

BIRTH AND LIFE OF SAMSON



Passages to Study: Judges 13:1-25; 14:1-20; 15:4-16.

Read with the class: Judges 13:1-7; 14:1-12; 15:4-16.

Texts for memorization:

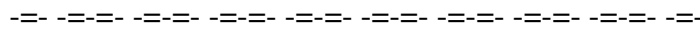
Younger: Proverbs 1:10.

Older: Proverbs 1:15.



OBJECTIVES: To teach that:

- 1. God, ever merciful, does not want anyone to remain under the power of evil influences.
2. God is always looking for persons who will obey and serve Him.
3. Samson had a privileged start in life as has everyone who receives Bible teaching in childhood.
4. God wants those who serve Him to live lives of separation from sin.
5. Disaster occurs in the life that is governed by what is pleasing to one's eyes rather than what the will of God requires.



SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: In the house of Samson's parents, figures of the mother and father with the child. Also a list of prohibitions to be followed with a figure of an angel who communicated them to the mother.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Samson's birth was the result of a miraculous work by God.
- It was God's response to the people's needs after 40 years of oppression by the Philistines.
- God began to prepare this judge many years before the end of those 40 years by sending a messenger to announce his birth to his parents.
Cmt. God is at work all the time in the affairs of men and years are sometimes required to reveal what He has in mind. Who can tell what is being in the lives of some of the young people in your class?
- The parents raised Samson carefully, following the instructions of the angel.
- They would explain to Samson the requirements of the Nazarite vow, giving him a good start in life.
- As a Nazarite, he was "separated" to God. (See Numbers 6:1-21)
Sug. This point can be used to explain to the students the reasons for the concern in a Christian home to keep certain standards of holiness and to avoid being affected by the corrupt world around.
- As a Nazarite, Samson's life should have been the complete opposite of that of the Philistines.
- The Philistines had a religion, but in no way kept separate from evil.
Cns Christian parents become a force for good in the world when the objective they have in raising their children is to serve God. If children understand this, they might be less critical of family disciplines.
- Samson's task was to begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines. (Judges 13:5)
- The Philistines were a people that lived on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to the southeast of Israel.
- They had begun to take over that area and increased their power in the region little by little, finally ruling over the Israelites. (Judges 15:11)
- The Philistines continued to be a threat to the Israelites up until the times of Saul and David.
Cmt. Samson was to keep the Nazarite vow in order to be an example of the separation that God expected His people to maintain from the nations around.
Apl. Parents and teachers are in a position to influence the lives of the student and can show them how to live a life separated from a world whose influence is so contrary to the holiness of God.
- The Philistines had a more advanced technology than the Israelites. Early in the Iron Age, they knew how to smelt iron and learned to do it before the Israelites did, giving them a military

BIRTH AND LIFE OF SAMSON

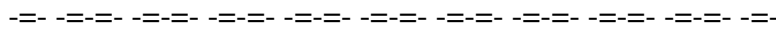


advantage. (1 Samuel 13:19-22) Sug. See Unger's Bible Handbook, page 191, "Archaeological Light".

- Samson wanted to become acquainted with the Philistines. (Judges 14:10)

Cns. Perhaps Samson hoped to become acquainted with their more advanced technology but this desire placed him in danger.

Cmt. One of the dangers facing young people is the temptation to become acquainted with technological advances of our world today. The Internet offers many temptations unless access to certain sites is kept under control.



SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: To the side of a road, figures of Samson killing a lion and on a separate patch, a wedding feast. On another separate patch the foxes with their tails on fire running through the fields of the Philistines.

DEVELOPMENT:

- Samson began to take steps of disobedience when he sought the friendship of the Philistines.

- He was always guided by what his eyes saw. "I have seen ..." (Judges 14:2), instead of being influenced by what God revealed to him.

- He insisted on marrying a Philistine woman and did not take God's will into account.

Apl. God does not want His own to be linked to the unsaved for it is an "unequal yoke". (2 Corinthians 6:14)

Sug. People think their lives are their own and make decisions independently of what might be the will of God. If the teacher knows of some who have brought disaster upon themselves by so doing, this should be used as an example.

- Samson travels to Timnath with his parents who are going to arrange for the wedding.

- As they journey, Samson kills a young lion without using any weapon except his hands.

- Samson was able to kill the lion using strength given to him by the Spirit of the Lord, and not by his own power.

Cns. This deed was a sign to Samson that God wanted to use him to overcome the Philistines in the power of His Spirit.

Cns. The appearance of the lion and his ability to overcome it in the power of the Holy Spirit would have a double lesson for Samson.

Lsn. 1. God was trying to dissuade Samson from going into his intended relationship with a person of a nation foreign to his own. The lion was sent to stop him on his path of disobedience.

Lsn. 2. God had not forsaken him and was willing to strengthen him for the task He had given him.

Cmt. Samson did not inform his parents. Did he perhaps want to avoid being advised by his parents to change his mind? They had already shown their opposition to his wishes.

- Samson continued on HIS way, for what mattered to him was that the woman pleased him. vs.7.

Sug. Talk with the students about the difference between being controlled by the will of God and being controlled by the flesh through what one sees.

- Historians say that twelve months usually elapsed between the engagement and marriage.

- A year later, on the trip to his wedding, Samson visited the spot where he had killed the lion and found its bones.

Cns. Would Samson take time to think about his insistence on marrying as he looked at this reminder of an event of a year ago?

- The flesh of the animal is gone and Samson finds that bees have built their honeycombs in the lion's skeleton.

- Samson ate of the honey.

BIRTH AND LIFE OF SAMSON



- He should not have eaten something that came out of a dead body, but once again he chooses to please himself and disobey God's commandments. (See Leviticus 11:35-40)
- Samson continued on his road of disobedience in spite of knowing the Philistines were evil and did not deserve to be trusted.
- As the wedding is being celebrated, Samson proposes a riddle based on his finding honey in the body of the lion.

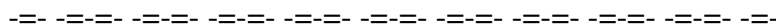
Summary. The story goes on to tell of Samson's challenge to his companions who succeed in finding the answer only by requiring the woman to betray her husband. Samson obtains their reward by killing 30 Philistines and taking their clothing. Then, very angry, Samson leaves his wife once he has taken his revenge. Later, in revenge once again, he releases foxes with their tails on fire into the standing grain of the Philistines. The Philistines get their revenge by burning Samson's wife and her father. Samson in return kills a great many Philistines and then leaves their country to go and live in a cave.

- God in His grace used different situations to give Samson the victory over Israel's enemies.

Cns. That God helped him does not prove that what Samson did was correct. It was God's will to punish the Philistines and save His people. He used Samson for this, but Samson did not work according to God's plan and did not achieve all that he should have.

Apl. We ought always to do God's will in God's way and in His power.

Note: Due to limitations of time and the understanding of children, the teacher must decide what and which events of Samson's life should be dealt with in detail.



SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS: Figures of Samson and two groups of men near his cave as Samson breaks the ropes after the Israelites hand him bound over to the Philistines.

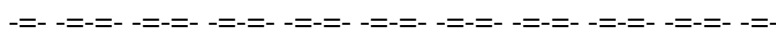
DEVELOPMENT:

- Samson sought reasons to attack the Philistines.
- He fought them for revenge when they did something that affected him, even when what they did was because of his mistaken decisions.
- Samson had some faith and the Lord gave him great strength against his enemies.
- The Israelites were not united behind Samson and did not have faith to see the opportunity they were being given of resisting the enemy. Instead, made cowardly by oppression, they turned Samson over to the Philistines.
- The Spirit of the Lord came over him and he freed himself from the ropes with which he was bound.
- Using the jawbone of a recently dead animal, God in His grace permitted him to gain another great victory.

Apl. God does not work as we might think. He is sovereign and does not have to explain Himself.

Cns. Samson ought to have been aware that his power came from God and was not his own. Had he recognised this, it would have helped him later, but there came a time when He did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

- God in His grace responds to his petition and opens a fountain of water to meet his need. (Judges 15:19)
- We find only two prayers in the life of Samson, both of which were made at times of great personal need. (Judges 15:18; 16:28)



BIRTH AND LIFE OF SAMSON



SCENE No. 4. VISUAL AIDS: Samson with the jawbone of the ass in hand and the words, "With the jawbone of an ass, I have slain a thousand men." Also a list noting the weaknesses of Samson that showed in his disobedience.

DEVELOPMENT:

- After gaining an outstanding victory, Samson throws away the jawbone.
 - Apl. It is important not to revere the objects God uses since it is He Himself who gives the victory.
 - Cmt. The Holy Spirit that worked in Samson is the same Spirit who works today in lives of believers and gives them strength so that they can overcome the evil one.
 - Every believer has help from God so that Satan need not gain any victory in that person's life.
 - Samson gained victories over the Philistines but he could not win over his own weaknesses.
 - Samson had various weaknesses:
 - 1) With women (14:1-7), he was willing to disobey God in order to have the woman that pleased him.
 - 2) He disobeyed his parents. (14:3)
 - 3) He practised deception. (14:9; 16:7,11,13b)
 - 4) He had 30 Philistine friends but they were enemies of the people of God. (14:11- 18)
 - 5) He spoke with double meanings instead of being frank and open. (14:13,14)
 - 6) He was controlled by feelings of anger and revenge. (14:19b; 15:4,5)
 - 7) He was capable of cruelty. (15:4,5)
 - (In the following lesson:)
 - 8) He went to a harlot. (16:1 and 2)
 - 9) He played with sin. (16:6-14)
 - 10) He told an enemy the secret of his power. (16:17,18)
 - 11) He was excessively self-confident. (16:20b)
 - 12) He broke his Nazarite vow. (14:9)
 - 13) He prayed when he found himself in great need, but seemingly at other times did not pray.
- Sug. Refer back to Samson's upbringing and to what the Nazarite vow required, as is mentioned in Scene 1, stressing how far Samson departed from what God had in mind for him.

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