

A CHARACTER STUDY ON

**SAMSON**

**DEDICATED TO GOD**

Adult Sunday School  
Gethsemane Baptist Church  
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# SAMSON

## I. Dedicated to God

Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt. When his work was finished Joshua took over the leadership of the people of God. He led them for many years as they conquered the land of Canaan. He died at the age of 110 years. (Judges 2:8) The officers of the people who served with him also soon passed off the scene. "And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, (Judges 2:10b – 12a). At this point in Israel's history there was no real leadership to help them stay faithful to the LORD that had led them since the Exodus out of Egypt. God raised up enemies in the land to oppose the people of Israel because of their unfaithfulness. "Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil." (vs. 15a) They suffered because of their infidelity. God saw their suffering and as grieved. (Judges 2:18) He therefore instituted a new form of leadership for His people. "The LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them." (vs. 16) "Judges were leaders who delivered Israel from a series of foreign oppressors during the period between the death of Joshua and the beginning of the monarchy." (Wycliffe, P. 233)

Of the many judges the best known is the man Samson. The only thing that most people know about the story of Samson is his episode with Delilah. The man Samson is an interesting character study. In the Bible we are given a history of his life from the announcement of his birth until his death. In some ways his life is similar to that of Moses. Moses was a man of character and faith. Samson is a character that stands as a counter point to Moses. Samson was not known for his character or faith. He was a man chosen and prepared by God to do a particular task. God gave him enormous strength. He was dedicated to God from before his conception and birth. Yet in many ways he was a weak man with many flaws. Judges chapters 13 – 16 tell us of the story of this man Samson.

The people of God had begun to worship the gods of the local people. As a punishment God had allowed the Philistine people to dominate the Israelites. This domination would last for 40 years. God would use Samson to overthrow the oppression of the Philistines.

Judges Chapter 13 begins with the story of Samson's parents. His mother, who is never named in the narrative, meets an angel of God who tells her that she would have a child. He then gives specific instructions on how her son was to be raised. He was to be a Nazarite. He was never to drink wine. His hair was never to be cut and he must always obey the ceremonial laws concerning becoming unclean by touching a dead body. (Numbers 6:2-21)

The Nazarite vow, "was used to designate a class of people who, under the impulse of

extraordinary piety, and with a view to a higher degree of religious improvement, voluntarily renounced the occupations and pleasures of the world to dedicate themselves unreservedly to the divine services." The vow could be for any period of time. "The use of wine tended to inflame the passions, intoxicate the brain, and create a taste for luxurious indulgences. The cutting off of the hair was a recognized sign of uncleanness (Lev. 14:8-9) Uncut it was a symbol of the purity of the man. Also, the long hair was a reminder of his vows of dedication to God. It would encourage others to such dedication. To avoid the ceremonial uncleanness of a dead body the Nazarite would avoid any contact with a body. (JFB. P. 526)

The reason God was requiring these vows of the mother and the new baby is not clearly spelled out in the text. However, the messenger from God did tell the mother what her son was destined to do. "He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." (13:5) He would be the instrument in the hand of God to defeat a powerful foe. His dedication to God would let all know that it was God who was accomplishing the task.

The identity of the "angel of the LORD" is also an interesting question. To Samson's mother he looked like a man. He is a supernatural being because he arose back to Heaven with the burnt sacrifice. (13:20) He tells Manoah, Samson's father, that his name is a secret. The word "secret" in this passage, has in its meaning the idea of "wonderful". Because of this many have supposed that

this angel of the LORD was an Old Testament appearance of the Lord Jesus, a Christophany.

When the child is born his parents name him “Samson”. The name suggests “serving like the sun.” Certainly, he was the rising son to his people after the long night of oppression. As he matured the Spirit of “the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.”(13:25) This means that he began to accomplish his purpose for his life by starting to remove the Philistines from Israel.

While the story of Samson is a dramatic example of how God can us a person, it demonstrates the fact that God has a plan for all of us. We find true fulfillment by doing the will of God for our lives.

Ideas to consider:

1. What other similarities between Moses and Samson do you notice?

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2. How are the characters of Moses and Samson different?

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3. In what ways could the angel of the Lord be a Christophany?

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4. How did Samson live up to the meaning of his name, “serving the sun”?

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References:

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Wycliffee = The Wycliffe Bible Commentary. Moody Press.  
1962.

JFB = Jamieson, Fauset and Brown A Commentary, Vol.1.  
1946.

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