

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

We're going to talk about strength in today's lesson, so let's start with some strength-testing competitions! I need two volunteers to start. Choose two students to come up front. If you have a large class, you may choose more volunteers.

Okay! You have 60 (or 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 10 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.

If you have an active class that enjoys competition, play several rounds with different volunteers and the same or different exercise. Or, you may see who can stay for the most rounds by having the winner of each round remain and compete against different volunteers.

We tested your strength with this competition. Some of these exercises were tough! Today, we'll see how God gave supernatural strength to a man in the book of Judges.

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, God would raise up a judge to deliver them. In Lesson 71, God chose Gideon. Who were the enemies that were stealing from and attacking the Israelites during Gideon's time? Midianites.

The Midianites had a huge army that invaded Israel. The Israelites cried out to God for help, and God came to Gideon. Gideon wasn't courageous or mighty when God found him, but God promised to be with him and help him defeat the Midianites.

Gideon gathered over 30,000 Israelites, but God reduced his army to just 300 because he wanted the glory for the victory to be his, not Gideon's or his men's. Gideon and his men surrounded the Midianite camp at night.

They smashed their jars, blew their trumpets, and raised their torches, and God caused the Midianites to panic and fight each other. This victory could only happen through the Lord's power!

Samson's Birth

Pass out the Class Notes.

The judge in today's lesson was given special strength to fight the enemies of the Israelites. Let's find out why God gave supernatural strength to this man.

Judges 13:1

Slide #4

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

What did the Israelites do? 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.

The Philistines were a warlike people who took over land along the southwestern coast of Israel. They controlled five major cities, and from these cities they raided and harassed the Israelites. Because they settled along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, the Philistines were known as a seafaring people. They also had superior metalworking skills to the Israelites, which gave them an advantage in battle because their weapons were stronger.

Why do you think God let the Philistines oppress the Israelites? He wanted the Israelites to recognize their sin of idolatry and repent.

Yes. God always had a purpose for punishing his people. He wanted them to repent and return to worshipping him. After 40 years under the terrible rule of the Philistines, the Israelites needed God's help for deliverance.

Judges 13:2–5

Slide #5

Slide #6

Let's see who God appeared to. 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? A Nazirite to God. He would save Israel from the Philistines.

God promised that her son would become a deliverer, or a judge, for Israel. And he would be a Nazirite. A Nazirite was a person "set apart" to God who followed certain rules to show devotion to God. These rules

included not shaving his hair or eating or drinking anything made from grapes.

Normally, Israelites would make a Nazirite vow and follow these rules for a certain amount of time. In this case, Manoah's wife followed Nazirite rules while she was pregnant, and her son was supposed to obey these rules for his entire life. He was not supposed to cut his hair or drink wine or grape juice.

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

Slide #7

Let's start the Class Notes. You will write the correct answer next to each question. Who will read #1? Choose a reader. Nazirite. Have students complete #1.

Who will read #2? Choose a reader. Not drink wine or cut his hair. Have students complete #2.

And #3? Choose a reader. Philistines. Have students complete #3.

Samson's Strength

When Samson was older, he saw a Philistine woman and told his parents he wanted to marry her. They weren't happy with Samson's choice because she was the daughter of their enemies! Samson had a weakness for ungodly women.

Judges 14:5-7

Slide #8

Slide #9

Let's read what happened on the journey to see this woman. Who will read Judges 14:5-7? 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. But he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat.

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

God sent his Spirit to empower Samson to defend himself against this dangerous lion. Sometime later, Samson stopped to look at the dead lion, and he found that bees had made a nest in the carcass. He ate some of the honey from it and then gave some to his parents.

Seeing honey in a dead lion gave Samson an idea for a riddle. What is a riddle? Allow answers.

A riddle is a tricky question to be solved or guessed.

See if you can guess the answer to this riddle: What travels around the world but stays in one spot? Allow guesses. A stamp!

Here's another one: I'm tall when I'm young and short when I'm old. What am I? A candle.

How about this one: What always sleeps with its shoes on? A horse.

Do any of you know a riddle you'd like to share? Allow several students to share a few riddles or you may give more riddles you know or brought.

When it came time for his wedding feast, Samson gave a riddle about honey and a lion to the Philistines who were there. Instead of being a fun game, Samson's riddle made the Philistines angry because they'd have to pay Samson 30 sets of clothing if they couldn't solve it within seven days. They threatened Samson's bride to find out the answer. She wept and begged Samson to tell her, and when he did, she reported it to the Philistines. So the Philistines gave him the correct answer to his riddle. Samson was angry that they learned his riddle, so he went to another Philistine city and took clothing from 30 men to pay the men who answered his riddle.

After Samson returned home in anger, his bride was given to the best man at his wedding feast. This turned out to be a bad wedding, didn't it? Samson never got his bride, and he had to go beat up guys to give clothing to his Philistine wedding guests. Samson didn't know his wife had been given to another man, and he went to visit her sometime later. When he found out what happened, he was furious!

Judges 15:4-5

Slide #10

Who will read what Samson did in Judges 15:4-5? Assign a reader.

What did Samson do to get back at the Philistines? Burned down their grain and olive orchards using torches tied between pairs of foxes.

How many foxes did Samson catch to burn the Philistines' fields? 300.

Imagine how long it would take to catch 300 foxes! The Philistines weren't happy about their destroyed fields. They sent men of Judah to capture Samson and bring him to them.

Judges 15:13-15

Slide #11

Slide #12

Listen as I read what happened from Judges 15:13-15. Read the verses.

The men of Judah bound Samson with two new ropes and brought him to the Philistines.

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 an amazing victory! God gave him strength to break free of the ropes that bound him. Samson had no weapon, so he picked up

a donkey's jawbone and used it to kill 1,000 Philistines!

Slide #13

Slide #14

Let's answer some more of the Class Notes questions. Who will read #4?

Choose a reader. Lion. Have students complete #4.

And #5? Who will read what happened at the wedding feast? Choose a reader. Riddle. Have students complete #5.

Who will read #6? Choose a reader. Foxes. Have students complete #6.

And #7? Choose a reader. Jawbone of a donkey. Have students complete #7.

Samson's Downfall

We've seen how God supernaturally enabled Samson to kill a lion, catch foxes, and defeat many Philistines with a piece of bone! Samson judged Israel for 20 years, but his weakness for ungodly women would lead to his downfall.

Even though Samson knew the Philistines were trying to capture him, he kept putting himself in danger by trusting the wrong women. Once again, Samson fell in love with an ungodly woman. Her name was Delilah. When the Philistines found out, they came to her and said 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 methods to bind Samson and then had men jump out to attack him. But every time, Samson jumped up, broke free, and defeated the men.

Judges 16:17-22

Slide #15

Slide #16

Slide #17

Slide #18

Slide #19

Delilah got desperate and begged Samson to tell her his secret. Finally, Samson couldn't stand her begging anymore. The Bible says Samson's soul was vexed to death! Listen to what happened when Samson told her the truth. Read Judges 16:17-22.

What did Samson tell Delilah would make him weak? He was a Nazirite, and his head/hair had never been shaved.

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. A Nazirite was set apart to God, and Samson's long hair was a sign of his special relationship with God. When Samson put Delilah above his relationship with God, God left him.

Who shaved Samson's hair? A man Delilah called. Delilah lulled Samson to sleep and then had a man come and cut his hair. Did Samson know God wasn't with him when the Philistines attacked this time? No. He thought he'd break free as he'd done before.

Samson assumed God would always give him strength. It was sad that Samson was spiritually blinded to his sin and didn't even realize that God had left him. When the Philistines captured Samson, they physically blinded him and bound him. 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 women become more important to him than obeying God. He told his secret to Delilah and ended up blinded and imprisoned by his enemies. How could he help deliver the Israelites now?

But God was in control, and he wasn't done with Samson yet. The Philistines gathered to worship their false god Dagon, and they called for Samson to come up from prison to entertain them. There were over 3,000 Philistines at the feast. Samson asked the boy who guided him to lead him between the two pillars on which the house rested. The Bible uses the term "house," but since over 3,000 people were on the roof, it was likely a temple or a circular amphitheater with people on the roof looking down at Samson.

Judges 16:28–30

Slide #20

Slide #21

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 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 #22

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

Samson fell into the same sin of idolatry as the Israelites. But instead of worshipping false gods, Samson put women above God. The ungodly women in his life eventually led to God removing his blessing from Samson. However, when Samson repented, God heard his prayer and answered it.

Slide #23

Slide #24Slide #25

Let's finish our Class Notes. Who will read #8? Choose a reader. Delilah. Have students complete #8.

Who will read #9? Choose a reader. Shaved his head. Have students complete #9.

And #10, what happened to Samson once he was captured? Choose a reader. Prison. Have students complete #10.

What's the answer to #11? Who will read that? Choose a reader. God. Have students complete #11.

And #12, what did Samson ask for when he was between the two pillars? Choose a reader. Strength. Have students complete #12.

Application

Slide #26

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God gave Samson supernatural strength to defeat the Philistines and avoid capture many times. But Samson had a weakness for ungodly women. He loved Delilah and eventually told her the secret of his strength. He sinned by putting his love for her above his obedience to God. God removed his strength, and Samson was blinded and put in prison. But, God still listens to his children when they repent and cry for help. Samson prayed for God's blessing, and God answered! Samson collapsed an entire building of Philistines.

We may be tempted to blame Samson for his sins, but we sin, too. Our weaknesses may be different from his, but they can be just as destructive. If Samson had remained obedient to the Lord and kept himself separate from sin, he could've avoided Delilah and her trap. The same is true for us today. When we remain obedient and separate from the world, we can avoid the destructive consequences of sin. Samson let the pleasures of the world distract him from his true purpose.

What are some things that can distract us from serving God today? Allow discussion. Having fun, being popular, being selfish, wanting material things, wanting friends, etc.

Let's pray and ask God to help us avoid distractions so we can be used mightily 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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