

We have talked about how the Israelites worshipped God when they had a good leader. When that leader was gone, the Israelites started doing evil things again. The Israelites needed help again.

There was a man in the tribe of Dan named Manoah. Manoah and his wife had no children. An angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife and told her she would have a son. (Judges 13:3) Her son was going to be very special. He would be a Nazirite. The Angel of the Lord told her not to drink wine or eat anything unclean. The angel told her to never cut her son's hair. Manoah's wife went to Manoah to tell him what she had been told. Manoah prayed to God to show them what to do with their child. Then the Angel of the Lord returned and told Manoah all the things that had been told to his wife.

The Angel of the Lord told Manoah to make an offering to the Lord. Manoah built a fire to make his sacrifice. There was a flame that went up from the altar toward heaven. The Angel rose up to heaven in the flame. (Judges 13:20) Manoah and his wife watched the Angel ascend to heaven.

Manoah and his wife had their son. They named him Samson. The Lord blessed Samson. (Judges 13:24) Even as a young man, the Spirit of the Lord was upon Samson.

Samson grew up and was a very strong man. God made Samson strong. One day, Samson was walking in the vineyards of Timnah. A lion roared and started to attack him. The spirit of the Lord made Samson strong enough to kill the lion with his bare hands. (Judges 14:6)

Later, Samson went back to Timnah to get the girl he wanted to marry. He found the dead carcass of the lion. Inside was a swarm of bees. The bees had made honey inside the carcass of the lion. Samson ate some of the honey and brought some to his parents. Samson did not tell his parents where the honey came from. Maybe that was because Samson was not to touch anything dead according to his Nazirite vow.

It was time for the wedding feast. At the feast, Samson told the men a riddle. He said “Out of the eater came something to eat. And out of the strong came something sweet.” (Judges 14:14) The men did not know what the riddle meant. They went to Samson’s wife and begged her to find out the answer.

Samson’s wife told Samson that if he really loved her he would tell her the answer to the riddle. Samson told her about killing the lion and how the bees were in the carcass of the lion. His wife went to the men and told them the answer to the riddle. When the men went to Samson with the answer to the riddle, he knew his wife had told them. He was very angry.

Samson was so angry that his wife had told his secret. She had embarrassed him and made him look foolish in front of everyone. He went out and got 300 foxes and tied torches on their tails. When the foxes ran through the fields, it burned up the vineyards and the olive groves. (Judges 15:5) Three thousand men went to arrest Samson for what he had done. They tied him up and took him back to the Philistines.

When the Philistines got close to Samson, God gave him the strength to break the ropes. Samson grabbed a jawbone of a donkey and killed one thousand Philistines. (Judges 15:15)

Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Bible does not tell us if she was an Israelite or a Philistine. The Philistines wanted her to help them find out where Samson got his strength. They offered Delilah 1100 pieces of silver if she would tell them where his strength came from. (Judges 16:5)

Delilah asked Samson again, and again where he got his strength. Samson gave her a different answer each time she asked. She was getting angry because she wanted the silver the Philistines had promised her.

Delilah begged Samson to tell her the answer. Then she told Samson he must not love her because he would not tell her the truth. Finally, Samson told her that his strength was in his hair.

While Samson was sleeping, Delilah called a man to come and cut off his hair. Then she woke Samson. The Lord had left Samson and he had lost his strength. (Judges 16:21)

The Philistines came to take Samson. He had no strength to fight them. They put Samson in prison and did terrible things to him. They even put out his eyes and made him blind. But while Samson was in prison, his hair began to grow again.

The Philistines were happy that they had beaten Samson. The people had gathered together to worship their idol, Dagon. They sent for Samson to be brought there so all the people could see him and make fun of him. (Judges 16:25) They put Samson between two pillars. There were thousands of people there. Samson prayed to God to give him strength. (Judges 16:28)

Samson said “Let me die with the Philistines!” (Judges 16:30) The pillars that were on each side of Samson were support for the temple walls. Samson pushed the pillars with all of his strength. When Samson pushed down the pillars, the walls of the temple fell. The temple fell on the people and they died. Samson died with the other people in the temple.

Samson had served as judge of Israel for 20 years. Samson’s family took him and buried him with his father, Manoah.