

Samson's Early Life

(A retelling of Judges 13, 14)

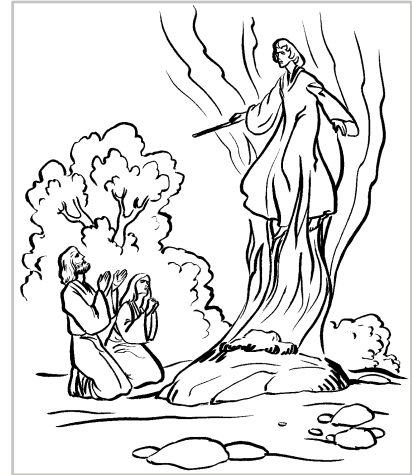
Introduction

Samson was a very strong man who became a leader among the Israelites. It was the Lord who made Samson strong. He showed great strength against the Philistines who were enemies of the Israelites. But he also made some foolish mistakes.

Samson is born

An angel of the Lord appeared to a woman who had no children. The angel said, "Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb. And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

The woman told her husband, Manoah. Then Manoah prayed to the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."



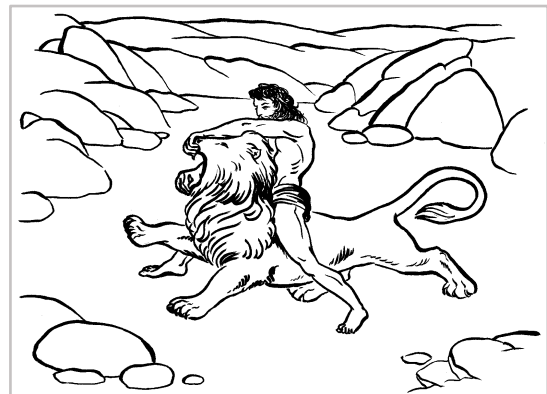
The Angel of God came to the woman again. She went to get her husband Manoah. He asked the angel "What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?" The angel told him what his wife should do.

Then Manoah offered a young goat as a sacrifice to the Lord. They saw the angel ascend in the flame of the altar! Then they knew that He was the Angel of the Lord.

Later, the woman bore a son, and they called his name Samson. The child grew, and the Lord blessed him.

Samson kills a lion

Samson wanted to marry a woman who was a Philistine. On his way to see her, he was surprised by a young lion that came roaring against him. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, and he tore the lion apart. Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she pleased him well.



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When Samson went back (to take this woman as his wife), he saw the carcass of the lion that he had killed. There was a swarm of bees and honey inside the carcass. Samson took some honey and ate it as he walked along.

At a feast after the wedding, Samson posed a riddle to thirty young Philistine men. If they guessed the answer in seven days of feasting, Samson would give them clothing. If not, they would give him clothing. Samson said: "Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet."

The men asked Samson's wife to find out the answer because they could not explain the riddle. (On the seventh day they threatened her if she did not find out the answer.) Samson's wife wept and asked Samson to explain it to her. When he finally told her the answer, she told the Philistine men.

Then the men of the city said to Samson: "What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?" Then Samson went and killed thirty other Philistine men, took their clothing and gave it to the men who explained the riddle. He was angry, and he returned to his father's house.

Conclusion

Samson showed his strength against the Philistines many times, always with the Lord's help. And he was a judge or leader of the Israelites for twenty years. But he also made mistakes, such as when he told Delilah the source of his strength. Read Judges 15 and 16 to learn more about Samson.