit move him. This did not mean God's Spirit took over and made Samson do things he did not want to do. It means at times he did what God directed him to do.
3. We are chosen by God today. Many reject God's choosing of them. They reject the sacrifice of His son for their sins. They make no pretence of being set apart to serve the Lord.
4. *Eph 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...*
5. God chose to save us, even before the beginning of the world. Yet many reject what God has done for them. God wants all men to be saved —2 Pet 3:9, 1 Tim 2:4. Yet many will be lost in the last day.
6. *Titus 2:11-12 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age...*
7. We need to accept God's choosing of us and do as He commands. We must recognize we must be set apart from the world and live a life of godliness. We must be led by God's Spirit.
8. *Gal 5:24-25 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*
9. We are led by the Spirit today when we study the N.T. given by inspiration of the H.S. We must study it and apply it to our lives and live godly lives. Samson was moved by the Spirit. We

should be too, but in a different way.

## B. Second, Samson went to God in times of trial and distress.

1. Samson knew he was a child of God and that God would watch over him. He knew the Lord would answer the prayers of the righteous. He went to God;
  - a. When he was worn out by killing the thousand Philistines and God gave him water.
  - b. When he was a captive of the Philistines he asked for his strength back one more time and God gives it to him.
  - c. It seems probable that Samson prayed on other occasions. He may have prayed when the lion attacked him. He may have prayed when the Philistines attacked him. He seems to have trusted in prayer.
2. *Prov 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.*
3. *James 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*
4. *1 Pet 3:12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."*
5. God answering Samson's prayers is strong testimony (along with Hebrews 11) that Samson was a righteous man.
6. Scripture records very little of Samson. Hebrews 11 is the only reference to him outside of Judges 13 to 16. There is a lot more to Samson's life. He seems to have been a righteous man overall.
7. God records a lot of things that we consider questionable and wrong. We will take about this more next week. However Jehovah used these things to punish the enemies of God's people. These things make him a hero to the Jews —to a physical nation.

## C. Third, and last, Samson learned where his true strength lay.

1. Samson did not live a long life. He was probably forty or so when he died. Many of his sins are the sins of youth.
2. As a young man he depended on his own strength and power many times. Most young men think they are invincible. Yet Samson learned he was not. He learned that true strength comes from God.
3. He lost his strength and his eyes and had to grind grain in a Philistine prison. He could do nothing about that. We do not know how long he had to do this.
4. Yet finally he realized his strength came from God and not his long hair. He prayed to God for his strength one more time. He did not pray for his own deliverance but the destruction of his and his people's enemies. God answers his prayers.
5. We need to learn this lesson too. We can learn it the hard way, as Samson did. Or we can learn it the easy way from God's word.
6. *Phil 4:12-13 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*
7. *Eph 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*
8. *2 Cor 12:7-10 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
9. Samson asked for great things because he knew the power of God. We need to learn where our strength is. We cannot get through life on our own. We must trust in God and rest in His

strength.

D. We see that Samson trusted in Jehovah and was indeed a hero of faith.

## **Conclusion; Most folks admire strong people.**

A. They admire women and men who are *physically* strong.

1. However we should admire folks who are *spiritual* strong. These are people who trust in God and in prayer.
2. They know where their true strength lies and have accepted God's choice of them to be His children.

B. These folks believe in Jesus Christ and repent of their sins.

1. They know they must obey the Lord to be chosen by Him. They are buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him in a new life —Rom 6:3-7.
2. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
3. If we can help anyone serve the Lord today and become a Christian, please let us.