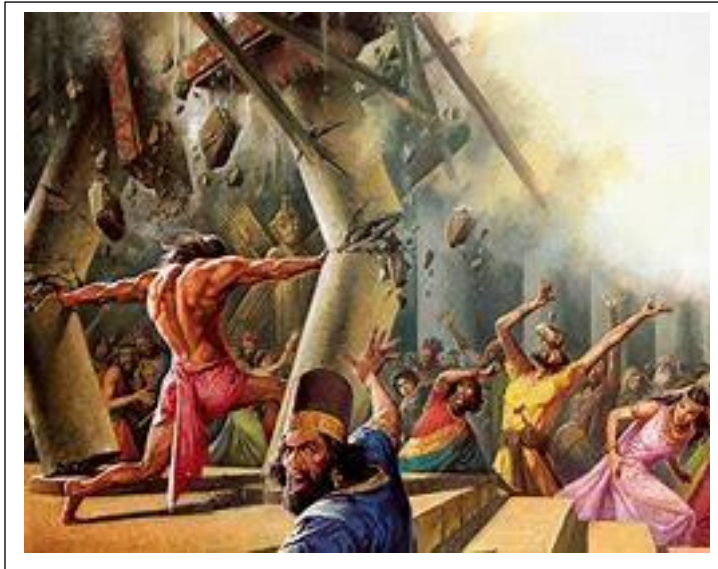


Lesson 33

The Judge Samson

Judges 13:1-25

Judges 16:4-31



Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.

Contents :

1. Preparation
2. Memory verses
3. Theme
4. Lesson introduction
5. Verse by verse commentary (suggested location of activities included)
6. Suggested prayer to close
7. Attention grabbers
8. Activities
9. Bible Text (in full, without commentary)

1. Preparation

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. (see point 7)
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children (see point 8)

2. Memory verse

2 Corinthians 12:9

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

(bold for younger children, or the verse below)

Judges 16:28 (NIV)

28 Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me.

3. Theme

We need to remain faithful to God. But even if we have made mistakes, God can still use us!

4. Lesson introduction

God demonstrates in the Bible over and over His desire to deliver His children. If His children will forsake their own ways and turn to Him, He will deliver them.

It is sad to be remembered for what one might have been: to go through life and never live up to one's potential. Samson was a judge, a man called by God to be His instrument in delivering the children of Israel from the Philistine rule, yet he would never experience all God had intended for his life.

Samson was set apart for special service to God from birth. He had been called by God to be a Nazirite. A Nazirite vow—a vow of special separation and consecration to God—was usually temporary, but in Samson's case, it was for life (Judges 13:5). As a sign of his vow, no razor was ever to touch his head. His hair would keep growing all of his life.

Samson was given supernatural strength and performed great exploits for the Lord fighting against the rule of the Philistines. However, he did not take his calling and enabling seriously. He began to depend more and more on his own strength rather than on God's.

The Bible chronicles Samson's great feats and prefaces them with "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him" (14:6,19; 15:14). However, Samson was full of pride and spiritually weak. He did not remain faithful to God.

His downfall was his love for a Philistine woman named Delilah. Though he killed a lion with his bare hands, carried city gates away, broke the bonds of his enemies, and burned up the crops of others, he could not subjugate his own desires nor control his passions. Yet, in his final pitiful condition, Samson cried out to the Lord.

5. Verse by Verse Commentary

Judges 13: 1

The children of Israel chose to do evil instead of walking in the ways of the Lord. God allowed the Israelites to be delivered to the Philistines because of their wickedness. Had they walked in the ways of the Lord, God would have enabled them to drive the Philistines out of the land through His mighty power; but now, as a consequence of their unbelief and disobedience, they have become slaves to the Philistines for 40 years.

The Bible says the pleasure of sin lasts only for a season (Hebrews 11:25). Practicing sin will ultimately bring us into bondage (slavery).

Although the Israelites were disobedient, God loved them and made a way of deliverance for them. Through God comes salvation and deliverance for His children.

Even if we have turned away from God, He still loves us. In fact, Romans 5:8 says that while we were still in our sin and rebellion, God showed His love towards us through His Son dying on the cross for us. God sent a deliverer! God in His love came searching for us and provided a wonderful salvation that we might have a relationship with Him.

Judges 13:2-5

God chose to bring deliverance to His people through the birth of a man named Samson, and God chose obscure Danites to be the parents of the future deliverer. Samson would be consecrated to God, separated unto Him for His purposes.

God chose two faithful Danites to be the parents of Samson. In the Bible, we will often find that God chooses ordinary people who love Him and are willing to obey Him to do great things. Samson's parents probably never dreamed that their son would be used so greatly in the nation of Israel. Maybe God wants to use some of us for great things.

Unfortunately, we will see in another lesson that Samson would not remain obedient unto God; and yet, through him, the deliverance of God's people would begin.

Judges 13:8

Manoah prayed for God's guidance. How wise he was to seek counsel from the Lord! In James 1:5 we read, "if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

Judges 13:9-14

God listened to Manoah and granted him his request. God hears our prayers and honors the cries of a pure and humble heart.

Suggested Activity: House on Fire

Judges 13:15-23

God did a miraculous thing before Manoah and his wife. They were both awe-stricken to find that the Angel of the Lord Himself had come to them. While Manoah feared, his wife reasoned truth with him. She reminded Manoah that God's favor was upon them, and He had great plans for their lives.

Remember, God is on our side and desires to bless His children. God has forgiven us for our sins and delivered us from His judgment. Why should we fear harm from God? Through God comes salvation and deliverance for His children.

Judges 13:24-25

God was faithful to His Word and chose Samson to begin to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Later, God would provide an even greater deliverer for those who seek Him. Through belief in Jesus Christ, we can be delivered from our enemies: self, sin, and death. Not only are we delivered from those things which seek to destroy us, we are brought into new life through Jesus Christ and are given the promise of eternal life with Him. How great is the love of God that He would desire to deliver us! God sent a deliverer!

Suggested Activity: Mailman Game

Judges 16:4-5

The passion Samson once had for the Lord was now superseded by the passion he had for a Philistine woman—a woman of the world. No longer in fellowship with God and pursuit of His will, Samson was in a dangerous position.

Judges 16: 6-12

Samson, foolish and weak, had put himself in a place where his enemy could tempt him. How foolish to have put himself in such a place by choosing to spend time with a Philistine woman, knowing the

Philistines were enemies to God's people. As a man called by God to be the leader of the nation of Israel, Samson was aware of his great responsibility. Yet, we find Samson playing games with sin.

Consider Delilah. Her game was to try to find out Samson's strength. Her purpose was to do him harm, not good. Could there be anything more wicked than to betray someone who loves you by discovering a secret that would bring harm to him? For eleven hundred pieces of silver, she was willing to betray him to those by whom he was mortally hated. It's obvious she had no love in her heart for Samson—the man she had captivated.

When we are enticed and drawn to the things of this world, we open the door, for our enemy, Satan to trap us. Satan tries to deceive us into thinking that he has our best interest in mind—that what he offers is fun or good for us. In the end, the path Satan allures us to follow will lead to destruction. Delilah offered Samson pleasure that would last for a moment but would destroy his life in the end. Giving into the temptation to sin may seem good at first but will always lead to misery and destruction. [Remain faithful to God!](#)

Judges 16: 13-14

Samson continues in his game with Delilah, not even thinking about his spiritual condition. Sin had overcome Samson's heart to the point that he slept in Delilah's presence without concern. Though Samson was a man called by God, he was not a godly man. He had given in to the temptation of sin. Though he could crush an army of a thousand, a deceiving young woman would be his ruin.

Sin is deceiving and blinding—Samson could not think clearly. Why did Samson stay with Delilah? Perhaps it was because he thought he was in love with her and that she was in love with him. Perhaps he thought "love" would overcome any possible deceit. That also turned out to be a lie. Perhaps Samson's foolishness and pride led him to believe he was so strong that Delilah could never hurt him. Unfortunately, Samson was relying on his own strength and his own wisdom.

Suggested Activity: Pass It Down

Judges 16: 15-17

Samson was deceived in a big way. Each time she tested Samson, she only hoped to discover how she might overcome him. Weary of Samson's games, she forced him through her persistence to give her the truth.

Delilah would not give up and kept nagging Samson daily to find out the secret of his strength until Samson finally gave in (v. 16). Sometimes our enemy, Satan will keep coming at us with the same temptation. The Bible says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith,..." (1 Peter 5:8,9). And in James 4:7 we read, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" Sadly, Delilah's persistence paid off; Samson gave in to her request and revealed all that was in his heart. We should never allow anyone, no matter how attractive or persuasive, to talk us into doing wrong. [Remain faithful to God!](#)

Unfortunately for Samson, he thought his hair was his strength. The angel that foretold his birth said nothing of his great strength, but only that he should be a Nazirite, which would mean that no razor

should come upon his head (Judges 13:5). His consecration (being set apart) to God was his strength, and it was in his obedience to the Lord that the Holy Spirit would work in him mightily.

Judges 16:18-19

Delilah knew that Samson told her all that was in his heart. She was a deceitful woman with honey on her lips and poison in her heart. Cold and calculating, she had toyed with Samson, pretending to love him while hoping to receive money at his expense. Now she could deliver Samson up to the lords of the Philistines. Her wicked scheme accomplished, she began to torment him. Like Delilah, Satan is a liar and will tell us anything so that he can ultimately torment us with the results of sin. Do not listen to him! Again, how could Samson be so foolish? You would think that he would have walked away from Delilah's deception. If he did not realize what was happening after the first and second experience, surely, he should have understood the situation by the fourth time.

May we learn not to make foolish mistakes ourselves—not to be deceived by false promises or the allurements of the world's temporary pleasures. God desires that we remain in close fellowship with Him and pursue His wisdom and direction. His Holy Spirit will reveal the difference between deception and truth. God is able to keep us from falling. May we walk in obedience to God's will, knowing that He wants the best for us. [Remain faithful to God!](#)

Judges 16:20-21

How sad! Samson's relationship with God had deteriorated so much that he did not even realize His presence had left him.

Samson, the mighty warrior, became a slave. Rather than kill him, the Philistines preferred to humiliate him by poking out his eyes and making him grind grain, a woman's job. He now had plenty of time to wonder if the charms of Delilah were worth spending the rest of his life in humiliation.

Blinded and weak, Samson would spend the rest of his short life in Gaza, the place where he had once demonstrated his great strength (16:1-3).

Although God did not completely abandon Samson (16:28-30), He allowed Samson's decision to stand, and the consequences of his decision followed naturally. Samson had taken his abilities as well as God's presence for granted. God offered him all he would ever need; yet he chose instead to put himself into Delilah's deceitful hands. As a result, he would not escape the consequences of his decision. Each of us choose to go God's way or our own way. If we choose to go our own way in disobedience to God, we must realize we will face the consequences of our choice. Sin leads to bondage, misery, and destruction. As Samson experienced, sin binds, blinds, and then grinds (destroys) our life.

Samson's life could have been different if he had only remained faithful to God. [Remain faithful to God!](#) Daily, we make choices to live our lives for our own selves or for God. A life lived for self will only lead to disappointment, misery, and destruction. With His strength and help, may we resist the temptation and trickery of the enemy. May we fulfill God's call on our life—living up to our potential and experiencing His blessings. We will find He is all we need.

Suggested Activity: Watch It Baby!

Judges 16:22-24

Samson's hair began to grow again after it was shaved. It is interesting that the Philistines did not cut his hair again, knowing that it was a sign of his strength. Perhaps they thought he could work harder for them if he was stronger, yet they did not fear his strength because he was blind.

These people had no fear of God, as we see by their joyous celebration of Samson's capture. They believed that it was their god, Dagon, who delivered Samson into their hands; so they had a great and joyous sacrificial festival in honor of their god. Dagon, a deity that resembled the body of a fish with the head and hands of a man, was one of the principle gods of the Philistines.

All the people took part in this festival, singing songs of praise to the god who they thought had given them their enemy. Yet, their god did not hear their singing because he was not alive. Our God is alive and delights in the praises of His people.

Judges 16: 25-27

When the people were "merry," they called for Samson desiring that he make sport for them. They wanted him to put on a show—to become the fool of their games. Matthew Henry comments, "It was an instance of barbarity to trample thus upon a man in misery, at the sight of whom a while ago they would have trembled."

How sad are the consequences of Samson's foolish sins. The Bible says sin is pleasurable for a season; but in the end, it will destroy those who give in to it. Satan had enticed Samson through his weakness and lust. He promised him pleasure in a relationship with Delilah...Now, we see Satan in the jeering crowd watching as Samson, once a mighty man for the Lord, reaps his own destruction and misery.

Judges 16:28

Samson "called unto the Lord..." Samson was not a type of man that we would look up to; in fact, his life was marked with failure. But when he called out to the Lord, the Lord heard him. In Psalm 66:19-20 we read, "but verily God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer or His mercy from me."

How good to know that we can call out to God for help in our time of need! Although we do fail and make mistakes, God remains faithful and ready to forgive. In Psalm 86:5 we read, "For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You." Samson asked God for strength one more time, to avenge himself of the Philistines for his two eyes.

Suggested Activity: Smashed Banana Salad

Judges 16:29-30

After Samson had prayed to the Lord for strength for this last great feat, He embraced the two middle pillars on which the building was built and leaned on them. With his right hand on one pillar and his left hand on the other he said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" He then bent the two pillars with force and the house fell on the princes and all the people who were there.

God granted Samson's final prayer and the temple was demolished, killing more people in Samson's death than he had killed while he lived. (Before this event, he had killed at least 1,030 Philistines.) God's judgment came upon a people who had made a mockery of God and His servant. The shame of Samson's sin was taken away in his death; for now, the Philistines had no cause to celebrate victory over him. God

in His mercy forgave and used a man whose own failures had bound Him. *Though we have made mistakes, God can still use us!*

Judges 16:31

Here we are told that Samson's brethren and relatives came to take Samson's body away for burial between Zorah (his birthplace) and Eshtaol in Manoah's tomb. Samson's 20 years of judgeship over Israel ended.

Samson's life was not one to hold up as an example of courage or virtue. Rather his failures and the consequences he suffered can be a warning to us not to allow our selfishness and lust to rule over us. Samson had little regard for the rights and property of others; he was often driven to act out of revenge; and governed by selfishness and lust, he was prey to the enemy's temptation. He had great ability and was endowed with physical power by the Holy Spirit, yet he was overcome by his weaknesses and suffered the consequences.

Yet, despite all his failures, his story does not end in failure; for he once more called upon the Lord in faith. God honored his faith and bestowed His mercy. In fact, we find Samson listed in God's "Hall of Faith" in Hebrews 11:32. *Though we have made mistakes, God can still use us!*

Suggested Activity: String Tug-O-War

6. Prayer

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for His faithfulness in providing a deliverer for us, Jesus, and of commitment to be faithful to the Lord in all things. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

7. Attention Grabbers

What you will need:

- 1) A yo-yo.
- 2) Two bowls, several large towels and 2-3 paper or Styrofoam cups.

Carrying out the attention grabber:

1) "Walking" Freeze Tag:

Play a game of Freeze Tag. Explain to the children that they will have to walk and not run. Have one person be the "freezer" and another the "un-freezer." The "freezer" will go around the class freezing children. The children must remain frozen after being tagged. But the "un-freezer" will also be going around the room "un-freezing" the children.

Explain to the children that the "freezer" is like our enemy who tries to cause problems in our lives. The un-freezer represents the Lord who "delivers" us.

2) Yo-Yo Demo:

You will need a yo-yo. Demonstrate faithfulness using a yo-yo.

During your “yo-yo-ing” ask questions like, “When I throw the yo-yo down, what do I always want it to do?” (come back up); “What happens to my ‘yo-yo-ing’ when the yo-yo doesn’t come back up?” (I have to stop and start over); “How is this yo-yo coming back like being faithful to God?” (Does the right thing, does what you want it to.); “What are some ways that you can be faithful to God this week?” Remain faithful to God!

3) Paper Cup

Bring 2 bowls and several large towels.

Fill one bowl with water and let someone demonstrate how he can put the water into the other bowl with a paper cup. Then poke a hole in the cup and have someone demonstrate again. What is the difference? Can it still be done? Yes, but it’s a lot harder!

Next, put your finger over the hole in the cup and begin to fill the bowl again. Can it be done now? Is it easier? Explain that this is how God works in our lives when we make mistakes. If we only ask for forgiveness, God will cover our mistakes with His grace, just like covering the hole in the cup. Though we have made mistakes, God can still use us!

8. Activities:

What you will need:

- 1) A large dark-colored cloth and a small doll.
- 2) As many 3”x 5” cards as the number of children in your class, stickers, rubber stamps or markers.
- 3) A timer, two small containers, one of which is filled with small toys or other small objects.
- 4) Several pipe cleaners, large wooden beads, masking tape and markers.
- 5) A few bananas, a heavy bowl, 1/2 cup of plain yogurt, a teaspoon of sugar, cinnamon, and one other fruit (apples, grapes or pineapples).
- 6) Several 24” long pieces of string or yarn and a few 12” long pieces.

How to carry out the activities:

1) House on Fire

Let the kids act out a daring rescue. Make a house by placing a dark cloth over a table. Hide a doll inside the house. Have a child volunteer to be the “fireman.” Blindfold them to get ready to make the rescue. With the class making siren, bell, and cries of help noises, let the blindfolded “fireman” go inside the house and rescue the baby.

Explain to the children that when we are in danger, our Heavenly Father will always come to our rescue. “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11). God sent a deliverer!

2) Mailman Game

What does it mean to deliver? Our closest example is the modern-day mailman. He takes our letters to the place we want them to go. When God delivers His people, He takes them to the place where He wants them to go.

Let your class deliver "letters" that you have "pre-addressed" on 3x5" cards. You can pre-address the letters to your regular attendees in your class, but make sure to leave some extras for visitors (Put their names on the cards when they arrive; do not give them a blank card). Let them decorate their letters with stickers and or rubber stamps before delivery.

3) Pass It Down

This is more of a demonstration than a game. Have a time trial to see how fast your class can "pass it down." Have them all stand in a row, shoulder to shoulder. Place a container at each end of the row, one should be full of small toys or other objects (perhaps, blocks), the other empty.

When you say "go," the child on the end with the container filled with toys or other items should pick up one item at a time and pass it down to the next person and so on until all the items make it through the line and into the empty container on the other side. Time how long it takes for the children to do this. Allow them to do it a few times. They will probably get faster each time.

Afterward ask what happens when someone is not watching or paying attention. This is really just a fun game, but how can these things be like not being faithful to God? God has a path of obedience for each of us to follow, and it can affect other people when we do not do our part. We need to pay attention to God's plan for our life and not make a mistake like Samson.

4) Watch It Baby!

Give your class pipe cleaners and big beads.

Let each child make a person of his own out of the pipe cleaners and beads. They will look like little stick people, use the beads for the head, allowing the children to draw on eyes, nose, etc. Give each child a small piece of masking tape for a blindfold for his person.

Have them walk their people around the edge of the table, instructing them where to walk and what to watch out for so they don't fall off. What happens if the pipe cleaner person does not listen to his creator? Is listening and obeying considered faithfulness? What will happen if we do not listen to our Creator?

5) Smashed Banana Salad

Show your class a couple of nice bananas and tell them they can help you a few at a time to make the snack. As you are talking, put the bowl heavily on the bananas. Oh No! You have made a mistake! Now what can you do? Well you make smashed banana fruit topping.

Mash the bananas the rest of the way in the bowl, and add about 1/2 cup of plain yogurt, a teaspoon of sugar (optional), and some cinnamon. Put the fruit of your choice (apples are great or grapes, pineapple, peaches etc.) into individual Styrofoam cups. Add some topping and serve.

Explain that even though you made a mistake by smashing the bananas something good could still come out of it. God's forgiveness works the same way. Though we have made mistakes, God can still use us!

6) String Tug-O-War

Form pairs. Give a 24" long piece of sting or yarn to most pairs, but to some give two 12" pieces. Oops! By mistake you must have cut some in half. Oh well, tie them together and play anyway! The rules of the tug-o-war are that you can only use the thumb and index finger of one hand. Using masking tape, mark two lines in front of each player and a piece of tape in the center of the string. Whoever can get the marker across their line is the winner.

Use this as an illustration: even though a mistake was made, the strings could still be used. This is how God works in our life. Though we have made mistakes, God can still use us!

9. Bible text (NIV):

Judges 13:1-25

The Birth of Samson

1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

2 A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. 3 The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. 4 Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. 5 You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

6 Then the woman went to her husband and told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name. 7 But he said to me, 'You will become pregnant and have a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from the womb until the day of his death.'"

8 Then Manoah prayed to the Lord: "Pardon your servant, Lord. I beg you to let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."

9 God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her. 10 The woman hurried to tell her husband, "He's here! The man who appeared to me the other day!"

11 Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, "Are you the man who talked to my wife?" "I am," he said.

12 So Manoah asked him, "When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs the boy's life and work?"

13 The angel of the Lord answered, "Your wife must do all that I have told her. 14 She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her."

15 Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, "We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you."

16 The angel of the Lord replied, "Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the Lord." (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the Lord.)

17 Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the Lord, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?"

18 He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding. [a]" 19 Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the Lord. And the Lord did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: 20 As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. 21 When the angel of the Lord did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the Lord.

22 "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!"

23 But his wife answered, "If the Lord had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this."

24 The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him, 25 and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 16:4-31

4 Sometime later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. 5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels[a] of silver."

6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued."

7 Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man."

8 Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she tied him with them. 9 With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the bowstrings as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied."

11 He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man."

12 So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.

13 Delilah then said to Samson, "All this time you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied."

He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric 14 and[b] tightened it with the pin.

Again she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric.

15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." 16 With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it.

17 So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, "Come back once more; he has told me everything." So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. 19 After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him.^[c] And his strength left him.

20 Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!"

He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

21 Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison. 22 But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

The Death of Samson

23 Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands."

24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying,

"Our god has delivered our enemy
into our hands,
the one who laid waste our land
and multiplied our slain."

25 While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them.

When they stood him among the pillars, 26 Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them." 27 Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. 28 Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "Sovereign Lord, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." 29 Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, 30 Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

31 Then his brothers and his father's whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led^[d] Israel twenty years.