

Judges & Ruth

God's *Faithfulness* Remains

women's | BIBLE STUDY

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LESSON *Ten*

Samson's Early Years

Samson's story began differently than the others in Judges. Though in dire need of help, Israel had not cried out to God. Yet, in His grace, God made a way to deliver them. Manoah and his wife had a son who was to be devoted to God through a special vow. Samson, this special son, grew up and challenged the enemies God called him to defeat.

FAITHFULNESS

God chose Samson to "begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines." (13:5) Throughout the story of Samson, look for ways God's faithfulness remains despite Samson's sinful choices.

THE PHILISTINES

The Philistines are seen frequently in Scripture as one of Israel's primary enemies. They lived on the western coast of Israel against the Mediterranean Sea.

ANGEL OF THE LORD

For a reminder about the Angel of the Lord, turn to the sidebar on page 17.

Read Judges 13-14 before answering the following questions.

1. From chapters 13-14, what do you learn about:

Manoah's Wife

Manoah

God

Samson

The Philistines

Read Judges 13.

2. Manoah's wife encountered the Angel of the Lord. What did he tell her?
3. Read Numbers 6:1-12 in connection with Judges 13:4-5. What was this child's life supposed to look like and why?

4. Manoah's prayer was answered, but probably not in a way he would have expected. How do you respond to God when His plans for your life are different than you expected?

5. From verses 19-23, what happened when Manoah offered a sacrifice to God? Why do Manoah and his wife respond by saying, "We shall surely die for we have seen God"? (For help, see Exodus 33:19-20.)

Be encouraged. You can have access to God through Jesus Christ. When you believe, God's Spirit lives in you and you can commune with God constantly. Ephesians 2:13 and 18 say, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ... For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."

Read Judges 14:1-9.

6. Why did Samson request a wife from the Philistines and how did his parents react? What does this tell you about Samson and his devotion to God?

7. List the major events that happen in verses 5-9. What questions does this section of Scripture bring to your mind?

VOW

In the book of Numbers, Nazarite vows were voluntary and temporary. However, Samson's vow started at birth and should have lasted throughout his lifetime.

NAZARITE

Nazarite means to "separate" or "abstain."⁵⁸

BARREN WOMEN

For stories of God allowing barren women to have children, read Genesis 21 and 25, 1 Samuel 1, and Luke 1. In each case, a male child was born to fulfill God's purposes.

BURNT OFFERINGS

Burnt offerings were part of the Old Testament Law given to Israel through Moses. These offerings were a way to worship God.

TIMNAH

Timnah was a Philistine town that was apparently easy to access. This was due to the Philistinian rule over Israel at the time.⁵⁹

8. Considering the Nazarite Vow (Numbers 6:1-12), why were Samson's actions wrong?

9. Samson chose to sacrifice his devotion to God for short-lived pleasure. How have you acted like Samson this week? Using the verses below for help, what does it look like to seek and obey God over the temptation of sin? (See Appendix: Sin.)

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

Galatians 5:16-24

Hebrews 4:14-16

James 4:8

“People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.”

— *D.A. Carson* ⁶⁰

Read Judges 14:10-20.

10. Samson bargained with his enemies at his wedding. Explain the wager and how the Philistines uncovered the secret to Samson's riddle.

11. Where in chapter 14 do you see God at work? In light of this, what timeless truth do you discover about God?

RIDDLE

The riddle came about as a result of Samson's experience in Judges 14:1-9. It is no wonder the Philistines had difficulty answering it as no one else saw the honey in the dead lion carcass.

ASHKELON

Ashkelon was a major Philistinian city during Samson's time.

SLOW DECLINE

While Samson's beginning in chapter 13 looks very promising, we find in chapter 14 he becomes "a judge/deliverer who chases women instead of enemies and who avenges personal grievances instead of delivering his nation from the oppression."⁶¹



BIG IDEA

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's lesson?

Notes