

# SAMSON LOSES HIS STRENGTH

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JUDGES 16:4-31



*The true source of our strength is God.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**Samson's pride and the Philistines' plot** – Samson was increasingly confident in his strength and became very proud. At the same time, the Philistines were tired of being overcome by Samson's strength. They wanted to kill him (Judges 16:2) or humble him (Judges 16:5). The Philistine rulers enlisted the help of Delilah, whom Samson loved. Each ruler promised to pay her the incredible treasure of 1,100 pieces of silver if she could find out the secret to his strength. Delilah repeatedly asked Samson for the secret of what would overcome his strength and three times Samson lied to her. She then whined and badgered him until finally his soul was vexed and he revealed his secret (Judges 16:17).

**God humbled Samson** – Samson delighted in women more than in the Lord. In the end, God used a woman's manipulation to humble him. Samson so wanted Delilah's love and he was so confident of it that he remained with her for days perhaps weeks after her first three betrayals. When the Philistines learned the secret of his strength they gouged out his eyes so that even if his strength returned he would be of little danger to them. Samson was then thrown in prison and in his weakness, was mockingly used to entertain guests of the Philistine lords. One can only imagine how they abused Samson, the mighty warrior, who was now blind and had to be led around by a young man (Judges 16:26). Samson, the man of great strength, had become nothing but a clown, completely humiliated. Samson's hair began to grow back, but his strength did not return. His prayer to God, asking for strength just one more time, proves that the Lord was the true source of his strength.

**God restored Samson and judged the Philistines** – Though Samson was interested in his own revenge as he stood between the pillars of the temple, he called upon the true source of his strength. There is no record of Samson ever before calling upon the Lord prior to engaging in battle. Here, now completely humbled, he cried out to God. The Philistines not only mocked Samson, they mocked the Lord saying, "Our god has given Samson into our hands." God answered Samson's prayer and in the greatest display of his strength, Samson brought down the whole temple and everyone was killed. Those he killed in his death, including the leaders of the Philistines, numbered more than those he killed during his lifetime.

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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.*

Samson was one of the heroes of the faith that the writer of Hebrews cites as an example for us (see Hebrews 11:32). Hebrews 12:2 tells us to fix our eyes on Jesus when we think of men of faith from the Old Testament.

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 he 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: Ezekiel 34:22-23**

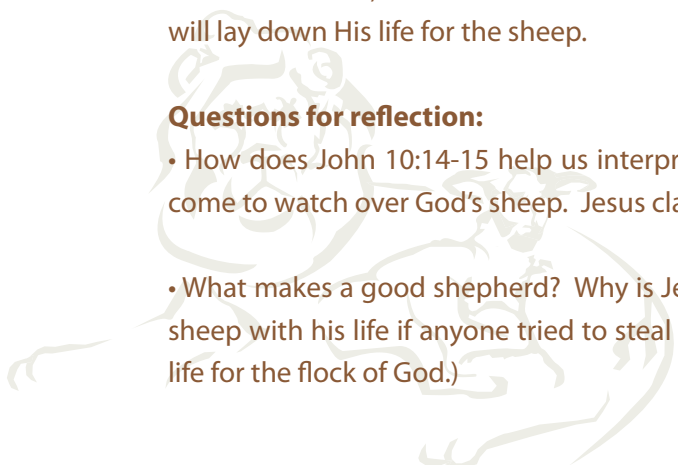
#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

Here Ezekiel prophesied about a coming shepherd from the line of David who would watch over the rescued sheep of God's flock. - Jesus is the descendant of David who is the chief shepherd over God's sheep.

In John 10:14-15, Jesus tells us that He is the good shepherd who knows His sheep. He is the one who will lay down His life for the sheep.

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- How does John 10:14-15 help us interpret the Ezekiel passage? (Ezekiel tells of a shepherd who will come to watch over God's sheep. Jesus claims to be that shepherd.)
- What makes a good shepherd? Why is Jesus a good shepherd? (A good shepherd would defend the sheep with his life if anyone tried to steal or harm them. Jesus is the good shepherd who gave up His life for the flock of God.)



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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?*

#### SAMSON'S PRIDE

Take the class through the following verses reading each one without comment: Judges 14:2, 15:3-5, 15:11, 15:16, 16:20. Then ask the class the following questions:

- Who is Samson talking about in these passages, himself or God? (Samson is talking about himself.)
- Who is getting the glory for Samson's life? (Samson is getting the glory for his accomplishments.)

Read Isaiah 42:8 and instruct the children that when we take credit for our accomplishments without recognizing God, we take God's glory to exalt ourselves. The Bible calls that sin pride.



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### HOW MANY EGGS CAN YOU JUGGLE?

#### Supplies

six hard boiled eggs

Follow the dialogue loosely below between two adult teachers (Teacher #2 must be able to juggle three eggs so ask around for a volunteer to help you.) Read Proverbs 16:18 to the children and ask them to tell you how Samson's life fits this proverb.

Teacher #1: "Hey kids look what I can do with an egg." (Teacher just throws it up in the air and claps while it is up in the air.) "Watch this!" (Teacher throws up the egg and claps twice.) "Pretty good, huh?"

Teacher #2: (Teacher #2 picks up an egg casually, throws it up, claps three times and shrugs like it is nothing.)

Teacher #1: "Show off. Watch this." (The teacher begins to juggle two eggs. Since the eggs are hard-boiled, have the teacher quickly pick up the egg if it drops and make it seem like they are raw but just didn't break.)

Teacher #2: "How many eggs can you juggle? I just learned to juggle three. Can you juggle three?"

Teacher #1: "Of course I can juggle three. I can juggle however many I want. Why, I can juggle six eggs." (teacher says smugly.) "I'll juggle six if you can juggle three without dropping any."

Teacher #2: "I'll give it a try." (Juggle three eggs a few passes then stop. If you drop one ask for another chance and ad lib the dialogue.) "Okay, I did it, now I want to see you juggle six."

Teacher #1: "Well, I . . .!"

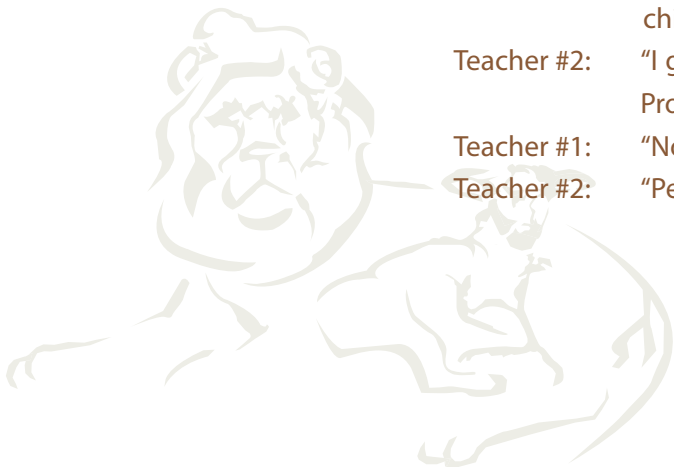
Teacher #2: "You can do it can't you?"

Teacher #1: (With pride.) "Of course I can. Give me those eggs." (Roughly grab the three eggs from the other teacher and then the remaining three. Get ready to juggle by going through the motions in practice with three eggs in each hand. When you finally do attempt to juggle you should throw the eggs up so they land close to, but not on, the children.)

Teacher #2: "I guess you can't juggle six eggs at once. Have you ever heard of Proverbs 16:18?"

Teacher #1: "No, I haven't."

Teacher #2: "Perhaps someone in the class can read it for us."



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Have one student read the proverb then ask the class the following questions:

- How does this proverb apply to our skit? (Teacher #1 was prideful about how many eggs he could juggle. It led to him committing to juggle more eggs than he had talent for juggling. In the end, he was humbled by his failure.)
- How does this proverb apply to Samson? (All Samson cared about was pleasing himself and in the end he paid a terrible price for his pride. He was tricked by Delilah to reveal the secret of his strength, his Nazirite vow to God which included not cutting his hair.)
- How does this proverb apply to your lives? (Encourage the children to give specific examples of pride from their lives. Then point them to the cross as the place where we run upon the discovery of our sin.)

### TELL IT WITH PROPS

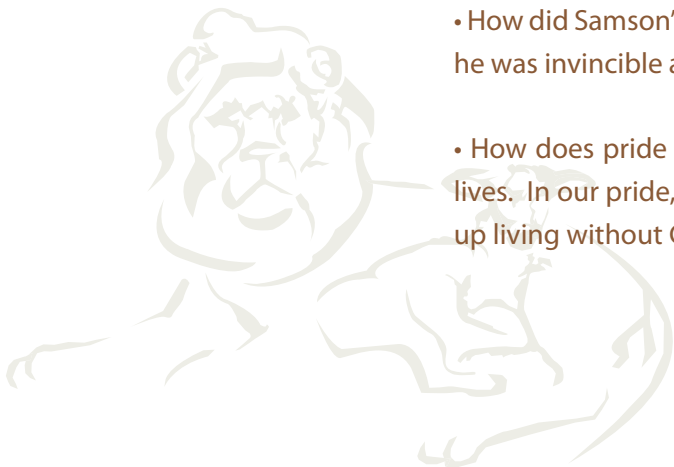
#### Supplies

- 7 3' lengths of cord with loops tied on each end (bow strings)
- 4' length of brand new rope
- 7 locks of hair (can come from an old doll or craft store)
- a pair of scissors (to be used to indicate the shaving of Samson's head)

Use the props to show and tell the story of Samson's demise. No need to memorize the lines, just read them, but dramatize the voices. When it comes to an action scene, such as when Delilah binds Samson's hands, use the props to add interest.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- When should Samson have figured out Delilah was evil? (Samson should have known from the beginning by her questioning. But certainly he should have known after he found himself tied up with the bowstrings. The pride of his heart had deceived him, see Jeremiah 49:16. It is fitting that his punishment involved blinding him since Samson was blinded by his pride and so sinned against God.)
- How did Samson's pride deceive him? (Samson got to the place where he thought he was invincible and he could do whatever he wanted.)
- How does pride operate in our lives? (Pride operates the very same way in our lives. In our pride, we think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Then we end up living without God and thinking we can live life on our own, see Romans 12:3.)



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### 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 being led around by a young man because he is blind.

### FOR OLDER GRADES

#### Supplies

- pens or pencils
- paper

Compare the prayer of Samson in Judges 16:28-30 with the prayer of the thief on the cross in Luke 23:40-43. Write the answer to the following question: How was Samson like the thief on the cross in both his prayer and God's answer?

In brief, Samson lived a life of sin, but in the end, recognized God was his only hope. Just as the thief lived a life of sin, and realized in the end that Jesus was his only hope. In both cases God answered their prayers.

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Pride** – Pride essentially means to lift oneself up or to exalt yourself. Since we are to be dependent on God, any attempt to bring glory to oneself is sin. God promises to humble the proud.

I say to the boastful, 'Do not boast,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horn; do not lift up your horn on high, or speak with haughty neck.' For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another. (Psalm 75:4-7, ESV)

