

SAMSON

Introduction

Of all the characters in the Bible few compare to the modern idea of a "super-hero" like Samson (yes, with the obvious exception of Jesus!). From what you know of Samson, which of the super-heroes below does Samson most resemble... and why?



A.



B.



C.



D.



E.

Who Is He?

See if you can fill out the chart below – you may use your electronic device for assistance from the www!

Where in Scripture it tells of his life?	
Name and meaning of his name?	
When did he live?	
Where did he live?	
What is his major impact?	

Sight

This is one of the over-arching themes in the book of Judges: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was *right in his own eyes*" (17:6; 21:25). Moses' warning years earlier had been disregarded: "You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is *right in his own eyes*" (Deut. 12:8).

This is the context in which Samson is born, learns, and lives. Culture has had its effect on Samson. Listen to the scene in which adult Samson is introduced, where he's courting disobedience by attempting to marry a Philistine woman: "Get her for me, for she is *right in my eyes*" (14:3). This phrase captures more than Samson's attraction; it reveals the condition of his heart. Several verses later, the phrase is again repeated: "He went down and talked with the woman, and she was *right in Samson's eyes*" (14:7).

- What is the meaning and impact of the phrase "*right in his own eyes*"?
- Can you think of other eras of history in which this same over-arching theme could be applied?
- How has "*right in his own eyes*" affected you in the context and culture in which you live?
- Can you think of anyone for whom "*right in his own eyes*" would be a positive? Why?

Strength

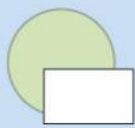
Samson's greatest asset was his strength. Answer the following questions about his strength:

- 1) Name as many specific instances from Scripture in which Samson overcame Israel's enemies with his strength:
- 2) How is Samson's strength not at all like those of the super-heroes mentioned in the introduction?
- 3) In what way(s) does God provide strength to others in Scripture... and to people still today?

Sin.. and Grace

Identify the sin(s) of Samson. Identify how God displayed grace to Samson. What happened in Samson's life through which the LORD worked a change?

Take a quiet moment and identify your sin(s). Identify how God has displayed grace to you. What did the LORD use to work changes in your heart?



Judge's homeland or dominant area of influence



The Judges

Judge	Reference	Tribe	Oppressor	Period of Oppression	Period of Rest	Total Length of Time*
Othniel	3:7-11	Judah	Mesopotamians	8 years (3:8)	40 years (3:11)	48 years
Ehud	3:12-30	Benjamin	Moabites	18 years (3:14)	80 years (3:30)	98 years
Shamgar	3:31		Philistines			
Deborah	chs. 4-5	Ephraim	Canaanites	20 years (4:3)	40 years (5:31)	60 years
Gideon	chs. 6-8	Manasseh	Midianites	7 years (6:1)	40 years (8:28)	47 years
Tola	10:1-2	Issachar			23 years (10:2)	23 years
Jair	10:3-5	Gilead-Manasseh			22 years (10:3)	22 years
Jephthah	10:6-12:7	Gilead-Manasseh	Ammonites		24 years (10:8; 12:7)	24 years
Ibzan	12:8-10	Judah or Zebulun?			7 years (12:9)	7 years
Elon	12:11-12	Zebulun			10 years (12:11)	10 years
Abdon	12:13-15	Ephraim			8 years (12:14)	8 years
Samson	chs. 13-16	Dan	Philistines	40 years (13:1)	20 years (15:20; 16:31)	60 years

* Added together, the dates in this column total about 410 years. However, many of the episodes in Judges overlap each other, unfolding in different parts of the land.