

GOD GAVE SAMSON STRENGTH

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JUDGES 13 & 14

*God cares for Israel in spite of their indifference and sin.***The STORY**

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

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.

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.

God used Sampson 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.

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Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

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. Both husbands, Manoah and Joseph were also visited by the angel to confirm what was said. And both Jesus and Samson were blessed of God as children. Samson however was an earthly deliverer who's sin greatly mar 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.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

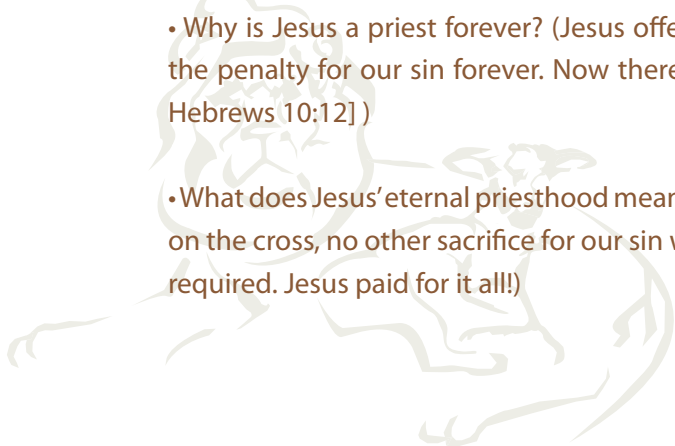
Bible Passage: Jeremiah 33:18

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus is the priest who will replace the Levitical priesthood (see Hebrews 7:12-17). Jesus is a priest "forever, in the order of Melchizedek". He is a priest 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).

Questions for reflection:

- 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!)



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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

HOW STRONG WAS SAMSON?

Supplies

several 24" lengths of ¼"
cotton rope

The object of this lesson is to consider the strength God gave Samson to deliver Israel.

Read the Judges 15:3-19. Ask the class if they think the rope that the Philistines used to bind Samson was thicker than the one you have. They will most likely say yes. Pass the rope around and ask them to go ahead and try to break it.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What gave Samson his strength? (Though some would say his hair, Judges 15:14 says the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.)
- Who did Samson attribute his victory to? (Judges 15:16 and 18 shows that Samson struggled between pride in himself and giving God the credit.)



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SAMSON TRIVIA

Supplies

trivia cards, a prize for boys and girls (make up trivia cards with the following questions and answers)

Read the story to the class and then divide the class into boy's and girl's teams. Have them take turns answering the following questions. The team with the most points in the end is the winner. Only one person is allowed to answer a question. Each person can only answer one question. Each team must select a person to answer the question before it is read. If the question is answered incorrectly, the opposing team may pick someone to answer it. If you get the question correct on the first try it is worth 5 points. Each subsequent try by the opposing team is worth one point less.

1. What was Samson's father's name? (Manoah)
2. What are the three vows of a Nazarite? (Never cut your hair, do not drink strong drink, do not touch a dead body or something unclean.)
3. What kind of ropes did the Philistines use to bind Samson? (New ropes)
4. What did Samson find in the lion? (Bees with honey)
5. Why was Samson's birth a miracle? (His mother was barren.)
6. How many foxes did Samson catch? (300)
7. What was Samson's Mother's name? (The Bible doesn't give her name)
8. How many men did Samson strike with the jawbone of a donkey? (1,000)
9. What came out of the hollow place at Lehi? (Water)
10. What two crops did the foxes with the torches set fire to? (Olives and grain.)



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PROVIDE WHAT YOU HAVE NOT ASKED FOR

Supplies

- powdered donuts
(enough for the whole class)
- water
- cups
- napkins

Make sure the donuts are hidden until you are ready to distribute them. Give each student a powdered donut and then have a second person give each child a napkin, then have a third person give each student a drink of water. While they are eating, read Judges 13 to them.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- How many of you asked me for a powdered donut? (None.)
- How many of you were hungry? (They will all likely raise their hands.)
- How many of you asked me for a napkin or a drink? (Ask for a show of hands.)
- How many of you needed a napkin/drink? (Ask for a show of hands.)
- How is my providing you with a donut, napkin, and drink like God providing Samson for Israel? (Israel wasn't asking for something they needed. It was God's kindness to provide for them a deliverer. God loved Israel and was not going to even allow their sin to drive a permanent wedge between Him and them. God knew the whole story. He knew that one day Jesus would come to bring a salvation that the people needed but they didn't know to ask for.)

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Samson breaking the new ropes with which the Philistines bound him.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Ask the class to look up 2 Timothy 2:13 and explain what it means for God to remain faithful even when we are faithless. God's history is one of reaching out to a people who were not reaching out to Him. He is the one who called Abraham out of a life of idolatry. He called to Samuel in the midst of Eli's sinful home, and he reached out to Israel and brought them a deliverer in Samson when they were not asking.

Have the class form into teams to list ways God showed his faithfulness to Israel in spite of their faithlessness. (Limit their study to Judges 13-15).

- God gave Israel a deliverer in Samson even though they were not repenting.
- God blessed Samson with power even though he often did what he wanted.
- God gave Samson water when he was thirsty.

The class may find other examples.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Nazirite – If a man or woman wanted to consecrate themselves to the Lord they would take a Nazirite vow. In Numbers 6:1-8, God gives three prohibitions to comply with the vow. First, they should not drink wine or other intoxicating drinks or any other grape product. Second, they should not cut their hair for the period of their consecration. Finally, they should not touch a dead body.

