



The Israelites were again straying from God and His Law. God delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. The Philistines worshiped the idol, Dagon.

God sent an angel unto the wife of an Israelite man called Manoah. He and his wife had no children. The angel said to the woman, "Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son." The angel gave the woman special instructions to follow before her son was born: she was to drink no wine or strong drink and eat nothing unclean.

The woman told her husband about the angel, and he asked the Lord to send the angel back. God did. When Manoah saw the angel, the angel repeated what he had said to the woman. When Manoah wanted to make an offering to him, the angel said the offering must be made to the Lord. So Manoah placed a meat offering upon a rock, and when fire went up toward Heaven from the offering, the angel ascended in the flame.

Manoah and his wife bowed their faces to the ground. Manoah thought surely they would die, but his wife said if God had wanted to kill them, He would not have received the offering or even told them all those things.

The angel had told them their son was to be a Nazarite from his birth to his death. A Nazarite was a person set apart unto the Lord for a special work. The one who was under a Nazarite vow was set apart from others in that he was never to eat grapes, drink grape juice or any strong drink, his hair was never to be cut, and he was never to touch a dead body (see Numbers 6:1-8).

In this case, Manoah's wife was told by the angel that her child would be a Nazarite from his birth to the day of his death. She was careful to do all that she had been told concerning the baby. When the baby boy was born, he was named Samson. As Samson grew up, I am sure his parents told him often how God had sent an angel to them with certain instructions about how to raise him, because God had a very special work ahead for him. Samson's special work was that he would begin to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines' control.

Church of God Sunday School

THE BIRTH AND RISE OF SAMSON: GOD CHOOSES SAMSON

Judges 13-16:3

When Samson was grown, the Holy Spirit began to make Himself known by coming upon Samson and empowering him with super strength, at times.

Also, Samson often visited the Philistines, looking for a wife. This did not please his parents. They tried to persuade Samson to seek a wife from his own people, and not from the evil, idolatrous Philistines. However, God was using that to make a way for Samson to begin delivering the Israelites from the bondage of the Philistines.

In the town of Timnath, Samson met a Philistine girl whom he wanted to marry. He asked his parents to arrange for him to marry her (that was the custom). When they tried to change his mind, Samson would not hear of it! He was often overly self-confident, as we shall see. So, Samson and his parents went to Timnath to have the wedding arranged.

Sometime on the trip, Samson must have been off by himself, for his parents did not know that a lion had come out and roared at him. The Spirit of God came upon Samson and strengthened him so much that he grabbed the lion and tore it apart with his bare hands! But Samson did not tell his parents about the lion.

When they came to Timnath, the wedding was arranged, as Samson desired. Later, after some time, when Samson and his parents were returning for the actual wedding feast, Samson passed the place where he had killed the lion. Bees had swarmed in the lion's carcass (the skeletal remains) and made honey. Samson took some honey and ate it. He gave some to his parents, too—but he did not tell them where he had found it!

Samson's wedding feast lasted for seven days. Thirty Philistines came to the feast. They were to be companions of Samson, but they were really there to see that he made no trouble for the Philistines.

Samson said to them, "I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets [shirts] and thirty change of garments: But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets [shirts] and thirty change of garments."

They said, "Put forth thy riddle."

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

The men thought and thought. They could not guess the meaning of the riddle. They went to Samson's wife. They told her to make Samson tell her the answer. They threatened to burn her and her father's household to death if she did not. She was very frightened. She went to Samson, crying and telling him he ought to tell her the answer if he really loved her. So, he told her the answer; then she went to the men and told them the answer!

On the last day of the feast, the thirty men said to Samson, "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?"

Samson knew then that his wife had talked to the men. The Spirit of the Lord came over Samson. He went to Ashkelon and killed thirty Philistines and gave their clothes to the thirty men!

Samson did not go back to his wife then. He went home, to his father's house. The girl's father thought Samson would not want her anymore, so he gave her to another man, thinking Samson hated her. But after a while, Samson decided to go back to his wife. When he learned that she had been given to another man, he became very angry, and what do you think he did?

Samson went out and caught three hundred foxes! He tied them tail to tail and put a torch between each pair of tails! When Samson had that finished, he lit the torches and turned all the foxes loose in the Philistines' cornfields! The foxes ran here and there through the cornfields, setting both the standing corn and the shocks on fire, destroying them. Then they ran through the Philistine's vineyards and olive orchards!

Oh, the Philistines were mad! They felt that Samson's wife and her father were to blame for all the destruction that Samson had caused, so they killed them! That only made Samson want to punish the Philistines some more; so he went out and killed many of them.

Then Samson went down to Judah, to the top of a high rock that was called Etam. The Philistines told the men of Judah that they wanted Samson. When three thousand Israelites, men of Judah, came to get Samson, they said to him, "What is this that thou hast done unto us?"

Samson said, "As they did unto me, so have I done unto them."

Samson did not try to resist the men. The men promised Samson they would not kill him, but they tied him up and took him to their enemies, the Philistines. The Philistines shouted when they saw Samson. Suddenly, the power of the Holy Spirit came over Samson in a great way. He broke the cords that bound him as easily as if they had been flax that was set on fire—and no wonder, it was the fire of the Holy Spirit that had severed the cords!

Then he "found a new jawbone of an ass," and with just that jawbone and his God-given strength, he killed a thousand more Philistines! He called that place Ramath-lehi, meaning "the lifting up of the jawbone." He said, "With the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men." (Was it possible that Samson's overly self-confident attitude caused him to feel that he had slain those men by his own strength?)

Then Samson became thirsty, and he prayed for water, giving God the glory for his great victory. God made a hollow place in the jawbone, and water came out. Samson, therefore, called that place En-hakkore, which means "the spring of him who prayed."

The Philistine people really hated Samson, and they never stopped trying to catch him. One time, Samson went to the Philistine town of Gaza. That night, men surrounded the city and hid by the gate of the city, waiting to catch and kill Samson in the morning.

But Samson decided to leave the city at midnight. Naturally, the gate was closed and locked. But that did not stop Samson. Before anyone could get to him, to even dare try to stop him, Samson grabbed hold of the doors of the gate, the two posts that held the gate up, and the bar too! He jerked the whole thing loose from the wall, put it on his shoulders, and walked off! He walked all the way to the top of a hill outside the city. There he laid everything down and left it!



Would the Philistines ever be able to catch Samson?

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

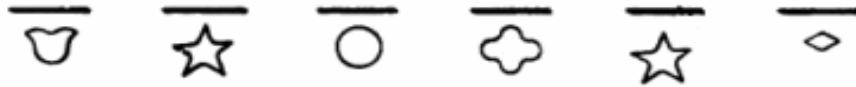
*"Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."*

*—1 Timothy 5:22*

# Use the symbols to find Samson's father's name

A = ☆  
H = ◇

O = ☼  
N = ○  
M = ∩



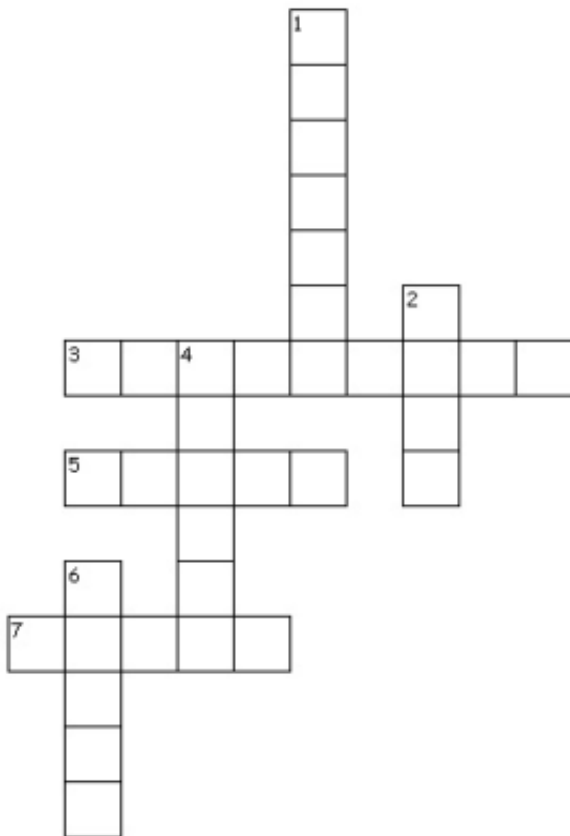
## SAMSON

### Across

3. Samson's parents wanted him to marry an \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Samson was a \_\_\_\_\_ of Israel.
7. The dead lion was full of this.

### Down

1. Samson used this to kill a thousand men.
2. Samson killed this with his bare hands.
4. Samson told this at his wedding.
6. Samson lit their tails with fire.





## Samson Slew a Thousand Philistines