

# The Book of Judges: Samson

We may think we can use God to get what we want, but God is not a means to our ends.

Judges 13-16

May 5, 2019/ May 15, 2019

## TODAY'S TEXT

Text: **Judges 13:1-7**

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. <sup>2</sup> A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. <sup>3</sup> The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. <sup>4</sup> Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. <sup>5</sup> You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

### 14:1-4

Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. <sup>2</sup> When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife." <sup>3</sup> His father and mother replied, "Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." <sup>4</sup> (His parents did not know that this was from the Lord, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

### 14:19-20

Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of everything and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he returned to his father's home. <sup>20</sup> And Samson's wife was given to one of his companions who had attended him at the feast.

### 16:15-20

Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." <sup>16</sup> With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it. <sup>17</sup> So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man." <sup>18</sup> When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, "Come back once more; he has told me everything." So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. <sup>19</sup> After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. [a] And his strength left him. <sup>20</sup> Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

### 16:28-30

Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." <sup>29</sup> Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, <sup>30</sup> Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

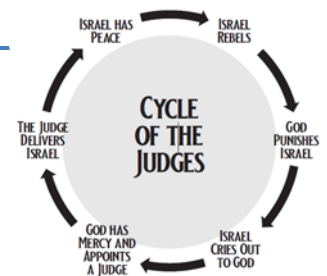
## FIRST THOUGHTS

° Who is your favorite superhero? They are certainly popular right now as the money for the new Avengers movie keeps rolling in. Does your superhero have a fatal flaw? What is their "kryptonite"?

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

We come now to the most well-known stories in Judges. The Philistines are the classic enemy of Israel in the Old Testament. They were a sea-faring people who conquered the areas around the Mediterranean Sea. They settled along the coast of Israel. During the time of Samson, they began coming inland and raiding Israel. Because of their advanced use of iron in weapons and armor, they were more than a match for most of the other nations they encountered. Even after Samson's death, Philistines would continue to trouble Israel (Goliath was a Philistine) until David ultimately destroyed them when he became King of Israel about 200 years after Samson.

Samson took a Nazirite vow. To learn more about this, read Numbers 6:1-21. Other examples of the Nazirite vow are seen in the life of Samuel and John the Baptist. These three men were Nazirites from birth and it was a symbol of being set apart for a special purpose. Other men and women took Nazirite vows for a shorter, defined time period. These were often used to seek God's direction for a special time or to offer thanksgiving for a deliverance from God.



## WATCH THE VIDEO

Look for these lessons in today's video:

- Lesson #1: We are our own worst enemy. Samson was compromising, unteachable and proud.
- Lesson #2: The world needs a greater savior than Samson. Samson's story is an incomplete foreshadowing of the coming of the perfect Savior, Jesus Christ.
- Lesson #3: It is never too late to cry out to God.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

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### > Read Judges 13:1-7

- What part of the cycle of Judges is missing from the story of Samson that has been present in the other stories?
- Why do you think God chose to continue to help Israel even when they don't ask? Why does God choose a judge from birth this time instead of someone who was already alive to be the deliverer?
- Summarize the components of the Nazirite vow in v. 4-5. Samson's parents seem to take these commands seriously. Why does Samson not seem to? What was his attitude about his vow and relationship with God based on what else you heard about his story?

### > Read Judges 14:1-4

- Talk about this statement from the video "Just because God is using you doesn't mean you are right with Him." Have you ever experienced that or seen it in someone else? Why would God use us when we are not right with Him? How can we know we are right with Him when He is using us?

### > Read Judges 14:19-20

- Samson uses the abilities God has given him for his own selfish reasons. How are we tempted to use God's blessings and the abilities He has given us for our own selfish reasons? What happens when we do this?

### > Read Judges 16:15-20

- Just before these verses, Delilah has asked Samson 3 times the secret of his strength and he has told her 3 lies. Each time she calls in the Philistines to capture him and he fights them off. Why does Samson keep going back to Delilah and why does he keep putting himself in this situation?
- One of the lessons from the video is "We are our own worst enemy." What does that mean to you? How have you experienced that?

### > Read Judges 16:28-30

- How is God's grace demonstrated in the closing of Samson's story? How does even the closing of this story still reflect that Samson's motivations in calling on God were selfish?
- What do we learn about God from the story of Samson? What do we learn about ourselves?
- What do you think about the foreshadowing of Jesus in the story of Samson?

## SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

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Select one of these things to do this week:

**PRAY:** Pray for God to shape the way you view Him and His gifts this week. Any time you notice God's gifts, thank Him for expressing His love to you.

**THANK:** Keep a thanksgiving journal for the next week. Write down 3 things you're thankful for everyday to remind you that God's the one who gives you everything.

**SERVE:** Use your God-given gifts to serve someone in your life this week. Volunteer at church or in your community. Pray for a friend in need and then let them know. Help out a neighbor. Bless someone financially.

## PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

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- Remember you can always re-watch or catch up on past videos on [www.rightnowmedia.com](http://www.rightnowmedia.com). If you don't have a log in, visit [www.chetscreek.com/rightnow](http://www.chetscreek.com/rightnow) to request your free access. Search for the Judges series (it's on the Chets Creek Channel on the left hand side).

- Next week we begin closing out our time in Judges. Read Judges Chapter 17 this week. Look especially for clues as to how far the Israelites had fallen away from God.

## READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

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**5th** – 2 Samuel 10; 1 Chronicles 20; Psalm 20; Matthew 22 | **6th** – 2 Samuel 11-12; Psalm 51; Matthew 23 | **7th** – 2 Samuel 13-14; Matthew 24 | **8th** – 2 Samuel 15-16; Psalm 32; Matthew 25 | **9th** – 2 Samuel 17; Psalm 71; Matthew 26 | **10th** – 2 Samuel 18; Psalm 56; Matthew 27 | **11th** – 2 Samuel 19-20; Psalm 55; Matthew 28