

Judaistik

Scandinavian Jewish Studies

Current

Archives

Editorial Team &
Board

About

Vol 24 No 1-2

[Home](#) / [Archives](#) / [\(2003\)](#) / [Articles](#)

The strange biography of Samson

Yair Zakovitch

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30752/nj.69597>

Keywords: Bible, Old Testament -- Criticism, interpretation, Jewish, Samson, Bible, Judges, Monotheism, Myth in the Old Testament

Abstract

The biblical story of the life of Samson hides much from the reader&&the Book of Judges has deleted from the story elements that were deemed improper for the book's placement among the Holy Scriptures. In this article, the author shows how the Bible transforms Samson from a mythological hero, the son of a god, to a mere mortal whose extraordinary strength came through the spirit of God that rested with him so long as he kept his Nazirite vows. The biblical storyteller could not prevent the story of Samson from entering into the biblical corpus since it was a tale of tremendous popularity. He thus told it in such a way as to bring it closer to his monotheistic beliefs and world-view. In its 'biblical' form the story does not bring honor to the figure of Samson, and so his placement as the last of the judges in the Book of Judges prepares the reader for the establishment of the institution of kingship, in the Book of Samuel.

 PDF

ISSUE

[Vol 24 No 1-2 \(2003\)](#)

SECTION

Articles

PUBLISHED

Sep 1, 2003

HOW TO CITE

Zakovitch, Y. (2003). The strange biography of Samson. *Nordisk judaistik/Scandinavian Jewish Studies*, 24(1-2), 19-36.
<https://doi.org/10.30752/nj.69597>

Copyright (c) 2003 Yair Zakovitch



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Nordisk judaistik/Scandinavian Jewish Studies aims at promoting Jewish studies in Scandinavia by publishing scholarly articles, surveys and documents, by reviewing recent literature, and compiling bibliographies. The journal is multidisciplinary and welcomes articles from a vast range of research fields within which Jewish themes are analysed.



CURRENT ISSUE



ISSN 0348-1646 eISSN 2343-4929



Platform &
workflow by
OJS / PKP

Accessibility

Samson is the third to last of the Judges of the ancient Children of Israel mentioned in the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible) and the Talmud. He is described in the Book of Judges chapters 13 to 16. The Book of Samson also appears in Josephus's Antiquities of the Jews, written in the last ten years of the 1st Century AD, as well as in works slightly earlier. Samson is known for being given great strength by God to use against those who do not like him and to do great things that regular people cannot do Samson, legendary

Please read our new [privacy policy](#).

I ACCEPT