



SAMSON

Judges 13-16

Once a man named Manoah and his wife wished very much to have a child. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and said, "You will have a son. He is never to have his hair cut." Soon they had a boy and named him Samson. God gave him great strength and chose him to be the judge of Israel, because the people had once again forgotten the true God.

The Philistines rules over the Israelites, but the Lord gave Samson the strength to defeat them. Then Samson fell in love with a beautiful woman named Delilah.

"Delilah," said the Philistines, "find out the secret to Samson's strength, and we will reward you greatly."

One day when they were alone together, she said playfully, "Samson, what is the secret of your strength? What would someone have to do to defeat you?"

"If you were to tie me with seven leather cords," Samson replied, "I would lose my strength."

Delilah waited until he was asleep and tied him up. Then she shouted, "The Philistines are here!" Samson woke up and broke the cords. He had not really told her his secret.

Three times she asked him the secret to his strength; three times Samson mislead her. At last he told her, "My hair has never been cut. Cut my hair, and I will be like any other man."

Delilah waited until Samson was asleep; then she cut his hair. The Philistines attacked him, and he lacked the strength to fight them. They captured him and made him a slave. But his hair began to grow again. The Philistines took Samson to their temple. He prayed to God, "Lord, give me the strength to punish the Philistines." Strength and power coursed through

his body once more, and he pushed the pillars of the temple apart so that it crumbled to the ground. The roof of the temple fell and crushed Samson and the Philistines.