

At last Samson yielded, and told his wife how he had killed the lion and afterward found the honey in its body. She told her people, and just before the end of the feast they came to Samson with the answer. They said: "What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?"

And Samson said to them: "If you have not plowed with my heifer, You have not found out my riddle."

By his "heifer,"—which is a young cow,—of course Samson meant his wife. Then Samson was required to give them thirty suits of clothing. He went out among the Philistines, killed the first thirty men whom he found, took off their clothes, and gave them to the guests at the feast. But all this made Samson very angry. He left his wife and went home to his father's house. The parents of his wife gave her to another man.

But after a time Samson's anger passed away, and he went again to Timnath to see his wife. But her father said to him: "You went away angry, and I supposed that you cared nothing for her. I gave her to another man, and now she is his wife. But here is her younger sister; you can have her for your wife, instead."

But Samson would not take his wife's sister. He went out very angry; determined to do harm to the Philistines, because they had cheated him. He caught all the wild foxes that he could find, until he had three hundred of them. Then he tied them together in pairs, by their tails; and between each pair of foxes he tied to their tails a piece of dry wood which he set on fire. These foxes with firebrands on their tails he turned loose among the fields of the Philistines when the grain was ripe. They ran wildly over the fields, set the grain on fire, and burned it; and with the grain the olive trees in the fields.

When the Philistines saw their harvests destroyed, they said, "Who has done this?"

And the people said, "Samson did this, because his wife was given by her father to another man." (SEE PART II)

WHAT CAME OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN?

WHEN SAMSON LOOKED UPON THE
DEAD LION WHAT DID
HE FIND?



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**Twelfth in the Series of Old Testament
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**The Story of Samson
The Strong Man
Part - I of II**



Jesus teaches the Children
the Old Testament!

THE STORY OF SAMSON, THE STRONG MAN

PART - I

Now we are to learn of three judges who ruled Israel in turn. Their names were Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. None of these were men of war, and in their days the land was quiet.

But the people of Israel again began to worship idols; and as a punishment God allowed them once more to pass under the power of their enemies. The seventh oppression, which now fell upon Israel, was by far the hardest, the longest and the most widely spread of any, for it was over all the tribes. It came from the Philistines, a strong and war like people who lived on the west of Israel upon the plain beside the Great Sea. They worshipped an idol called Dagon, which was made in the form of a fish's head on a man's body.

These people, the Philistines, sent their armies up from the plain beside the sea to the mountains of Israel and overran all the land. They took away from the Israelites all their swords and spears, so that they could not fight; and they robbed their land of all the crops, so that the people suffered for want of food. And as before, the Israelites in their trouble, cried out to the Lord, and the Lord heard their prayer.

In the tribe-land of Dan, which was next to the country of the Philistines, there was living a man named Manoah. One day an angel came to his wife and said: "You shall have a son, and when he grows up he will begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. But your son must never drink any wine or strong drink as long as he lives. And his hair must be allowed to grow long and must never be cut, for he shall be a Nazarite under a vow to the Lord."

When a child was given especially to God, or when a man gave himself to some work for God, he was forbidden to drink wine, and as a sign, his hair was left to grow long while the vow or promise to God was upon him. Such a person as this was called a Nazarite, a word which means "one who has a vow"; and Manoah's child was to be a Nazarite, and under a vow, as long as he lived.

The child was born and was named Samson. He grew up to become the strongest man of whom the Bible tells. Samson was no general, like Gideon or Jephthah, to call out his people and lead them in war. He did much to set his people free; but all that he did was by his own strength.

When Samson became a young man he went down to Timnath, in the land of the Philistines. There he saw a young Philistine woman whom he loved, and wished to have as his wife. His father and mother were not pleased that he should marry among the enemies of his own people. They did not know that God would make this marriage the means of bringing harm upon the Philistines and of helping the Israelites.

As Samson was going down to Timnath to see this young woman, a hungry lion came out of the mountain, roaring against him. Samson seized the lion, and tore him in pieces as easily as another man would have killed a little kid of the goats, and then went on his way. He made his visit and came home, but said nothing to any one about the lion.

After a time Samson went again to Timnath for his marriage with the Philistine woman. On his way he stopped to look at the dead lion; and in its body he found a swarm of bees, and honey which they had made. He took some of the honey and ate it as he walked, but told no one of it.

At the wedding-feast, which lasted a whole week, there were many Philistine young men, and they amused each other with questions and riddles.

"I will give you a riddle," said Samson. "If you answer it during the feast, I will give you thirty suits of clothing; and if you cannot answer it then you must give me the thirty suits of clothing." "Let us hear your riddle," they said. And this was Samson's riddle:

"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

They could not find the answer, though they tried to find it all that day and the two days that followed. And at last they came to Samson's wife and said to her: "Coax your husband to tell you the answer. If you do not find it out, we will set your house on fire, and burn you and all your people."

And Samson's wife urged him to tell her the answer. She cried and pleaded with him and said: "If you really loved me, you would not keep this a secret from me."