



K-1st Lesson

Review

We're going to talk about strength in today's lesson, so let's start with a strength-testing competition! I need two volunteers to start. *Choose two students to come up front. If you have a large class, you may choose more volunteers. If there's time, you may want to do several rounds.*

Okay! I'm going to give each of you a book to hold. Then I'll add another book. I'll keep adding books until you say, "No more!" Ready? *Have volunteers hold out their hands in front of them. Start stacking one book at a time onto each student's hands until they cannot hold any more.*

- Great job! How many books did you each hold? *Count how many books each volunteer was able to hold before they said, "No more!"*

We tested your strength today because we're going to talk about someone in the Bible who was given supernatural strength from God. But first, let's see what we remember from the last lesson.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. So far in the book of Judges, we've seen how God sent enemies against the Israelites to punish them for worshipping false gods. But whenever they cried out to God for help, he would choose a judge to rescue them.

- Refer to Lesson 71 Flip Chart.* Who did God choose to lead the fight against the Midianites? What was his name? *Gideon.*

Gideon started out with a pretty big army, but God made it smaller and smaller because he didn't want the people to think they won by themselves. One night, Gideon and his men surrounded the Midianite camp. They smashed their jars, raised their torches, and blew their trumpets. With God's help, the Midianites were defeated! This was a victory that could only happen through God's power!

Samson's Strength

Today's lesson starts at a time when the Israelites had forgotten God again and were worshipping false gods and idols. Once again, God sent enemies to rule over the Israelites to punish them for their sin. The Israelites were miserable—who would rescue them from the evil Philistines?

One day the angel of the Lord appeared to the wife of a man named Manoah and promised that God would give her a son. This was exciting news since she didn't have any children! God told her that her son would help save Israel from the Philistines. Since God would set him apart for this special purpose, there were certain rules her son should follow: he should never drink wine and should never cut his hair. Soon, Manoah and his wife had a son, and they named him Samson.

God blessed Samson with great strength as he grew into a man. One day when Samson was traveling along a road, something jumped out of the bushes to attack him!

Judges 14:5–6

- Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster.* Let's look in the book of Judges to find out what Samson did. Who has the Bible? *Have the student bring up the Bible and open it to the sticky note. Read Judges 14:5–6 starting halfway through verse 5 with "And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring."*

- Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart.* 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.*

Wow! This is amazing! Samson had no weapon or anything to fight the lion with except his bare hands.

- What gave Samson the power to defeat the lion? What rushed upon him? *The Spirit of the Lord.*

God sent his Spirit to give Samson the strength to save himself from this dangerous lion.

Samson's Downfall

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. God chose Samson to be a judge who would help Israel by fighting against the Philistines with the great strength God gave him. But Samson had a weakness; he fell in love with an ungodly woman named Delilah. Instead of choosing a woman who worshipped the one true God, Samson wanted to be with Delilah, who worshipped false gods.

When the Philistines found out Samson loved Delilah, they came to her and said, "We will pay you lots of money if you find out the secret of Samson's strength."

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

Delilah liked the idea of getting lots of money. She asked Samson to tell her where his strength came from. Samson said, "If someone tied fresh bowstrings (cords) around me, I would become weak."

So Delilah tied bowstrings around Samson. Then she shouted, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!"

- How many of you think Samson got caught? *Show of hands.*

Well, Samson got up and snapped those bowstrings right off. That wasn't the secret of his strength.

Delilah asked two more times for Samson's secret, and each time Samson lied. Delilah was getting upset. She wanted the money that was promised to her. "Samson," she whined, "how can you say you love me, and then lie to me about the secret of your strength. Please tell me the truth."

Delilah pestered Samson day after day to tell her his secret. Finally, one day Samson gave in and said, "Because I am set apart to God, 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, bring my money. He's told me the secret of his strength. I know it will work this time."

Judges 16:19–20

Uh oh! Did Samson make a big mistake? Let's find out what happened next. Listen as I read Judges 16:19–20. *Read the verses.*

- While Samson was sleeping, Delilah called a man to come in. What did that man do? *Shaved Samson's head.*
- After Samson's hair was cut, Delilah woke him up. What was Samson thinking he would do this time? *He thought he'd break free as he'd done before.*
- Did Samson know that God wasn't with him when the Philistines attacked this time? *No.*

Samson was given power from God to fight the Philistines, so his strength didn't come from his long hair. But, God had set Samson apart for a

special purpose, and Samson's long hair was a sign of his special relationship with God. Samson let Delilah become more important to him than loving and obeying God, so God left him.

Samson's Last Feat

The Philistines captured Samson. They blinded his eyes and bound him in chains, and he was taken to prison. It sure seemed like it was all over for Samson. Now he was blind and suffering in prison. How could he help rescue the Israelites now?

Well, as we've seen many times before, God was still in control because he is sovereign—and he wasn't done with Samson yet. There came a time when many Philistines gathered at a feast to worship their false god. They called for Samson to come up from the prison so they could make fun of him. Because Samson was blind now, he asked the boy who guided him to lead him between the two tall pillars that held up the building they were in.

- What do you think Samson was going to do with those pillars? Any guesses? *Allow guesses.*

Judges 16:28–30

Let's find out. Listen to Judges 16:28–30. *Read the verses.*

- What did Samson pray for? *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.*

- What happened to the house they were in? *It collapsed, killing Samson along with all the Philistines.*

Refer to the Flip Chart. God helped Samson fight against the wicked Philistines one last time. He gave Samson the strength to knock down two enormous pillars and make the whole building fall down. Thousands of Philistines died there that day, and so did Samson.

Samson's life was different from other judges because God gave him special strength to fight the evil Philistines alone—the other Israelites didn't join him to fight. Samson made the mistake of letting Delilah become more important to him than loving and obeying God. However, when Samson knew he was wrong and cried out to God, God heard his prayer and answered him one last time.



God gave
Samson great
STRENGTH.



Samson told
DELILAH
his secret.



Lord, give me
STRENGTH!