

Lesson 72

Samson Receives Strength

God gave Samson supernatural strength to fight the Philistines.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Slide #3

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline and Lesson 71 Theme Poster. So far in Judges, we've seen how God punished the Israelites for idolatry by sending enemies against them. But when they repented and cried to God for help, he would raise up a judge to deliver them. In our last lesson, God chose Gideon.

The Midianites had come into Israel with a huge army! God promised to be with Gideon and help him win against the Midianites and defeat them. But God kept making Gideon's army smaller and smaller until there were just 300 men.

Why did God do that? He didn't want the people to think they won by themselves.

God deserved to get the credit and the glory for the victory, not Gideon or his men.

One night, Gideon and his men surrounded the Midianite camp. They smashed their jars, raised their torches, and blew their trumpets. Then God caused the Midianites to panic and fight each other. With just 300 men against thousands, this was a victory that could only happen through the Lord's power!

In today's lesson, we're going to talk about strength, so let's start with some strength-testing competitions! I need two volunteers to start.

Have exercises, stopwatch/timer, and optional ribbons or prizes ready.

Choose two students to come up front. If you have a large class, you may choose more volunteers.

Okay! You have 30 seconds to do as many _____ (insert exercise here: jumping jacks, pushups, squats, crunches, burpees, etc.) as you can. Demonstrate how to do the chosen exercise properly to help students avoid injury and follow good form. I'll set the timer and tell you when to start. Class, you'll need to cheer them on! I also need helpers to count how many they each complete. Assign one or more students to watch and count for each volunteer. Ready? Go! Start timer and encourage the volunteers. Give a countdown for the final ten seconds.

Great job! How many did they each complete? Have counters give you the total for each volunteer. You may want to give prizes (e.g., small treats or ribbons) to the volunteers before they return to their seats.

Some of these exercises were tough! We tested your strength in this competition because today we'll see how God gave a man supernatural strength.

Samson's Birth

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. This man was also a judge. Turn to the book of Judges chapter 13. Let's find out why God gave him supernatural strength!

Judges 13:1

Slide #4

Slide #5

Who will read Judges 13:1? Assign a reader.

What did the Israelites do again? Evil in the sight of the Lord.

This evil was the first step in the Judges cycle—worshipping false gods.

What enemies did God give them over to for 40 years? Philistines.

Show Map of Philistia. The Philistines were a warlike people who took over land along the southwestern coast of Israel. They controlled five big cities, and from these cities they would go into Israel and take their food and animals and make trouble for the Israelites. They also had better metal-working skills than the Israelites, so their weapons were stronger, which made it really hard to win battles against them.

Why do you think God let the Philistines oppress, or rule over, the Israelites and cause them to suffer? He wanted the Israelites to recognize their sin of idolatry and repent.

Remember, God always had a purpose for punishing his people. He didn't do it just to be "mean." God wanted them to repent and turn back to worshipping him. After 40 years under the terrible rule of the Philistines, the Israelites needed God's help to be rescued from the wicked Philistines. Let's see how God would help them this time.

Judges 13:2–5

Slide #6

Slide #7

Who will read Judges 13:2–5? Assign readers.

Who did the angel of the Lord appear to? Manoah's wife.

What did God say Manoah's wife would have? A son.

Manoah's wife had no children, but God promised her a son.

In verse 5, what would be special about this boy? What would he be and do? He'd be a Nazirite to God. He'd begin to save Israel from the Philistines.

God promised that her son would become a judge and begin to save Israel from the wicked Philistines. He would be a Nazirite, who was a person "set apart" to God for a special purpose. To show his devotion to God, this son would need to follow certain rules. These rules included not cutting his hair or eating or drinking anything made from grapes.

Things happened the way God said. Manoah and his wife had a son, and they named him Samson. And God blessed Samson as he grew up.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Slide #8

Let's start the Class Notes. You will write the correct answer in the crossword puzzle. Who will read #1? Choose a reader. Nazirite. Have students complete #1.

Who will read #2? What were the rules of a Nazirite? Choose a reader. Hair. Have students complete #2.

And #3? What would God help Samson do? Choose a reader. Philistines. Have students complete #3.

Samson's Strength

When Samson was a man, something amazing happened while he was walking along the road with his parents.

Judges 14:5-6

Slide #9

Let's read what happened on the journey. Who will read Judges 14:5-6? Assign a reader.

This account is amazing! What attacked Samson on the road?

A young lion.

And what did Samson do to the lion? Tore it to pieces with his bare hands.

Samson had no weapon or anything to fight the lion with, except his hands.

What gave Samson the power to defeat this lion? Look in verse 6. The Spirit of the Lord.

God sent his Spirit to give Samson the strength to defend himself against this dangerous lion.

Judges 15:14-15

Slide #10

Let's read about another time when God gave Samson great strength. Samson had been captured and tied up with ropes. The men who captured him were going to turn him over to the Philistines.

Who would like to read what happened from Judges 15:14-15? Assign readers.

What happened when the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson this time? Samson broke the ropes that bound him, picked up a jawbone of a

donkey, and killed 1,000 Philistines.

God gave Samson strength to break free of the ropes that bound him. Samson had no weapon, so he picked up a donkey's jawbone that lay nearby and used it to kill 1,000 Philistines! God gave Samson an amazing victory over the enemy!

Slide #11

Let's answer some more of the Class Notes questions. Who will read #4? Choose a reader. Lion. Have students complete #4.

And #5? What did Samson use to fight when he was captured? Choose a reader. Donkey. Have students complete #5.

Samson's Downfall

Slide #12

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. We've seen how God supernaturally helped Samson to kill a lion and defeat many Philistines with a piece of bone! Samson judged Israel for 20 years, but his downfall came when he fell in love with an ungodly woman named Delilah. The Philistines told Delilah they'd give her lots of money if she could find out the secret of Samson's strength.

What was the secret of Samson's strength? Who made him strong? God.

Delilah asked Samson to tell her where his strength came from and how he could be defeated. Samson told her three lies. He said he would become weak if he were bound by fresh bowstrings (cords), tied with new ropes, or if his hair were woven into a loom. Delilah tried each of these ways to bind Samson and then had men jump out to attack him. But every time, Samson jumped up, broke free, and defeated the men.

Delilah was getting desperate. She wanted the money she had been promised. Day after day, she begged Samson to tell her his secret until finally, the Bible says Samson's soul "was vexed to death!" Samson couldn't stand listening to her begging anymore.

So he decided to tell Delilah the secret of his strength. "I am a Nazirite to God," he said. "I have never cut my hair. But if my head were shaved, my strength would leave me."

This time, Delilah knew Samson was telling her the truth. She quickly called for the Philistines saying, "Hurry, he's told me the secret of his strength. I know it will work this time."

Judges 16:19-22

Slide #13

Slide #14

Uh oh! Is this going to get Samson into trouble? Let's find out what happened. Listen as I read Judges 16:19-22. Read the verses.

Delilah lulled Samson to sleep. Who shaved Samson's hair? Look in verse 19. A man Delilah called.

After Samson's hair was cut, Delilah woke him up. What was Samson thinking he would do in verse 20? He thought he'd shake free as he'd done before.

Did Samson know that God wasn't with him when the Philistines attacked this time? No.

Samson received power from God to fight the Philistines, so his strength didn't come from his long hair. But, God told Samson's parents that he would be a Nazirite, someone who was set apart for God's special purpose, and Samson's long hair was a sign of his special relationship with God. When Delilah became more important to Samson than his relationship with God, God left him.

The Philistines captured Samson. They blinded him and bound him in shackles, and he was taken to Gaza where he was forced to work in a prison.

It sure seemed like it was all over for Samson. He sinned by letting Delilah become more important to him than obeying God. Now he was blind and imprisoned by his enemies. How could he help deliver the Israelites now?

Well, as we've seen many times before, God was in control—and he wasn't done with Samson yet. There came a time when many Philistines gathered at a feast to worship their false god Dagon. They called for Samson to come up from prison so they could make fun of him. Samson asked the boy who guided him to help him place his hands on the two pillars that held up the house. The Bible uses the word "house," but since it says over 3,000 people were on the roof, it was probably a temple or a round amphitheater with people on the roof looking down at Samson.

What do you think Samson did? Any guesses? Allow guesses.

Judges 16:28–30

Slide #15

Slide #16

Let's find out. Who will read Judges 16:28–30? Assign readers.

What did Samson do in verse 28? He prayed for God to remember him and give him strength one more time.

Samson cried out to God for help and strength. And God answered!

What did Samson do with the last bit of strength God gave him? He pushed the two middle pillars supporting the house, and the house collapsed, killing Samson along with all the Philistines.

Slide #17

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Samson was willing to die to have one final victory for the Lord against the Philistines. God gave Samson the strength to knock down two enormous pillars making the whole building collapse! More people died here than in all his other battles against the Philistines.

Samson's life was different from other judges because God gave him strength to fight the Philistines alone—the other Israelites didn't join him to fight. Samson fell into the same sin of idolatry as the rest of the Israelites. But instead of worshipping false gods, Samson put Delilah above God, and God finally took his blessing away from Samson. However, when Samson repented and turned back to God, God heard his prayer and answered it one last time.

Slide #18

Slide #19

Let's finish our Class Notes. Who will read #6? Choose a reader. Delilah. Have students complete #6.

How was Samson finally captured? Who will read #7? Choose a reader. Shaved. Have students complete #7.

And #8, what happened to Samson once he was captured? Choose a reader. Prison. Have students complete #8.

What's the answer to #9? Who will read that? Choose a reader. God. Have students complete #9.

And #10, what did Samson ask for when he stood between the two pillars? Choose a reader. Strength. Have students complete #10.

Application

Slide #20

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God used Samson to show the Israelites that he had not forgotten them. God gave Samson supernatural strength to defeat the Philistines without being captured many times.

But we may be tempted to think, "Wow, Samson sure made a lot of bad choices!" But we make sinful choices, too, don't we? Our weaknesses may be different from Samson's, but they can be just as bad. If Samson had stayed obedient to the Lord and kept away from sin, he wouldn't have been trapped by Delilah.

The same is true for us today. When we are careful to obey God's Word and stay away from worldly things that don't please God, we can avoid the terrible consequences of sin. Samson let things of the world distract him from what God really wanted him to do.

What are some things that can distract us from serving God today? What do we spend most of our time doing or thinking about? Allow discussion. Having fun, trying to be popular, being selfish, trying to win friends, wanting to have and do the latest and greatest, watching TV/movies, playing video games, playing sports, etc.

God wants us to learn from the accounts he has given us in the Bible. From Samson's life, we see great faith and courage to fight for the Lord but also weakness for wanting things of the world. Let's pray and ask God to help us keep from distractions so we can be used greatly for his glory.

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Three chairs set out for bases
Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Medium-sized cardboard box
Scissors or knife
Four beanbags
Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

Materials

- Review Questions (included in lesson)
- One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)
- Pencils or white board markers
- One die

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

6 = body

5 = nose

4 = whiskers

3 = eyes

2 = ears

1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)

Masking tape

Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)

Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers

Rolled up socks

Masking tape
Ten sheets of paper
Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Small paper strips
Cup or basket

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)

White board or chalkboard
Markers/chalk
Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.),
tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards
One beanbag
Masking tape
Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he

receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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