

# Samson

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon explores the life of Samson, highlighting his failure to follow the Nazarite vow and the universal nature of sin, and emphasizing the importance of understanding and overcoming sin through separation and holiness.*

**Duration:** 42:09

**Scripture:** Numbers 6:2, Luke 7:38, Luke 15:2, James 2:10

**Topics:** "Samson"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the cycle of sin and redemption that is seen throughout the book of Judges. He emphasizes that sin enslaves us and leads to a cycle of rebellion, retribution, repentance, and rest. The preacher uses the example of a boy named Johnny who lies to escape punishment for killing his mother's favorite duck, highlighting the tendency to lie to avoid consequences. He also addresses other sins such as cheating, profanity, lust, anger, and hatred, emphasizing the need for repentance and turning to God for forgiveness. The sermon concludes with the reminder that Jesus taught the importance of love and warned against the destructive nature of sin.

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## Transcript

Last week we had an introduction to the book of Judges, and today I'd like to talk to you about the last of the judges in that book, whose name was Samson. His nickname was Sonny. There's some connection between the word Samson and the word son.

Shall we turn to chapter 13 of the book of Judges, please? Verse 1 has a familiar sound to it. All through this book, we've encountered this cycle. Sin, servitude, supplication, salvation, or deliverance.

You have that same dreary cycle. Rebellion, retribution, repentance, and rest. And here you have it again in verse 1. Again, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.

This was a little different from the time of the other judges. They were ruled by the Philistines, but it doesn't say they were oppressed. And they were quite happy to have it that way.

It was a sort of coexistence, and they really resented Samson a little because he was troubling the Philistines. At one time, the men of Judah actually turned Samson over to the Philistines. They bound him and turned him over to their own enemies.

This book is not just ancient history, it's current events. You have that sort of coexistence today where the church is happy to be in league with the world, happy to be in league with other religions, the ecumenical movement. Peace at any price.

That's what it was during this time. The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years. Now it says there was a certain man from Zorah of the family of Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren and had no children.

In other words, Samson was going to be born miraculously. That's promising. Whenever God has a great work to do in the world, a baby is born.

Moses was born at a very critical time in the history of the nation to deliver Israel from Egypt. Here you have Samson going to be born to deliver Israel from the Philistines. And best of all, you have the Lord Jesus born in Bethlehem to be the Savior of the world.

Whenever God has a great program to fulfill, a baby is born. Well now, in verse 3, you have the appearance of the angel of the Lord. Wherever you have expression in the Old Testament, the angel of the Lord, it means Lord Jesus in a pre-incarnate appearance.

And before the end of the chapter, it's quite clear it's an appearance of God. The expression an angel of the Lord doesn't mean that at all. But the angel of the Lord, correct in most modern translations, means God appearing to man, an appearance of God to man.

Just think of the Lord Jesus appearing as an angel to this dear woman with good news for her. I wonder if it made him think forward to the time when he would be born of a virgin in Bethlehem. In each case, a miraculous birth.

Now it's interesting to me that he appeared to the mother, to the would-be mother. He didn't appear to Manoah, he appeared to Manoah's wife. Why? Well, I think we know why.

Because it's the mother that has the most formative influence in the life of a child. That was to be the case here also. And so the angel of the Lord gives instructions to the mother about this child that's going to be born.

He's going to be a Nazarite. That word has nothing to do with Nazareth, whatever. Nazarite really means separation, separate.

And he gives the mother certain instructions. She herself, because she's going to be his mother, is not going to partake of any of the fruit of the vine, grapes, raisins, wine, strong drink. She's going to live a life of separation in preparation for this child.

Apparently the Nazarite could come about in two ways. First of all, Samson had no choice in this matter. He was a Nazarite from his mother's womb.

In other cases, a man could take the vow of a Nazarite. And here we have Samson, a Nazarite from birth. Notice the terms of the vow.

He must eat or drink nothing of the fruit of the vine. He must eat no unclean food, no razor on his head, and he must not touch any dead body. It's interesting to me that all of those things were broken in the life of Samson.

He did everything that a Nazarite shouldn't do. Samson is a riddle to me. I would never know that he was a saved person if it weren't for Hebrews chapter 11, where he's listed in the honor roll of faith.

He was a womanizer. He was a wild man in many cases. Physically strong, morally weak.

But I want to tell you something. God saw faith there. That's a big lesson to me.

God can often see faith where I can't see it. Sometimes we see a Christian fall into sin and we wipe him out. But you're not a Christian.

Never was really saved at all. Don't be too sure. You'd think Lot was never saved at all, but he was.

He was. And so was Samson. All Christians are to be Nazarites, not by taking a vow, but by being sanctified in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

We are to walk in separation to God, in separation from sin, living sober lives, not becoming intoxicated by the fruit of the vine, touching no dead bodies, separation from defilement in our lives. You say, what about the shaving of the head? Well, I want to tell you this. There was no magic in the hair.

It's what the hair spoke of. It spoke of separation. And Christians are to be separated.

You have to be, Christians have to be separated from the world in order to have influence on it. I think that's one of the great lessons in the book of Judges. You have to be separated from the world in order to have influence on it.

Archimedes said, give me a fulcrum outside of the world and I can move the world. That's good. Give me a fulcrum outside the world and I can move the world.

But the lesson is you have to get outside the world in order to have influence on it. If I conform to the world and all its patterns, its lifestyle, and all the rest, I'm never going to have an influence on it. You have to be outside.

There are two sides to the truth of separation. One is we're in the world but not of it. Do not love the world nor the things that are in the world.

If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Very clear, isn't it? We're to be separate. And the Lord Jesus said in John 17, they are not of the world, the disciples, even as I am not of the world.

James said, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? That's strong, isn't it? Friendship with the world is enmity with God. And 2nd Corinthians 6, the Apostle Paul says, come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing and I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters. But we're still in the world, aren't we? And we're in the world to have an influence, to have a ministry to the world.

The Lord Jesus didn't pray that God the Father would take us out of the world but that he would preserve us in the world. Preserve us as salt and light in the world. So separation doesn't mean isolation but neither does it mean imitation or conformity to the world.

I think you see the the proper balance in the life of the Lord Jesus, don't you? He was in the world but he ate with publicans and sinners. But in eating with publicans and sinners, he didn't condone their sin. He

spoke out against it.

I remember when he went at the house of a Pharisee and he spoke to that Pharisee. He says, I came to you and you didn't wash my feet. This woman from the time I came in hasn't ceased to wash them with her tears, to wipe them with the hairs around.

He rebuked. He was faithful. When the Lord Jesus was with the publicans and sinners, he was faithful to God the Father in all things.

That's the proper balance, isn't it? I admire Christians that can do that and be with the people of the world and be a witness for Christ at the same time. Somebody has said a separated Christian is a Bible-centered, Christ-controlled Christian in which God is reproducing his character by the Holy Spirit. I like that.

A Bible-centered, Christ-centered Christian in whom Christ is reproducing his character by the Holy Spirit. Manoah came. His wife told him about this visitor and he came and he prayed for the return of the man of God.

It says there, and God listened to the voice of Manoah. You know, sometimes you get these short sentences in the Bible and they're so meaningful, aren't they? God listened to the sight, to the prayer of Manoah. Did God listen to your prayer this morning? Interesting, isn't it? The great God of the universe, the one who hurled the stars into space and who controls them now by his mighty power, and he hears your prayers and he hears my prayers.

Many different languages, too, and all over the world. And on the second visit of the angel of the Lord, Manoah wants to know the rule of life of the child and his work. What is going to be his rule of life and what is going to be his work? Well, it's already been answered.

His rule of life is to be that of a Nazarite, of a separated person, and his work is going to be to deliver Israel from the Philistines. In answering the prayer, the angel of the Lord just mentioned, repeated again, the instructions concerning the Nazarites' separation. The next scene in this chapter is that Manoah wanted to make a meal.

He wanted to go out and kill a kid and, in typical Middle Eastern hospitality, provide a meal. And it's very strange. The angel of the Lord said, no, I don't want you to do that.

I want you to offer a sacrifice, bring an offering. What was that all about? Well, I would suggest this to you. Manoah still thought of him as an angel, a created being.

He didn't realize he was talking to God. He thought of him as a created being. Come on in and have a meal with us, you know.

No, I want you to offer an offering and I'm going to show you something in it. So, Manoah did offer the kid. He did offer the offering to the Lord.

He said, what is your name anyway? I forgot to ask you your name. He said, my name is Wonderful. And when he said Wonderful, he wasn't using an adjective.

He was using a noun. It is an adjective as well. It could be an adjective as well.

He is Wonderful, but his name is Wonderful. The name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Father of Eternity. That's who it was, the Lord Jesus, whose name is Wonderful.

And there in the fire of the offering, he did wondrously, it says. He did wondrously, connected with his name Wonderful, and went up to heaven in the fire of the offering. And his perceptive wife was very good.

She said, we've seen God, we're going to die. Or, you know, they thought no man can look on God and live. But her logic was very good.

If we were going to die, he would have killed us before now. That's what she said. It's wonderful that the dear woman's logic defeated the poor man's fears.

Really did, really did. It's really a beautiful chapter. I recommend that you spend time in it.

What did they do? They worshipped. They worshipped the Lord, now that they knew exactly who had been speaking to them. And then you have the birth and early life of Samson.

And you know, you come to the end of that chapter, and everything's fine. Child is going to be born. Wonderful.

And he's going to deliver Israel from the Philistines. This is great. Come to the next chapter.

Maybe you'd just like to go over it with your thumb as we move along. Samson is now born. It says, he went down to Timnah, verse 1, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

So, he went up and told his father and mother, saying, I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. Now, therefore, get her for me as a wife. Red lights are flashing all over the landscape, aren't they? Here's a child born with such promise, such a godly family background.

And now, he said, here's a woman. She's pleasing to me. Get her for me.

That is a familiar sound. She's pleasing to me. There was no king in Israel in those days, and every man did that which was pleasing in his own eyes.

Fits in perfectly. You know, you'd like to take dear Samson aside at this point and have a nice little talk with him. And I think I'll do that, and you can listen.

What is sin? Well, first of all, how do you spell sin? You spell it S-I-N. What's the middle letter in sin? I. Get her for me. She pleaseth me well.

Sin is not only doing what's wrong, what's forbidden by the Word of God, it's failing to do what is right, isn't it? Oh, I didn't sin. I didn't do anything wrong. No, did you do what is right? Whatever is not of faith is sin.

We read in Romans, sin is lawlessness, John tells us. What does that mean, sin is lawlessness? I want my way. I don't care what anybody else says.

This lawlessness means taking the law, my life in my own hands, and doing what I want to do. Sin is unrighteousness. What does that mean? It means, it means anything that's not right.

Sin is missing the mark. Oh, yes. What is the mark? The mark is the glory of God.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. What is the glory of God? The glory of God is his perfect standard, his standard of perfection. You know, if we're all to stand and let's say the ceiling here is the glory of God, that's the mark.

Some would get closer to the mark than others, but we'd all be short, wouldn't we? We'd all fall short. A plane crashes into the side of the mountain. It's 500 feet from the top of the mountain, but I want to tell you something, the people would be just as dead if it had crashed 50 feet from the top of the mountain.

Came short. That's what sin, that's what sin is. It's missing the mark.

People say, well, God can't give you a standard that you can't attain to, can he? God can't give you a rule that you cannot attain to. God never gives you a rule that you can't attain to, because his rule is perfection, and you can't attain to that, and I can't. For instance, it says in 1 John 2, my little children, these things write unto you that you sin not.

Can you fulfill that? You can come closer, you can grow in holiness, but we're all short of the mark. What is sin? Sin is failure to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Anybody here guilty? Well, I certainly am.

Failure to love your neighbor as yourself. You know, that commandment just exposes the selfishness of my heart, doesn't it? The selfishness. Do you love your neighbor as yourself? That's what sin is.

Failure to believe God. That's a sin. In fact, if you don't believe God, you're calling him a liar, John says in 1 John 5. Now, that's serious.

God is the only person in the universe who's absolutely reliable, and then you turn around and call him a liar. Failure to believe God. Lying is a sin.

Why do people lie? Oftentimes lie to escape punishment. They'd rather lie than take the punishment. Anybody innocent? Cheating on exams at school.

I wish I could say I never did that. I did. Private profanity.

You wouldn't say it in public, but there in the privacy of your home, sometimes it slips out. Taking the name of the Lord your God in vain. Not a pretty picture.

Lusting. Hollywood is lust. Lust cannot wait to get.

Love cannot wait to give. Lust is sin. Living in a world of mental fantasy.

Anger is sin. Road rage. Oftentimes it leads to murder.

Shooting a person dead on the spot. Hatred is sin. The Lord Jesus brought that out very clearly.

You hate your brother, you kill him. Sin begins in the mind. All sin begins in the mind.

Gossip is sin. Speaking about another person in order to put him down and put yourself up. Sharing information with a person when it's not, when they're not part of the problem or part of the solution of the problem either.

Envy is sin. Jealousy. You know that, you know that's found among full-time Christian workers too.

Don't get the idea that just because people are in full-time Christian work they're exempt from these things. One man can be sitting there and listening to another man and saying, I wish he'd quit so I can get up there. Political corruption.

Judicial corruption. You read about it every day in the papers. Adultery is sin.

Fornication is sin. Homosexuality is sin. Teen pregnancies are sin.

Live in loving. Live in lovers. Openly flaunted today, but I want to tell you the guilt remains.

That's a marvelous thing, isn't it? We can sin, but we don't get away with it. The guilt remains there. Unbiblical divorce is sin.

Notice I said unbiblical divorce. I believe there is scriptural ground for divorce. Abortion, in most cases, is sin.

Pornography is sin. Drug abuse. Alcoholism.

Racism is sin. Pride and conceit. Pride.

Pride is the parent sin. The first sin took place in heaven, not on earth, when Satan wanted the throne of God and he was cast out. Rudeness is sin.

I thank God that my Savior was a gentleman. He was courteous. Rudeness is sin.

It's an insult to the Holy Spirit. Selfishness is sin. We've gone over that.

Revenge. Quickness of temper. Irritability.

And you know, all sin is against God. Against thee, the only, have I sinned, David said. Done this evil in thy sight.

Sin not only breaks God's law, it breaks his heart as well. And when a Christian sins, it's like slapping the face of Christ. If he died to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and I go in and that which causes, which caused his sin in the first place.

Sin is universal. All have sinned. All means all.

There's not a just man on earth that doeth good and sinneth not, says in Ecclesiastes. Not a just man on earth who doeth good and sinneth not. You know, every person should be able to say from his heart, I truly deserve to go to hell.

I think that's, I think that's when a person is ripe for salvation. When he can honestly say that from his heart, I truly deserve to go to hell. Sin has affected every part of our being.

You get that in Romans chapter 3, don't you? Verses 13 to 15. It's affected our throat, our tongues, our lips, our mouth, and our feet. Our feet, swift to shed blood.

It's interesting, you just put a new patch of cement down on the sidewalk in front of your house, and somebody comes along, and in an effort to achieve immortality, puts his initials in the cement. Or you've just painted your fence white, and somebody walks along, and to test the truth of the sign that says wet

paint. And that's what the Bible says, destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known.

James reminds us that to break one commandment of the law is to break them all. The law is a chain. Ten links break one, you've broken them all.

You may think you're not a great sinner, but it's not what you think that counts, it's what God thinks, isn't it? You may not have committed every sin, but you're capable of it, and so am I. You know, when Adolf Eichmann was put on trial for the slaughter of so many dear Jewish people, there was a man called to the trial, his name's Jehiel Deinur, a Jewish man. He had been in the concentration camps, suffered under Adolf Eichmann, and one day, that day he first walked into the courtroom, and he looked, and when he saw Eichmann, he really went into sort of a fit, and he finally collapsed. And you say, he was filled with hatred when he saw, wasn't there? They asked him afterwards, what was all that about? And he said, I saw that Adolf Eichmann was not the God man that ran the camps, he said, but I saw that he was just a human being, just like myself, he said.

And Mike Wallace, who was telling this story, said, Adolf Eichmann is in every one of us. Robert Murray Chain, who wrote some of our hymns, he wrote, I have discovered that in me is the seed of every sin. It's true.

I've discovered that too. I'm appalled when I look within myself and think of my capabilities for evil. That's what sin is like.

And that's why I'd like to talk to Samson at the beginning of it, before he takes the terrible plunge, but I'm afraid it's too late. All sin begins in the mind, I've already said that. Malcolm Muggeridge was in India at one, this is before he was ever saved, he was in India at one time, and he went into the river for his morning plunge.

And he looked in, in the distance, he saw a woman bathing, and lust arose in his heart. And he started to swim, he swam, he swam, and he swam. His mind filled with fantasies.

Finally, he got close so that he could see her, and he saw that she was leprous. And he said, I realized in a moment of time, it wasn't the woman who was leprous, it was Malcolm Muggeridge that was leprous. And that's it.

That's it. Sin is attractive in anticipation, and repulsive in retrospect. That's what the Bible warns us about.

Beautiful in prospect, but hideous in retrospect. Amnon committed immorality with his sister. It says that after he committed the immorality, the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her.

I don't doubt that that rings bells in some of our hearts here today. The more you think about a sinful temptation, the more apt you are to commit it. Do you ever think about that? The more you think about a sinful temptation, the more you are apt.

James describes the birth of sin there in the first chapter of his epistle. That's what he's saying in effect. Think about it long enough, you don't do it.

And the more we sin, the easier it is to sin. When you first committed a sin, your consciousness, you do it the second time, your consciousness says, don't do it. After a few times, your consciousness says, don't do it.

But it's easier to do it. You know why? Because it uses that expression in Ephesians, who being past feeling. They've become used to it.

It no longer has the same effect on us. Sin is enslaving. Really, it really makes slaves of us.

One day Johnny was out in the back of his, the backyard and his mother had a favorite duck out there and Johnny had a slingshot and you know the rest of that story. It was a good shot and he killed the duck and he took and hit it. But his sister saw what happened.

There's always somebody that sees. That night after supper, the mother asked, said to the girl, now help me with the dishes. She said, oh no mother, Johnny wants to do the dishes, don't you Johnny? Then a little later, the father had some program to take Johnny out and the sister said, oh I don't think Johnny wants to go, do you Johnny? I'll go.

Johnny was enslaved. Finally, he couldn't stand it any longer and he went to his mother and he told her what had happened. She said, I know Johnny.

I saw it happen. Why didn't you tell me sooner? If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Sin has a way of finding a person out.

Man, Aram committed murder and he buried the body under a pile of leaves. That night, a great storm arose and the leaves all blew away. He went back and saw it and it was just completely exposed.

He put it down in the depths of the river. The river went dry. The river went dry and he realized he wasn't going to get away with it.

He covered the body with stones but in the course of time, it was discovered and he was put to death. The poet said and sought the black accursed pool with a mild misgiving eye and he saw the dead in the river bed for the faithless stream was dry. Then down I cast me on my face and first began to weep for I knew my secret then was one that earth refused to keep.

Land or sea, though it should be 10,000 fathoms deep." Pretty sad, isn't it, the whole story? Listen, I got good news for you at the end of the meeting. The blood of Christ washes a person from every sin. You tell me that isn't wonderful.

I don't care what your past has been. You can come to the Lord Jesus Christ, believe on Him, accept Him as your Lord and Savior, believe that He died for you on the cross of Calvary, that He paid the penalty for your sins on the cross of Calvary. The slate is clean.

Good news? I would say so. I would say so. There's not a sin that His blood will not cleanse.

He may be speaking to somebody here in the meeting this morning and you're burdened with guilt and more than anything else you want peace. You can have it. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Would you be free from your burden of sin? There's power in the blood. Would you over evil a victory win? There's a wonderful power in the blood, power in the blood of the Lamb. Come to the cross.

Acknowledge that you are a sinner, that you deserve to go to hell, and with the hand of faith reach out and claim Christ as your Lord and Savior, and go away rejoicing, knowing that God will never remember those sins again. You might, but God will never remember them again. He'll never fish them up again against you.

The account was settled long ago. Shall we pray? Father, we rejoice at the truth of your word. You have said that we've all sinned and we acknowledge it today.

You've said, be sure your sins will find you out. And we know that that's true. They have a way of finding us.

And we know there's a guilt connected with our sin and it drags us down. But, oh, how we thank you today. Blessed Lord, that the Savior died for us.

He loved us and he died for us to clear us from the penalty and guilt of sin, that it's free, it's open to all, that all we have to do is come at all our sin and all our guilt and say, yes, Lord Jesus, I accept you as my Lord and Savior. I believe you died for me and that your death is effective for putting away all my sin. We pray that some might respond positively to the voice of the Lord Jesus today.

In his worthy name, amen.

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