

----- Eli-Samson 40 years -----

2848a AM, 3557 JP, 1157 BC

378. When Abdon died, he was buried at Pirathon in mount Ephraim. {#Jud 12:15} After him came Eli, who judged Israel for forty years. {#1Sa 4:18} He was also the high priest. This high priesthood was transferred from the descendants of Eleazar to Ithamar.

2848c AM, 3558 JP, 1156 BC

379. When Israel sinned again, God delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for the next forty years. {#Jud 13:1} This was the Israelites' sixth oppression, which we think ended seven months after the death of Eli, when the ark was brought back again. Hence, it was about the beginning of the third month, called Sivan, when Eli began to judge Israel.

2848d AM, 3558 JP, 1156 BC

380. An angel appeared to the wife of Manoah of the tribe of Dan at Zorah. He told her that she, though barren, would conceive and bear a son. This child would be a Nazarite who would begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. {#Jud 13:5}

2849b AM, 3559 JP, 1155 BC

381. As foretold by the angel, Samson the Nazarite was born at Zorah. {#Jud 13:24,25} It seems he was conceived after the forty years of oppression by the Philistines had begun. {#Jud 13:1-5} He avenged the Israelites against the Philistines for twenty years. {#Jud 15:20} Obviously, Samson's birth could not have happened later unless he was judging Israel before he was eighteen years old, which seems unlikely.

2867d AM, 3577 JP, 1137 BC

383. While Eli was executing the office of a judge in civil causes at the time of the Philistines, Samson picked a quarrel against him because he was engaged to marry a woman of Timnah. Samson had begun to judge the Israelites at the age of twenty-two. {#Jud 14:4} On the day of his betrothal, he had killed a lion with his bare hands. He made a bet at the wedding feast and propounded a riddle to the guests. When he had lost, because his wife had told them the meaning of the riddle, he went off in a rage and killed thirty men of Askelon. He gave these wedding guests the suits of clothing which he had stripped off his victims' bodies to fulfil the terms of the wager, and returned home to his father. [E32]

2868c AM, 3578 JP, 1136 BC

384. At harvest time, Samson went to present his wife with a kid at her father's house, but found that she had been given away in marriage to another man. He then sought revenge by catching three hundred foxes and tying fire brands to their tails. He turned them all loose in the Philistines' grain fields, vineyards and olive gardens, setting these all ablaze. The Philistines were very angry, so they took Samson's wife and father-in-law and burned them to death. In revenge, Samson killed a large number of them and sat down upon the rock of Etam. [L47] From there, three thousand Jews arrested him and delivered him to the Philistines. He then killed one thousand of these Philistine men with the jawbone of an ass. When Samson prayed in that place called Lehi, God opened a hole in the jawbone and from it came a fountain of water. This fountain was called Enhakkore, meaning the fountain of him who called upon God. He refreshed himself with the water from this fountain, because he was thirsty and ready to faint. {#Jud 15:1-20}

2887c AM, 3597 JP, 1117 BC

385. Delilah, Samson's concubine, betrayed him by cutting his hair, the symbol of his Nazarite vow, and delivered him to the Philistines. They plucked out his eyes and carried him

away prisoner to Gaza. They put him in prison and bound him with chains of brass.

2887d AM, 3597 JP, 1117 BC

385a. In prison, his hair grew again and his strength was renewed. He pulled down the temple of Dagon while the princes of the Philistines and a large number of the people were in it. More men were killed when the temple fell, including Samson himself, than he had killed in all his lifetime. He was buried with his father between Zorah and Eshtaol. He had judged Israel for twenty years. {#Jud 16:30,31}

2888a AM, 3597 JP, 1117 BC

386. The Israelites took courage from this great loss of the Philistines, and gathered together to a camp near Ebenezer (named by the prophet Samuel when, twenty-one years later, the Philistines were overthrown by him in the very same place). {#1Sa 4:1 7:12} There the Israelites lost four thousand men. When they sent for the ark of the covenant from Shiloh to be brought into the camp, the Philistines saw all that was at stake. During that battle the Philistines encouraged one another to be strong and fight lest, they said:

"we be forced hereafter to live in slavery under the Hebrews as they have been under us."

387. In that second battle, thirty thousand Israelites were killed. The ark of God was taken by the Philistines and Hophni and Phinehas, the two priests and sons of Eli, were killed there. When Eli heard the news, he fell off his chair backward and broke his neck for he was very fat. Furthermore, his daughter-in-law, the wife of his son Phinehas, went into labour because she was pregnant, and she delivered a son called Ichabod, and died. {#1Sa 4:1-22} When the Philistines took the ark of God, they carried it to Ashdod and placed it in the temple of their god, Dagon.

388. Twice, Dagon was found lying prostrate and broken before the ark on the ground. Some of the inhabitants of the place died of the plague, and some were struck with filthy tumours in their private parts. {#1Sa 5:9 Ps 78:66} They moved the ark from there, first to the Gittites and later to the Ekronites. However, the same plagues occurred wherever it went. After seven months, on the advice of their priests, the Philistines sent the ark home again with gifts into the land of the Israelites. Around the beginning of the third month, during wheat harvest time, fifty thousand and seventy men of Bethshemesh were killed for looking inside the ark. {#1Sa 5:1-6:1,13-19} From there, the ark was moved and carried to

the house of Aminadab in Gibeah, on the hill of the city of Kirjathjearim. {#1Sa 7:1,2, 2Sa 6:3,4} This place was inhabited by the tribe of Judah and was also called Baalah and Kirjathbaal. {#1Ch 13:6 Jos 15:9,60} However, all this time the tabernacle where God was worshipped remained at Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim. {#Jud 18:31 1Sa 14:3}

1 Samuel 4

17 So the messenger answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God has been captured."

18 Then it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

Judges 13

1 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

2 Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children.

3 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

4 "Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean.

5 "For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

24 So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

Judges 15

12 But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines." Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves."

13 So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like

flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.

15 He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it.

16 Then Samson said: "With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!"

17 And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.

18 Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?"

19 So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.

20 And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Judges 16

21 Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.

22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said: "Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!"

24 When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: "Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead."

25 So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.

26 Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them."

27 Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.

28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.

30 Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.

31 And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.