

## **Samson's Early Years and Marriage** **Judges 13:6-14:20**

### **Introduction**

Have you ever thought about the joy which comes from a birth announcement? Baby showers are given to supply gifts for the new baby. After the birth, families gather together and take many photos. What is all the fuss about? It is the celebration of new possibilities. The baby brings a new generation to the family's history. The baby's future is unknown and full of hope. The destiny of a nation could change because of a baby, just as it did with Samson's birth.

### **Outline of Judges 13:6-14:20**

- I. Samson's Supernatural Strength -  
Judges 13:6-25
- II. Samson's Unusual Marriage -  
Judges 14:1-20

### **I. Samson's Supernatural Preparation - Judges 13:6-25**

The wife of Manoah reported to her husband what she had seen and heard. *A man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome.* She was too stunned to ask where He was from, and He did not tell her His name. Returning home to her husband, she repeated what the Angel had said to her, that she would conceive and have a son, that she was to drink no wine or strong drink, and that she was not to eat unclean foods. The child would be a Nazirite to God from before birth until his death.

It is remarkable that Samson was to be known as a Nazirite *from the womb*. He would be dedicated to God. Also remarkable is that God concerned Himself with the nutrition that Samson received through his mother's umbilical cord, while he was still unborn! What does this say about the life and identity of unborn children? According to God, Samson's life started when he was conceived. Today,

pregnant mothers are still given instructions about what to do and eat for the baby's health and safety. Take a moment to be amazed by God's word, the Bible. It speaks with truth about every subject. It goes beyond the knowledge of its day. It is true at all times and in all places (Psalm 119:130,140).

Having heard his wife's announcement, Manoah immediately turned to prayer saying, *Oh my Lord,...teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born.* He asked God to send the Man of God to them again, and God answered His prayer. Do not neglect to pray! The Lord hears the prayers of His children (Psalms 18:6, 34:4).

The Angel reappeared to Manoah's wife, and she ran to get her husband, *The Man who came to me the other day, has just now appeared to me!* Manoah followed her and, seeing the Man, said, *Are you the Man who spoke to this woman?* The Angel answered, *I am.* Manoah then asked about the boy's life and work. The angel repeated the instructions given to the woman. There was no new information given to Manoah, except a reminder to not eat unclean food (which was a rule for all Israelites and should not have needed to be mentioned; we will talk more on this later). The Angel refused the request to stay for dinner. Instead, He told Manoah to offer the goat (which would have been prepared for dinner) as a burnt offering. This was an act of worship to God alone, and Manoah obeyed (Leviticus 1:10). Before the astonished couple's eyes, the Angel went up in the flame. At that moment, Manoah knew who the Angel was. He and his wife fell on their faces. While Manoah thought they would die because they had seen God, his wife gave a logical explanation of what had happened. If the two of them were going to die, God would not have: 1) accepted their offering, 2) appeared

to them, nor 3) given them the message about the child to be born.

Indeed, God did not come to destroy Manoah and his wife. Just as Manoah's wife used common sense to understand the situation, we must also use common sense in our daily lives. Proverbs 2:6 says, *For the Lord gives wisdom, from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.* God's thoughts are deep. *A senseless man does not know, nor does the fool understand this* (Psalms 92:4,5). God longs for us to grow in our knowledge of Him. Jesus's half brother, Jude, tells us to *contend earnestly for the faith* (Jude 3). The apostle Peter says, *always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you* (1 Peter 3:15). *Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord* (Isaiah 1:18). *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind* (Matthew 22:37). The absence of common sense results in foolishness.

God was faithful. *The woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.* Samson was a Danite living in an area dominated by the Philistines. This area is known as the Gaza Strip today, and the Palestinians who live there are descendants of the Philistines. It was Samson's destiny to launch the decline of this fierce fighting people. The Holy Spirit stirred Samson's spirit as God moved him toward his life's purpose. God was ready to **subdue** the Philistines.

Have you thought about what God is doing in your life? When Jesus was on earth, He cried to God asking to be saved from anything that would interfere with God's purpose for Him (Hebrews 5:7-8). Shouldn't we cry to God asking Him the same thing? God is with us and hears our cries. Wake up each morning and ask Him, "What will I do for You today, Lord?"

## II. Samson's Philistine Marriage - Judges 14:1-20

It seems that **lust** motivated Samson's desire for his foreign wife. He went to his father and mother saying, *I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.* Both his father and mother tried to **dissuade** him from taking a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines. It is understandable that they did not want to see their son marry a woman who worshiped the false god Dagon (Judges 16:23). Not to mention, Samson was not the average Jew. He was a Nazirite *from the womb*, and the Lord Himself had predicted Samson would *begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.* Surely, Samson's declaration, *Get her for me, for she pleases me well*, confused his parents. The literal translation is "*for she is right in my eyes*" (Young's Literal Translation).

While it is possible that Samson was not motivated by the desires of his **flesh**, it is not likely. Even the author of Judges points to Samson's pleasure in verse 7 "*she was right in the eyes of Samson.*" It doesn't appear that God's purpose was Samson's focus. However, God's purpose is never **hindered**. God used Samson's marriage to cause hurt to the Philistines. Dale Ralph Davis says in his commentary, "Yahweh can and will use the sinfulness or stupidity of his servants as the camouflage for bringing his secret will to pass."

On the way to make wedding arrangements, a young lion attacked Samson when he was alone. The Spirit of the Lord empowered him to kill it with his bare hands. God had provided him with a supernatural strength. Surely this was a sign to Samson of what God would do through him. In fact, the same sign encouraged David to take down the giant Goliath by the power of God. The young David told King Saul, "*The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion...He will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine* (1 Samuel 17:37)."

After some time had passed, Samson returned to Timnah to give a feast (wedding celebration) and get his bride. On his way, it seems his curiosity led him back to see the carcass of the lion. He discovered honey and a swarm of bees within the carcass. He scooped up some honey to eat and later shared some with his parents. However, he did not tell them where it came from. [The honey was unclean because it had touched a corpse. God had forbidden the Israelites to eat anything unclean (Leviticus 11:24-25, 39)]. Was Samson tricking his parents into eating something unclean on purpose? What about the Nazirite vow that forbid him from coming into contact with a dead corpse (Numbers 6:1-6)? Was Samson ignoring the Nazirite vow God had placed on him from his mother's womb? Sadly, it is likely that Samson cared little for either of these conditions. This was the darkest of times in Israel. The Angel that spoke to Samson's mother had to remind her not to eat anything unclean (Judges 13:14). A reminder is given when something has been forgotten. Samson seemed to have little concern for living according to God's law. Still, God did not hold back His Spirit. In fact, the very instance of bees in a carcass is a display of the wonder of God! After all, what kind creepy crawlies do you usually find inside a dead animal? Look for the wonder of God everywhere, and you will find it in the most unusual places!

At the wedding feast, Samson gave a riddle to 30 Philistine men. If they solved it, he would give them each a nice outfit. If they did not, they would each give him a nice outfit. The Philistine men threatened Samson's wife to get the answer for the riddle. Fearing the men would burn her and her father's house down, she cried and begged Samson for the answer. Finally, he gave in and told her, and then she told the men. When the Philistines gave Samson the answer to his riddle, he was furious. He knew what had happened. *If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle!* (A heifer is a cow, and calling a woman a cow was just as rude in Hebrew as it is to us today.) *The Spirit of*

*the Lord came upon him mightily*, and he went to the coastal city of Ashkelon twenty miles away. There, he killed thirty Philistine men and took their clothing back to Timnah to pay off his bet. It is clear that God was working through Samson. The acts of God may seem brutal. Being delivered from evil can be messy, and the cross of Christ is an example of that. After his debt was paid, Samson returned to his father's house. Meanwhile, his wife was given to another man, though Samson did not know it.

Samson was the most prepared of all the judges, having been "groomed" from the womb. Sadly, he is also the least accomplished in terms of conquered enemies. He will never see a complete victory over the Philistines. He was only the tool used to "*begin*" the deliverance of Israel. He is an example of how God uses the sinful acts of man to bring about His glory. †

### Prayer

Lord, let me wake each morning ready and willing to serve your purpose for me.

### Memory Verse

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

### Vocabulary

**subdue** - to get control of by using force, punishment, etc.

**lust** - a strong desire for something

**dissuade** - to convince someone not to do something

**flesh** - the sinful nature of human beings

**hinder** - to make slow or difficult

**QUESTIONS FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 11**

All questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

**DAY ONE: Read all notes and references.**

1. Who was the Angel of the Lord?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was God's purpose for Samson?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. From the notes, what other young man killed lions and stood up to the Philistines?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY TWO: Read Judges 15:1-8.**

4. a. When Samson went to visit his wife, how did his father-in-law welcome him?  
Give three points from verses 1-2.

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\_\_\_\_\_

②  
\_\_\_\_\_

③  
\_\_\_\_\_

- b. What was Samson's response in verse 3?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. a. What "weapons" did Samson use to take his revenge?  
\_\_\_\_\_

- b. What damage did he do with these weapons?  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What did the Philistines do after this? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. How did Samson take revenge? Give verse: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY THREE: Read Judges 15:9-11.**

8. Why did the Philistines go up to Judah? Give verses: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. How did the men of Judah respond? Write T (true) or F (false) next to each answer below. Correct the false statements and give verse for each.

a. T or F vs. \_\_\_\_\_ They sent 300 men to arrest Samson and deliver him to the Philistines.

b. T or F vs. \_\_\_\_\_ They told Samson that the Philistines ruled over them.

c. T or F vs. \_\_\_\_\_ They asked Samson, "What is this you have done?"

- d. T or F vs. \_\_\_\_\_ They let Samson go when he said, "I have obeyed the command of the Lord."

10. a. What agreement did Samson make with the men of Judah?

b. What did the men of Judah do to Samson?

**DAY FOUR: Read Judges 15:14-20.**

11. a. What did Samson do with:  
the ropes?

the jawbone of a donkey?

b. ? (Thought Question) Why do you think God gave Samson this miraculous power?

c. To whom did Samson give the glory?

12. a. What did Samson ask from God?

b. How did God answer?

13. How long did Samson judge Israel?

**DAY FIVE: Read Judges 16:1-31.**

14. a. How did Samson sin in verse 1?

b. How did his sin lead to tragedy for him?

15. a. What did Delilah receive for selling Samson's secret?

b. What did Esau receive for selling his birthright? See Genesis 25:29-33.

- c. What did Judas receive for selling Jesus into the hands of the chief priests?  
See Matthew 26:14-16.

- d. ? (Thought Question) What do you learn from these things?

16. a. Who did the Philistines credit for capturing Samson?

- b. Use the Judges 16:21 and 25 to tell what the Philistines did with Samson.

17. a. What was Samson's prayer in verse 28?

- b. What was Samson's last prayer?

- c. How did God answer these prayers?



VOCABULARY FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 11

*"The more words you know, the more clearly and powerfully you will think...  
and the more ideas you will invite into your mind."*  
— Wilfred Funk

DAY ONE: Write the definition of each vocabulary word.

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DAY TWO: Write three sentences using three different vocabulary words from this lesson.

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3.  

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DAY THREE: Circle the word’s synonym(s). (Synonym is a word/phrase that means the same thing.)

1. .    **subdue**    .....    conquer    .....    let go    .....    control

2. .    **hinder**    .....    help    .....    slow down    .....    make difficult

3. .    **dissuade**    .....    put off    .....    discourage    .....    encourage

**DAY FOUR: Match the word to its meaning.****Word****Definition**

<b>subdue</b>	to convince someone not to do something
<b>lust</b>	the sinful nature of human beings
<b>hinder</b>	to get control of by using force, punishment, etc.
<b>dissuade</b>	to make slow or difficult
<b>flesh</b>	a strong desire for something

**DAY FIVE: Review previous vocabulary words. Try to work from memory.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ - to continue to exist in pain or suffering
- \_\_\_\_\_ - doing something quickly and without thinking carefully of what will happen
- \_\_\_\_\_ - having or showing unfriendly feelings
- \_\_\_\_\_ - to rule as a king, queen, emperor, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ - to make fun of; ridicule; treat with scorn
- \_\_\_\_\_ - characterized by improper conduct
- \_\_\_\_\_ - to become less determined

**WORD BANK**

**endure**  
**hostile**  
**mock**  
**corrupt**

**rash**  
**strife**  
**accountable**  
**relent**

**bear**  
**reign**