

GOD GAVE SAMSON STRENGTH

God cared for Israel in spite of their indifference and sin.



THE STORY: JUDGES 13:1-5

MONDAY

Israel continued to sin without repentance

Israel continued to sin without repentance. The beginning of Judges 13 records that Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and He gave them into the hands of the Philistines. The text does not give a description of how Israel sinned; it only states that they were doing evil. In earlier chapters of Judges, Israel came under conviction when they were oppressed but this time there was no plea to the Lord for help. The words, "And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, saying, 'We have sinned against you'" (see Judges 3:9, 3:15, 6:6, and 10:10) do not appear.

After giving Israel over to the Philistines for forty years, God was ready to judge the Philistines and have mercy upon Israel. Once again, in God's kindness, He took the initiative to provide a deliverer for Israel. No one seemed to be calling out to God, but the Lord had not forgotten His people.

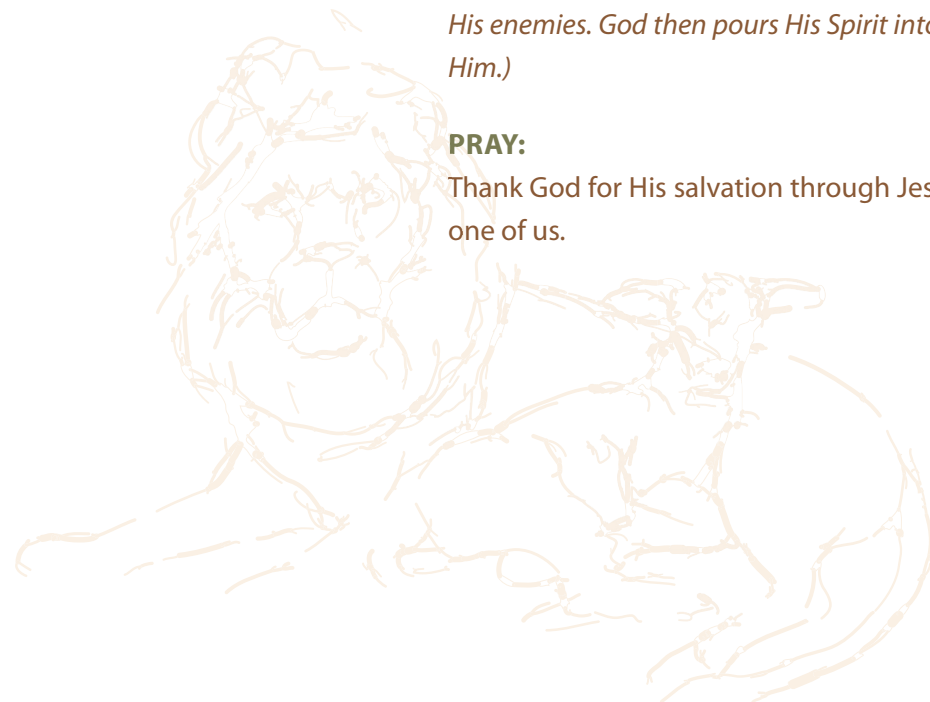
TALK ABOUT IT:

Does this story remind you of another deliverer? *(An angel appeared to Mary in a very similar way to announce the birth of Jesus.)*

God took initiative to provide a deliverer for Israel. How does God take initiative in our lives? *(Not only did God provide His Son Jesus, but He also calls us while we are yet His enemies. God then pours His Spirit into our hearts that we might believe and follow Him.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for His salvation through Jesus and for His loving initiative toward each one of us.





God visited Manoah and his wife

God visited Manoah and his wife. After hearing of the initial encounter with the angel, Manoah prayed to the Lord and asked that the man who visited his wife would return. God heard Manoah's prayer and the angel of the Lord returned for a second visit! At first the couple did not realize that it was the angel of the Lord visiting them but after He went up toward heaven in the flame of the altar, they realized who it was and said, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God." (see Judges 13:22). In spite of this wonderful experience, when Manoah and his wife had their son, his mother gave him the pagan name Samson, which is closely related to the word "sun" in honor of the sun god. She did not give him a name that honored the Lord.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What did Manoah ask the angel of the Lord? (*Manoah, just like Moses and Jacob, wanted to know the name of God. God told him that it was beyond understanding. It is not that God did not have a name, but that God cannot be defined simply in a name.*)

God attributes many names to Himself. How many can you remember? (*Here are a few: Mighty God, Lord of Lords, Wonderful, Counselor, King of Kings, Prince of Peace, Immanuel, Jesus*). As you can see, no one name can fully describe God.

PRAY:

Thank God that He is bigger than we could ever describe with one word.





Where is Jesus?

There is a noteworthy similarity between Jesus and Samson. Both of their mothers received word of their birth and the unique call upon their lives from an angel. An angel also visited both husbands, Joseph and Manoah, to confirm what was told to the women. Finally, both Jesus and Samson were blessed of God as children. Samson, however, was an earthly deliverer whose sin greatly marred his accomplishments.

Although Samson was one of several “Judges” appointed to deliver Israel, Samson’s life demonstrates the frailty of earthly deliverers. Samson became foolishly distracted with the pleasures and desires of the world. Jesus was different. Jesus came as a deliverer but did not fall into sin (see Hebrews 4:5).

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why is Jesus a better deliverer than Samson? (*Samson only delivered Israel from the Philistines for a short season. With one act, Jesus delivered us from our enemies for all time and eternity.*)

How does Samson’s life point to Jesus? (*Aside from the similarities related to his birth, Samson did go on to deliver the people of Israel from their enemy, the Philistines, when the Israelites had not called out to God for help. Similarly, Jesus delivers us from our enemies while we are still in sin, just like Israel was.*)

PRAY:

Thank God for His mercy in Samson’s life and in our lives.





God used Samson in spite of his pride

God used Samson in spite of his pride. Samson was hardly an example of a godly young man. He disrespected his parents (see Judges 14:2); touched the dead bodies of a lion and donkey in violation of his Nazirite vow (see Judges 14:9, 15:15); and he burned the standing grain of the Philistines in revenge, which is against God's direction as stated in Exodus 22:6. It would take some significant suffering to break Samson's pride. In spite of Samson's sin, God used him to bring judgment on those who were coming against His chosen people. In this account, we certainly see the faithfulness of God in spite of the faithlessness of man.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why did God bless Samson even though he was full of pride? *(God wanted to judge the Philistines for their oppression of Israel (see Judges 14:4).)*

We can be tempted to view Samson as a terrible sinner while we see ourselves as "not so bad." Did Samson need a savior more than we do? *(No, our sin disqualifies us from righteousness just as much as Samson's did. Though we might not sin with the same degree of evil as Samson, we are equally incapable of righteousness apart from the sacrifice of Jesus. Seeing that God blessed Samson in spite of his sin can encourage us to realize that God can do the same for us.)*

PRAY:

Thank God that, though we are sinners like Samson, we who believe in Jesus are saved from our sin by the grace of God.





Jesus is the priest who will replace the Levitical priesthood (see Hebrews 7:12-17).

On the road to Emmaus.

Jesus is a priest “forever, in the order of Melchizedek” not because of His tribe, but because of His power and indestructible life. Since Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood (see Hebrews 7:24).

TALK ABOUT IT: Why is Jesus a priest forever? (*Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice of His life that was sufficient to pay the penalty for our sin forever. Now there is no need to sacrifice, and no need for another priest (see Hebrews 10:12).*)

What does Jesus’ eternal priesthood mean for us? (*For those of us who have trusted in the Lord’s sacrifice on the cross, no other sacrifice for our sin will ever be needed. No further penalty for our sin will ever be required. Jesus paid for it all!*)

PRAY:

Pray to Jesus and thank Him for His sacrifice on the cross and for continuing to intercede for us before His Father in heaven.

