

JUDGES

With Great Power comes Great Responsibility



WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY



Judges 13:1

¹Again the Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight, so the LORD handed them over to the Philistines, who oppressed them for forty years.

²In those days a man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan lived in the town of Zorah. His wife was unable to become pregnant, and they had no children. ³The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife and said, "Even though you have

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Judges 13

been unable to have children, you will soon become pregnant and give birth to a son. ⁴ So be careful; you must not drink wine or any other alcoholic drink nor eat any forbidden food. ⁵ You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and his hair must never be cut. For he will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth. He will begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines.”

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Judges 13:24

When her son was born, she named him Samson. And the LORD blessed him as he grew up. ²⁵ And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he lived in Mahaneh-dan, which is located between the towns of Zorah and Eshtaol.

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Judges 14

¹One day when Samson was in Timnah, one of the Philistine women caught his eye. ²When he returned home, he told his father and mother, “A young Philistine woman in Timnah caught my eye. I want to marry her. Get her for me.”

³His father and mother objected. “Isn’t there even one woman in our tribe or among all the Israelites

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Judges 14

you could marry?” they asked. “Why must you go to the pagan Philistines to find a wife?”

But Samson told his father, “Get her for me! She looks good to me.”⁴ His father and mother didn’t realize the LORD was at work in this, creating an opportunity to work against the Philistines, who ruled over Israel at that time.

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Judges 14

⁵ As Samson and his parents were going down to Timnah, a young lion suddenly attacked Samson near the vineyards of Timnah. ⁶ At that moment the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him, and he ripped the lion's jaws apart with his bare hands. He did it as easily as if it were a young goat. But he didn't tell his father or mother about it. ⁷ When Samson arrived in Timnah, he talked with the

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woman and was very pleased with her.

⁸ Later, when he returned to Timnah for the wedding, he turned off the path to look at the carcass of the lion. And he found that a swarm of bees had made some honey in the carcass. ⁹ He scooped some of the honey into his hands and ate it along the way. He also gave some to his father and mother, and they ate it. But he didn't tell them he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion.

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Judges 14

¹⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. He went down to the town of Ashkelon, killed thirty men, took their belongings, and gave their clothing to the men who had solved his riddle.

But Samson was furious about what had happened, and he went back home to live with his father and mother. ²⁰ So his wife was given in marriage to the man who had been Samson's best man at the wedding.

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Judges 15

¹ Later on, during the wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat as a present to his wife. He said, “I’m going into my wife’s room to sleep with her,” but her father wouldn’t let him in.

² “I truly thought you must hate her,” her father explained, “so I gave her in marriage to your best man. But look, her younger sister is even more beautiful than she is. Marry her instead.”

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Judges 15

³ Samson said, “This time I cannot be blamed for everything I am going to do to you Philistines.”

⁴ Then he went out and caught 300 foxes. He tied their tails together in pairs, and he fastened a torch to each pair of tails. ⁵ Then he lit the torches and let the foxes run through the grain fields of the Philistines. He burned all their grain to the ground, including the sheaves and the uncut grain. He also destroyed their vineyards and olive groves.

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Judges 15

⁶ “Who did this?” the Philistines demanded.

“Samson,” was the reply, “because his father-in-law from Timnah gave Samson’s wife to be married to his best man.” So the Philistines went and got the woman and her father and burned them to death.

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Judges 15

¹⁴ As Samson arrived at Lehi, the Philistines came shouting in triumph. But the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon Samson, and he snapped the ropes on his arms as if they were burnt strands of flax, and they fell from his wrists. ¹⁵ Then he found the jawbone of a recently killed donkey. He picked it up and killed 1,000 Philistines with it.

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Judges 15

¹⁶ Then Samson said, “With the jawbone of a donkey, I’ve piled them in heaps! With the jawbone of a donkey, I’ve killed a thousand men!”

²⁰ Samson judged Israel for twenty years during the period when the Philistines dominated the land.

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Judges 16

¹One day Samson went to the Philistine town of Gaza and spent the night with a prostitute.

²Word soon spread that Samson was there, so the men of Gaza gathered together and waited all night at the town gates. They kept quiet during the night, saying to themselves, “When the light of morning comes, we will kill him.”

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Judges 16

³ But Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up, took hold of the doors of the town gate, including the two posts, and lifted them up, bar and all. He put them on his shoulders and carried them all the way to the top of the hill across from Hebron.

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Judges 16

⁴ Some time later Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who lived in the valley of Sorek. ⁵ The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, “Entice Samson to tell you what makes him so strong and how he can be overpowered and tied up securely. Then each of us will give you 1,100 pieces of silver.”

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Judges 16

¹⁵ Then Delilah pouted, “How can you tell me, ‘I love you,’ when you don’t share your secrets with me? You’ve made fun of me three times now, and you still haven’t told me what makes you so strong!” ¹⁶ She tormented him with her nagging day after day until he was sick to death of it.

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Judges 16

²¹ So the Philistines captured him and gouged out his eyes. They took him to Gaza, where he was bound with bronze chains and forced to grind grain in the prison.

²² But before long, his hair began to grow back.

²³ The Philistine rulers held a great festival, offering sacrifices and praising their god, Dagon. They said, “Our god has given us victory over our enemy Samson!”

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Judges 16

²⁴ When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, “Our god has delivered our enemy to us! The one who killed so many of us is now in our power!”

²⁵ Half drunk by now, the people demanded, “Bring out Samson so he can amuse us!” So he was brought from the prison to amuse them, and they had him stand between the pillars supporting the roof.

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Judges 16

²⁶ Samson said to the young servant who was leading him by the hand, “Place my hands against the pillars that hold up the temple. I want to rest against them.” ²⁷ Now the temple was completely filled with people. All the Philistine rulers were there, and there were about 3,000 men and women on the roof who were watching as Samson amused them.

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Judges 16

²⁸ Then Samson prayed to the LORD, “Sovereign LORD, remember me again. O God, please strengthen me just one more time. With one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes.” ²⁹ Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple. Pushing against them with both hands, ³⁰ he prayed, “Let me die with the Philistines.”

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Judges 16

And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime.

³¹ Later his brothers and other relatives went down to get his body. They took him back home and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, where his father, Manoah, was buried. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.