

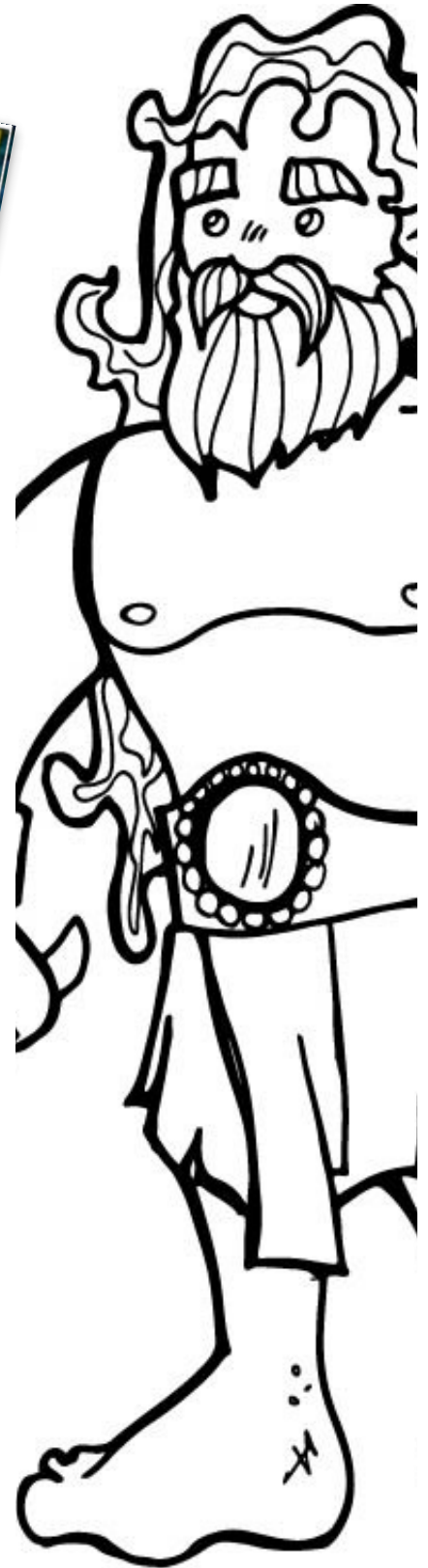
SAMSON

Making the Bible Come Alive

The strong one

WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

- Samson was the son of Manoah of the tribe of Dan. God had answered his father's prayer (Judges 13).
- His mother could not have children (Judges 13:2).
- An angel told his mother that she would become pregnant with a son (Judges 13:3).
- The angel also commanded her and her son to follow the rules of the Nazirite (Numbers 6). The razor was not to pass over Samson's head because he had been consecrated to God from his mother's womb (Judges 13:5).
- It was through him that the beginning of Israel's deliverance from the Philistines began (Judges 13:5).
- Samson was a judge in Israel during the time of the Philistines for twenty years (Judges 16:31).
- Samson married a Philistine woman despite the protests of his parents. He violated God's law against intermarriage with pagans.
- Samson loved one woman, Delilah. She betrayed him by cutting off his hair (Judges 16:4).
- Samson was captured, lost his strength and was thrown into prison. But by God's grace, he regained his strength one last time and freed the people of Israel.
- Samson is mentioned in the "Heroes of Faith" of the Bible (Hebrews 11:32).



WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- Samson was born while Israel was at war with the Philistines. Samson's parents could not have a child. An angel told them that they would have a baby boy who would grow up to be Israel's liberator. Manoah and his wife followed the angel's instructions on how to raise their son to be a Nazarene. This was a way of life for Israelite men who were dedicated to serving God. He was not to drink alcohol, touch a dead body or cut his hair. As the angel had said, Samson was born and Manoah and his wife raised him as they had been instructed.



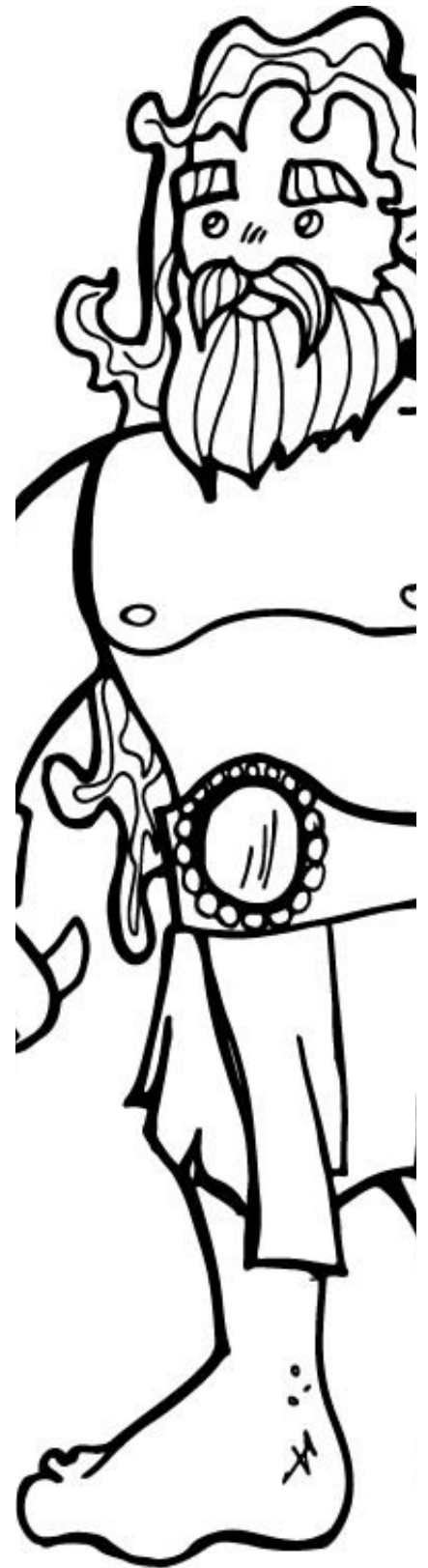
- Samson grew up and became very strong. He loved beautiful foreign women too much. To provoke his enemies, he chose a woman from their territory. He did not listen to his parents' protests and married her even though she was not an Israelite. On the way to Timnah, Samson was filled with the Spirit of the Lord and did some incredible stunts. When a lion tried to attack him, he tore the beast apart with his bare hands.
- On the way to his wedding, Samson returned to the Philistines and ate in a strange place. He found the carcass of a lion that he had killed and in it was a swarm of bees. Samson ate honey straight from the honeycomb and shared it with his parents (Judges 14:9). At the pre-wedding festivities, Samson used his adventure with the lion's carcass and the honey to give his thirty groomsmen a riddle. If they could not solve the riddle, they were to give Samson thirty shirts and a change of clothes (Judges 14:12). But if they answered correctly, Samson was to give them the same items. "Out of the one who eats came something to eat; out of the strong came something sweet." (Judges 14:13-14).
- The groomsmen had no idea how to solve the riddle. So they intimidated Samson's new wife by telling her that they would burn down her house and her father's house if she did not give them the answer to the riddle. After seven days of pressure, Samson gave his wife the answer. She immediately went to tell the groomsmen. Furious at the way the men had deceived him, Samson killed thirty Philistines and took their clothes. He then presented his groomsmen with their reward. Samson returned to his father's house. His father-in-law then gave his daughter's hand to one of the groomsmen! (Judges 14:20). Not even being allowed to see his bride, Samson decided to take revenge on the Philistines (Judges 15:1).
- Samson caught three hundred foxes. He tied them in pairs by their tails, attached flaming torches to them, and set them loose in the Philistine grain fields and olive groves. The fields burst into flames and were destroyed (Judges 15:4-5). Enraged, the owners of the fields burned and killed Samson's wife and father (Judges 15:6). After hearing the news of his wife's death, Samson killed more Philistines. He then took refuge in a cave called the rock of Etam. Then the armies of the Philistines marched on the tribe of Judah, demanding that three thousand of their men deliver Samson to them. Samson asked the men of Judah to bind him with a rope and deliver him to the Philistines on condition that he not be killed (Judges 15:9-13). As he was being handed over to the Philistines, he

broke the two new ropes that had held him. With the jawbone of an ass, he slaughtered a thousand Philistine soldiers (Judges 15:16). In the city of Gaza, his enemies tried to ambush him by waiting at the city gate. Samson simply lifted the gate and carried it to a distant hill (Judges 16:3).

- Samson then fell in love again with another beautiful Philistine woman: Delilah. His enemies saw another opportunity. They bribed Delilah to get the secret of Samson's strength. Delilah used her charm and after many attempts and a lot of harassment, she managed to get the truth out of Samson. Samson told her that a razor had never touched his head and that if he cut his hair, he would lose his strength. So while Samson slept, Delilah cut his hair. When Samson woke up, he discovered that his strength had left him and his enemies captured him, gouged out his eyes and he was forced to turn a millstone to grind grain in prison. After this victory, the Philistines organized a huge banquet in honour of one of their deities: Dagon. They brought Samson to the feast. They wanted to show off their trophy. Samson, who was now blind and whose hair had grown back, asked to be tied between the two supporting pillars of the temple. He prayed God to give him strength one last time. God granted his prayer and Samson pushed the pillars with all his strength until they fell and the entire temple collapsed. Three thousand guests at the feast then perished with Samson (Judges 16).
- Samson was disobedient on many occasions and failed to live up to the strict upbringing he had received from his parents. Despite this, God never gave up on him and granted him one last victory (Judges 16).

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **Nous devons apprécier tous les dons que Dieu nous a donnés.** Dieu a donné à Samson le don d'une grande force, mais il ne l'a pas valorisé, il l'a utilisé pour se montrer au lieu de rendre gloire à Dieu. Il l'a appris à ses dépens en perdant, en un instant, la force que Dieu lui avait donnée à cause de ses nombreuses désobéissances.
- **Dieu n'approuve pas le péché et il y a des conséquences.** Samson n'a pas vu tout de suite les conséquences de ses péchés. Il les a constatées plus tard. Tôt ou tard, on les voit. Nous devons nous rappeler de ne pas agir en fonction de nos sentiments ou de nos impulsions du moment. La Bible dit de pratiquer le fruit de l'Esprit, la maîtrise de soi (Galates 5.22). Il y





aura des gens, comme Dalila, qui essaieront de nous faire tomber.

- **Même si nous sommes faibles et que nous nous sentons désespérés, Dieu nous voit et veut nous aider à nous repentir.** Il peut encore nous utiliser pour sa gloire. Lorsque Samson était faible, qu'il avait perdu ses forces, qu'il était humilié par les Philistins, Dieu a entendu le cri de Samson. Il lui a rendu sa force pour une dernière fois. Samson est mort dans l'affrontement et a tué plus de Philistins, les ennemis d'Israël, que pendant toute sa vie. Il a ainsi réussi à libérer Israël.
- **Dieu a utilisé même des hommes imparfaits et pécheurs pour accomplir sa volonté.** Samson s'est volontairement engagé dans des situations qui l'ont conduit au péché, mais, à chaque fois, Dieu l'a utilisé pour sa gloire. Même notre péché ne peut pas empêcher la volonté souveraine de Dieu de s'accomplir.
- **Dieu est miséricordieux.** Les ennemis de Samson pensaient célébrer leur grande victoire sur lui, et les chefs se sont rassemblés dans le temple de leur dieu, Dagon, pour le louer d'avoir livré Samson en leur pouvoir (Juges 16:23). Pendant qu'ils fêtaient, ils ont amené Samson devant eux pour les amuser. Samson a prié alors qu'il était appuyé contre les piliers de soutien du temple païen. Dieu a exaucé la demande de Samson. Samson « a poussé de toutes ses forces, et le temple s'est écroulé sur les chefs et sur tout le peuple qui s'y trouvait » (verset 30). Cela ne signifie pas que nous pouvons pécher et que Dieu n'y verra pas d'inconvénient, mais nous pouvons voir Dieu entendre et répondre à la prière de quelqu'un qui crie vers lui.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter of IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!

