

Samson Loses His Strength

JUDGES 16



Samson made many enemies as a judge over Israel, especially among the Philistines. But he was too strong for them to fight, so they set traps for him instead. Even then, Samson escaped. Finally the Philistines came up with a plan. Samson loved a Philistine woman named Delilah. The Philistines promised her a treasure of silver coins if she could find out the secret of his great strength. Delilah agreed and the new trap was set.

The next time Samson came to visit Delilah, she asked, "Tell me the secret of your great strength. Is there any way you can be tied up so that you can't escape?" Samson lied. He said, "If anyone ties me up with seven fresh bowstrings, I will lose my power." So, while Samson slept, Delilah tied him up just as Samson had said. Then she shouted, "Samson, the Philistines are here to capture you!" Samson woke up and snapped the bowstrings as if they were nothing. Delilah complained, "You lied to me! Now tell me the truth. What is the secret of your strength?" Samson lied again. This time he said, "If anyone ties me with new ropes that have never been used, I will become as weak as any other man." But when she tied him up with new ropes and called in the Philistines, Samson broke the new ropes easily.

A third time Delilah asked Samson the secret of his strength. A third time Samson lied and, when the Philistines came, Samson escaped. Day after day Delilah pestered him to tell her the truth: "How can you say you love me if you won't tell me your secret?" Finally, Samson was so tired of arguing that he told her about his vow to God to never shave his head. Samson should not have done this, but in his pride, he thought he would not lose his strength. This time, while he slept, Delilah had a man shave his head. When the Philistines came in, Samson was easily captured, because God left Samson to fight in his own strength. The Philistines gouged out Samson's eyes and put him in prison.

After Samson had been in prison for awhile, the Philistines brought Samson to the temple of their god to mock him and to praise their god for his defeat. The Philistines were sure this would be a great day, but they forgot something. While Samson had been in prison, his hair had grown long again, as God had wanted it to be. When Samson entered the temple, he asked the attendant to put his hands on the pillars that held up the building, so they could help him stand. Then he prayed, "O God, please strengthen me just once more." God heard his prayer, and when Samson pushed against the pillars, his great strength returned. The whole roof of the building tumbled down on Samson, the Philistine rulers, and all the people who gathered there. They all died.

Although God used Samson to save Israel from their enemies, Samson fell into the sin of pride. He thought he could be strong all by himself, without God's help. He became distracted with the pleasures of the world. This story teaches us that no ordinary man could ever bring lasting salvation to God's people, for we are all sinners. One day, though, God sent a deliverer named Jesus who was very different. Unlike Samson, God's Son Jesus did not fall into sin. Though he was God, he humbled himself and came as a man to live a perfect life and die on the cross in our place, to provide a salvation that lasts forever!



Let's Talk About It!

What has God forbidden Samson to do?

What happens to Samson when he wakes up and finds his hair cut off?

Can you remember a time when you disobeyed?