



Samson

By Marcus Lander (1993)

*And Israel sinned against the Lord
Who forsook them to their foes,
To vex and try them by the sword
And prove them with many woes.*

*And God beheld his children's tears
While under bondage forty years.
With their oppressors there was power
Until the Lord's appointed hour.*

*Thus said the angel to Manoah's wife,
"Thy barren womb shall bring forth life,
You'll hear a son - a Nazarite,
A judge of Israel, a man of might."*

*"Be sure to eat no unclean thing
And taste no wine nor heady drink,
And when this happens as I've said
Beware you never shave his head."*

*So Manoah offered to the Lord
A kid with flour - and oil poured
Upon a rock, and as the flame to heav'n climb'd
The angel mounted up on high.*

*And so at last it came to be
That God fulfilled this prophecy.
Thus was Samson born in Zorah
To the family of Manoah.*

*The child grew, became a man
And wandered in the camp of Dan,
Between Zorah and Eshtaol
Along the west of Israel.*

*But Samson loved a Philistine maid
And thus his parents he dismayed:
They knew not this was God's design
To free them from the Philistines.*

*Then Samson went to stake his claim,
And so to Timnath's vineyards came,
A lion attacked him as he went,
But by God's Spirit its flesh he rent.*



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*He seized the beast about the mane
And on his own he overcame.
He left it dead upon the floor,
Thus Samson slew the predator.*

*And Samson liked the woman well
And so soon after it befell
That he went up to wed his bride,
But on the way he turned aside.*

*And found the carcass of his prey
Just as he'd left it, there it lay,
But 'neath the velvet of its hide
Some bees had made a nest inside.*

*Then Samson took the honey sweet
And also made his parents eat
But told them not from whence it came.
T'was underneath a lion's mane.*

*At the feast before his guests
Samson set the following test:
"Out of the eater came forth meat,
Out of the strong came something sweet."*

*"Just seven days I give to you
To solve this riddle, but if you do,
Then thirty sheets and equal raiment
I'll give to you to act as payment."*

*"But if you fail to do this task
Then from you all the same I ask.
Accept this challenge if you dare
But if you'd rather not - forbare."*

*For three long days they wracked their brains
But got no further for their pains,
At last to Samson's wife they went
And asked her what the riddle meant.*

*When she replied she did not know
They threatened her and bade her go
And by some devious means find out
What the riddle was about.*



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*But if she'd be a faithful wife
They'd burn her kin and take her life.
Frightened by their awful threat
She went to Samson quite upset.*

*And begged that he would nothing hide
But everything in her confide.
Told him she would look a fool
If he would not tell her all.*

*And when he saw her so distressed
Then he at last to her confessed;
He told her all, kept nothing back,
But loosed old Felix from the sack.*

*Then she went to tell the guests
The long-awaited answer to their quest.
So just before the evening fell
The same to Samson they did tell.*

*Then Samson flew into a rage.
Just how he felt is hard to gauge.
He said, "If you'd not made my heifer plough,
I know you'd still be guessing now!"*

*He leaves the feast with angry words,
Then at his side his sword he girds,
In Ashkelon he slays some men
And takes their robes, one score and ten.*

*Then Samson gave his guests the spoil
And left the wife who'd been disloyal.
Back to Zorah Samson went,
But to return was his intent.*

*But when he'd gone, his wife was wed
Unto another man instead.
Then Samson's passion once more burned
And so to Timnath he returned.*

*For his wife he brought a kid
For he forgave her all she did
But who should meet him at the door?
None other than his father-in-law.*



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*Who firmly told the angry lover
His wife was married to another.
Then Samson's anger knew no bound
And thrice one hundred foxes found.*

*He took two cubs and made a pair
And to their tails he tied a flare.
With every pair he did the same
And after this he took a flame.*

*And lit each flare, half fifteen score
And let them go in fields of corn.
They burned up all the sheaves and shocks
Together with the olive crops.*

*When the Philistines saw the fire,
Of it's cause they did enquire
And ere the fire had yet grown cold,
Of Samson's arson they were told.*

*Then burned they both his friend and bride;
And so amidst the flames they died.
They thought at last the day was won,
But Samson could not be outdone.*

*Many Philistines he slew
And then to Etam's rock he flew,
He climbed right to the mountain's top
And lived awhile upon the rock.*

*Through Judah's land the Philistines came;
To capture Samson was their aim.
Across the wilderness they tramped
And then at last at Lehi camped.*

*Then up to Samson's hideaway
Three thousand men of Judah came.
He pleaded with them not to kill,
And then submitted to their will.*

*Upon the hill they bound him fast
When they'd agreed to what he'd asked.
Down to Lehi they carried him
According to the foe's cruel whim.*



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*And when they saw their quarry bound
The Philistines made a joyful sound.
Loud and clear rang out the cry,
"Kill him!" "Let the traitor die!"*

*Then Samson strained beneath his bands
And so the ropes fell from his hands,
As melts the flax before the fire,
Thus snapped the bonds 'neath Samson's ire.*

*Then Samson took an ass's jaw
And slew one thousand men of war.
With fearsome rage he smote his foes,
And so they fell beneath his blows.*

*Thus Samson made a mighty slaughter
And then he cried to God for water,
Who heard his prayer and clove the jaw
At the place of En-hakkore.*

*Water gushed forth from the hollow,
More than enough for him to swallow,
And so he drank and so revived
And then at Gaza he arrived.*

*And Samson met a harlot there
With whom he had a love affair;
But soon his dwelling place was found
The Philistines came and camped around*

*To wait until the morning came,
When Samson's life they hoped to claim.
But Samson after midnight rose
And from the house he softly goes.*

*He takes the gates upon his back
Before the Philistines attack.
He grabs the posts with beams and all,
And tears them from the city wall.*

*He carried them up to a hill
And set them on a grassy rill,
Then off to Sorek Samson went
And dwelt within Delilah's tent.*



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*The Philistines let out a groan
When they saw their prey had flown,
But soon they hatched another plan
To try to catch this lustful man.*

*The Philistines to Delilah stole
And offered money for Samson's soul,
Delilah consented for a fee
To join them in their treachery.*

*Fifty-five hundred silver coin
They'd give to her, their side to join,
And on her victim's feelings play
And so find out where his strength lay.*

*So Samson fell to sinful living
And gave away his strength to women,
His substance to the bane of kings
Which only ever heartache brings.*

*He knew not that he'd sink to hell
If he succumbed beneath her spell.
More bitter than the pangs of death
Is she whose heart is snares and nets.*

*Enchanted by her lovely face,
Her soft sweet voice and gentle grace,
He failed to see the hidden danger
In this dark-eyed, black-haired stranger.*

*He saw the serpent's shining eyes
With all their power to hypnotise
But 'neath her beauty she had vice
And venom of the cockatrice.*

*As the serpent so the lizard;
Beware the dagger in thy gizzard.
Behind the charm there is a chain
For those who will not think again.*

*Like the poison's emerald hue
Beauty can hide peril too;
And though the chalice may enthrall
All those who drink will taste the gall.*



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*As hastes the bird unto the snare
And knows not there is peril there:
As sparks that tend toward the sky;
So doth man to trouble fly.*

*"Tell me I pray", Delilah asked,
"Which is the way to bind thee fast.
"With seven withs," the man replied,
"Still olive green and not yet dried."*

*He fell asleep upon her breast
Ere Samson's cheek she'd long caressed;
And while he slept she tightly bound
His limbs without a single sound.*

*And then she whispered in his ear,
"Wake up, the Philistines are here."
Slowly Samson woke from sleep
And rose and stood upon his feet.*

*And yawned and stretched, and shook his hands.
And from his body fell his bands
Which with such care Delilah tied;
And so the withs he cast aside.*

*"Why mock me so?", Delilah wept
And to her feet in anger leapt.
"Now tell me where your great strength lies"
If my love you don't despise."*

*Two more times did Samson so,
And each time did his bonds o'erthrow,
But though three times with lies he'd tricked,
Delilah simply wasn't licked.*

*As constant dropping on a rainy day,
She nagged at him to get her way,
Until he wearied of his life
Beneath the scolding of his wife.*

*He longed to live upon the roof
And so escape his wife's reproof.
Thus by the cunning of her art,
Delilah stole her victim's heart.*



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*Then Samson broke beneath her scolds
And so at last his secret told.
"My mighty strength is in my hair,
For never came a razor there."*

*Upon her lap to him she crooned
Until he fell into a swoon,
And then upon her pretty frocks
She made a barber shave his locks.*

*And then to him Delilah spoke
And so from sleep he soon awoke.
He rose to go like other times
And vanquish all the Philistines.*

*He knew not that his God had left
And of his strength he'd been bereft.
His enemies hurled him to the ground
And then in brazen fetters bound.*

*And then they plucked out both his eyes
And laughed at Samson's anguished cries.
To Gaza's prison house forlorn
Was Samson sent to grind the corn.*

*Forced to work against his will,
Round and round he pushed the mill,
And cursed himself for one big fool
As now he laboured like a mule.*

*And if by chance his feet should slip
His driver smote him with his whip
Upon his back he felt the pain
Through the torment of his brain.*

*To Dagon sacrifice was made
And at his feet an offering laid,
And God beheld their revelry
And scorned their pagan devilry.*

*Thus soon it came to pass hereafter
That Samson heard their raucous laughter.
The Philistines had made a feast
Now Samson's mighty acts had ceased.*



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*Then someone had a wicked thought,
"Bring Samson here to make us sport"
And so before the gathered throng,
Their foe in chains they brought along.*

*Of their foe they made ill use;
They heaped and piled him with abuse;
To Samson was no mercy shown,
But they forgot, his hair had grown.*

*Three thousand men, both knaves and Lords,
Sat drinking out of golden gourds;
And on a parapet of wood
In regal dress Delilah stood.*

*He could not see her with his eyes
But still he heard her mocking cries:
"Look! There the mighty Samson stands
With iron chains about his hands."*

*Then to Jehovah Samson prayed
As through the hall, his way, he made;
And with each hand he grasped a pillar.
In concentration bowed the killer.*

*And God looked down on Samson's plight
As he strained with all his might;
And filled him with his Spirit's power,
And gave him strength in this last hour.*

*The pillars fell, the house collapsed;
And all within to silence lapsed.
Thus Samson died beneath the rubble.
His days were short and full of trouble.*

*Their shrieks and cries rent through the air,
Then fell a deathly stillness there.
In halls where shouts of mirth once reigned
There came the stillness of the slain.*

*Cashluhim's sons of Ham's accursed seed
Lie slain by Samson's final deed.
Crushed beneath the scattered stones
Lie Samson's victims' battered bones.*



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*His family came for his remains
And laid them in his father's grave;
Between Zorah and Eshtaol
There lies the judge of Israel.*