

SAMSON AND THE RIDDLE

Israel kept disobeying God's laws. God allowed the Philistines to rule over them for 40 years. Then God used a strong man to help Israel break free.

by Shelby Faith

The Angel of the Lord appeared to the wife of a man named Manoah. He told her she would have a son. He told her to not drink any wine. He told her to never cut her son's hair, for the child would be set apart as a Nazirite to God. The Angel of the Lord said this child would be used to save Israel from the Philistines.

So the woman had a son and called him Samson. The child grew and God blessed him (Judges 13:1-25).

When Samson was grown, he went down to Timnah. There he saw a Philistine woman he liked. He decided he wanted her to be his wife. He went home and told his parents. His father didn't like the idea. But Samson had his mind made up.

A LION

Soon Samson and his parents traveled down to Timnah. As they came near, Samson wandered among the vineyards alone. To his surprise, a young lion came roaring out against him!

God gave him the strength to kill the lion. But Samson didn't tell his parents what had happened.

Later they returned to Timnah to make arrangements for the wedding. As Samson passed near where he had killed the lion, he wandered off again. He saw a curious thing. A swarm of bees and honey were inside the body of the lion. He took some of the honey and ate it. Then he gave some to his parents, and they also ate it. But he didn't tell them where he had found it.

They met with the woman and her family. They were going to have a seven-day wedding feast. His wife's family brought in 30 young men to keep him company for the seven days of the feast.

THE RIDDLE

Samson asked the young men to solve a riddle. If they could answer the riddle within the seven days, he would give them each a prize. He would give a shirt and change of clothes for each of the men. If they couldn't solve the riddle, they would each give him a set of clothing. They agreed to this.

Here is the riddle: "Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet."

QUIZ TIME

What did Samson find in the body of the lion?

QUIZ TIME

How did the young men learn the answer to Samson's riddle?

Three days passed, and none of the young men could solve the riddle. They were getting angry and frustrated because the wedding feast would soon be over. They went to Samson's wife. They told her to find out the answer to the riddle or else!

Samson's wife went to him crying. She said, "You don't love me! You have given a riddle, but you have not explained it to me."

Samson said to her, "Look, I have not explained it to my parents. Why should I explain it to you?"

She kept crying for the rest of the feast. He became worn out because of her constant questioning and crying.

On the seventh day he finally told her the answer. Then she went to the young men and explained the riddle to them.

They came to Samson and told him the answer. He knew now that his wife had betrayed him. He became angry. Now he would have to give these men 30 shirts and 30 changes of clothes.

God's power again came mightily upon Samson. He went to Ashkelon, another Philistine city. He defeated 30 men there and took their clothing. He returned and gave the clothing to the young men. Then he went back to his father's house.

After he left, his wife was given to another man. This man had been Samson's best man at the wedding. But Samson didn't know.

REVENGE LEADS TO MORE REVENGE

After a while Samson's anger cooled, and he went down to see his wife. Her father would not allow him to see her. Samson again became very angry.

This happened to be the time of the Philistines' wheat harvest.

Samson went out and caught 300 foxes. He took torches and tied a torch between each pair of foxes. After he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the fields. Both the stalks and the grain were burned up. The vineyards and olive groves burned as well.

The Philistines found out that Samson had done this. They took their anger out on his wife and her father.

Samson wanted revenge. So he attacked and defeated many of the Philistines. Then he went down and hid in the cave of the rock of Etam.

IN HIDING

The Philistines came up and camped around Lehi, a town in Judah. The men of Judah said, "Why have you come here?"

They answered, "We have come to arrest Samson for what he has done to us."

Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cave of Etam, where Samson was hiding. They said, "The Philistines rule over us. Why have you done this?"

Samson said to them, "I have repaid them for what they did to me."

They told Samson they had come to arrest him and give him to the Philistines.

Then Samson said, “Promise me that you will not kill me yourselves.”

They told him they would not kill him. They would tie him up and take him to the Philistines. So they tied him up with two new ropes. They brought him back to Lehi.

The Philistines were waiting. They came toward Samson, shouting angrily at him. Again the power of God came mightily upon Samson. He broke the ropes. He found a bone and defeated a thousand Philistines with it. People saw that Samson was a very strong man. They knew that God was with him.

After this, Samson was allowed to judge Israel for the next 20 years (Judges 15:20). Then at the end of his life, Samson would do more to help his people break free. (See the Bible story “[Samson, Delilah and the Secret](#).”)

QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. Why did God make Samson strong?
2. What animal attacked Samson in the vineyards?
3. What did Samson find in that animal’s body on his next trip?
4. What happened at his wedding feast?
5. What was the riddle?
6. How did the young men find the answer to the riddle?
7. What did Samson do when the men of Judah took him to the Philistines?



About **LifeHope&Truth**

LifeHopeandTruth.com exists to fill a critical void in this world: the lack of understanding about the purpose of life, the lack of realistic hope for a better future and the lack of truth!

Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

LifeHopeandTruth.com is sponsored by the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. It is supported by the generous contributions of donors and members of the Church around the world, who make it possible for everything on this site to be free of charge based on Jesus Christ's statement, "Freely you have received, freely give." You will never be charged or made to feel obligated for anything on this site.

The Church of God, a Worldwide Association, has congregations around the world in more than 50 countries, with headquarters in the United States near Dallas, Texas. To learn more about the Church, please visit our website cogwa.org.

More from LifeHopeandTruth.com



Wake up to daily inspiration right in your inbox! Subscribe at LifeHopeandTruth.com.



Get the latest blogs from Life, Hope & Truth as soon as they're posted. Subscribe at LifeHopeandTruth.com.



Never miss a post! Subscribe at LifeHopeandTruth.com to receive the week's latest articles and updates.



Read our bimonthly magazine that will give you refreshing and practical answers to the questions that affect your life! Subscribe for free at LifeHopeandTruth.com.

Connect With Us!



LifeHopeTruth

[@LifeHopeTruth](https://twitter.com/LifeHopeTruth)

[Life,Hope & Truth](https://plus.google.com/+LifeHopeandTruth)

[Life,Hope & Truth](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

[LifeHopeandTruth](https://www.instagram.com/LifeHopeandTruth)

info@cogwa.org