

STANDING IN THE GAP

CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does it mean to be called by God to stand in the gap — and are you fulfilling that calling?

I. THE TEXT & INTRODUCTION (00:00:00)

Key Scripture: Judges 16:25

"And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars."

The Image: Samson — placed between the pillars, standing in the gap.

The Illustration: A stubborn black cow with a white face keeps breaking through a downed fence. A trained border collie named Tank is placed in the gap of the fence to hold the cattle back while the fence is repaired.

- The dog was obedient, attentive, and held his position for over an hour
 - The cow kept trying — but the dog kept pushing her back
 - **Key Truth:** You need the right kind of obedience to stand in the gap effectively
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II. WHO WAS SAMSON? (00:07:11)

Background: Judges 13

- Israel had been sinning and living under Philistine oppression for **40 years**
- Manoah's wife was barren — the Angel of the Lord appeared to her with a promise
- The child to be born would be a **Nazarite from the womb** and a **deliverer** for Israel

Key Insight:

"Some of you — God has had a calling in your life even from the womb. Before you ever breathed air, God had a destiny for you."

God's Purpose for Samson:

- Not to be a spectacle — but to be a **deliverer**
- Not just to be strong — but to **stand in the gap** between Israel and the Philistines

The Spirit of the Lord Upon Samson (*Judges 13:25*)

- Killed a lion with his bare hands (*Judges 14:6*)
- Slew 30 men (*Judges 14:19*)
- Snapped binding cords like burnt flax (*Judges 15:14*)

Key Truth: It was never Samson's own strength — it was always the **Spirit of the Lord** coming upon him.

III. SAMSON'S FAILURE: SIN BLINDS, BINDS, AND GRINDS (*00:17:57*)

The Pattern of Compromise: Judges 16

- Samson lusted after women and made terrible choices
- He married outside his faith against his parents' counsel
- He fell for Delilah's deception and revealed the secret of his Nazarite vow
- His hair was shaved — his vow broken — **the Spirit of the Lord departed**

What Sin Does:

1. **Blinds you** — The Philistines gouged out his eyes
2. **Binds you** — They bound him and put him in prison
3. **Grinds you** — He was set to labor at the mill

Warning to Young People:

"The enemy will present things as they're not, and he will deceive you — and he will take you down a road you don't want to go on."

The Tragic Irony:

- The enemy let his hair grow back — they weren't smart enough to keep shaving it
- His strength began to return — but it was too late to avoid the consequences

IV. BETWEEN THE PILLARS: THE FINAL STAND (00:22:36)

The Scene: Judges 16:25–30

- Thousands gathered to mock Samson as entertainment
- ~3,000 people on the roof alone
- A young lad led him to the pillars

Samson's Prayer:

"O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

The Result:

- Samson pushed the pillars — the house fell
- He killed more in his death than in his life
- **The Saddest Picture in the Bible:** His parents digging through the rubble to find the one who was sent to be the deliverer

Key Truth: *Don't waste your anointing. Don't be a Samson — called, gifted, and anointed, but destroyed by compromise.*

V. OTHERS WHO STOOD IN THE GAP (00:25:09)

A. Ezekiel 22 — The Sins of the Leaders

- Three groups failing God: **preachers, religious leaders, and political officials**
- God searched for someone to stand in the gap — or He would bring destruction
- *"Just because you can get up and preach doesn't mean your life resembles the Word of God."*

B. Numbers 16 — Aaron Runs to Stand Between Life and Death (00:29:17)

- Rebels swallowed by the earth — yet the people still murmured against Moses and Aaron

- God sent a plague — thousands dying
- Moses told Aaron: "**Get your censer and run — stand between the dead and the living**"
- Aaron **ran** — he did not lollygag
- He waved the censer and **the plague stopped**

Key Truth:

"Aaron stood in the gap so the living would not die. That is what pastors do. That is what YOU need to do in your home — stand in the gap so the enemy cannot steal, kill, and destroy."

VI. THE CALL TO STAND IN THE GAP TODAY (00:31:32)

Who Needs to Stand in the Gap?

- **Parents** — stand in the gap for your family
- **Students** — stand in the gap in your school, be the light
- **Leaders** — stand in the gap for your community and nation
- **Every Believer** — stand in the gap against spiritual warfare that is happening right now

The Story of Tank — Conclusion (00:33:18)

- After fixing the fence, the pastor told Tank to stay in the side-by-side
- He walked the entire fence line — over an hour
- When he returned, the neighbor said: *"We've never seen a dog like that. My wife even called for him and he wouldn't move."*
- **Why?** Because he was told to stay — and he obeyed

Key Truth: *"If you're going to stand in the gap, you've got to be obedient. God's got you a job — but He needs you to be obedient."*

KEY TAKEAWAY:

"Standing in the Gap" means:

- Accepting the **calling God placed on you before birth**
 - Walking in **obedience to the Holy Spirit**
 - Refusing to let **compromise blind, bind, and grind** you
 - Actively **protecting your family, community, and church** from the enemy
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FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

- In what areas of your life is the enemy trying to find a gap to come through?
 - Are you more like Tank — obedient and attentive — or like the untrained dog, going wherever you please?
 - What vow or commitment have you allowed to be slowly compromised, like Samson's hair?
 - Who in your life needs you to run like Aaron and stand between them and destruction?
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Scripture References for Further Study:

Judges 13 | Judges 14:6, 19 | Judges 15:14 | Judges 16:25–30 | Numbers 16 | Ezekiel 22