

## Judges 14:1—15:20 **Samson and his Philistine wife in Timnah**

### Samson desires a woman in Timnah as wife

<sup>1</sup> Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. <sup>2</sup> 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." <sup>3</sup> Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well." <sup>4</sup> But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD--that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. <sup>5</sup> So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.

### Samson killed a young lion

Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. <sup>6</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

### The woman pleased Samson well

<sup>7</sup> Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

### Honey from lion carcass

<sup>8</sup> After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion. <sup>9</sup> He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

### Samson, the wedding feast and the riddle

<sup>10</sup> So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. <sup>11</sup> And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. <sup>12</sup> Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. <sup>13</sup> But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing." And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it." <sup>14</sup> So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet."  
Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

<sup>15</sup> But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? Is that not so?"

<sup>16</sup> Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me." And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained it to my father or my mother; so should I explain it to you?" <sup>17</sup> Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people.

18 So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down:

"What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them:

"If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!"

19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house.

### Samson's wife given to his best man

20 And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

Judges 15:1-20

### Samson forbidden access to his wife – She is given to another – Her younger sister offered in exchange

1 After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into her room." But her father would not permit him to go in. 2 Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."

### Samson, 300 foxes, burn Philistine grain fields, vineyards and olive groves

3 And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" 4 Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves.

### Philistine retaliation

6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

### Samson's revenge

7 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." 8 So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

### Men of Judah deliver Samson to the Philistines

9 Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us." 11 Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them." 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.

### Samson killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey

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.

### Water from the hollow in 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.

### Samson judged Israel 20 years

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

#### Facts Revealed:

#### Samson desires a woman in Timnah as wife

✧ Now Samson went down to Timnah, 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." [Judges 14:1-2]

✧ Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well." [Judges 14:3]

✧ The Holy Spirit was moving Samson and using his own nature to accomplish the Will of God. [Judges 13:25]

✧ Samson's parents were looking at the situation from a human perspective and did not realize that it was of the Lord to accomplish the beginning of the fall of the Philistines.

✧ Samson only knew that the woman pleased him well.

✧ But **his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD--that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines.** For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. [Judges 14:4-5]

✧ Samson's father and mother went with Samson to meet the woman of Samson's affection and her family, and begin the engagement process.

✧ The Philistines still had dominion over Israel.

✧ So often, when the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of ourselves or others we know, from a human perspective it is hard to discern His plan or purpose in the behavior we witness.

- ✧ God knew the future and what would happen with Samson and his love life, and what God would accomplish through it all.

### Samson killed a young lion

- ✧ Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. And **Ruach Yehowah (the Spirit of the LORD – Holy Spirit) came mightily upon him**, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. [Judges 14:5-6]
- ✧ The timing with the lion was the work of God, and the Holy Spirit empowered Samson to kill the lion with his bare hands.
- ✧ The doing was Samson's, but the occasion, will, and enablement, were Yehowah's.
- ✧ This incident began to build confidence in Samson for the greater work ahead for him.
- ✧ Samson kept the thing to himself.

### The woman pleased Samson well

- ✧ Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. [Judges 14:7]
- ✧ This is the second time we are told that the woman pleased Samson well, to express the depth of desire he felt for her.
- ✧ So many men today are driven by blind desire, without thinking of the consequence of the fulfillment of the particular desire. [James 4:1-2]

### Honey from lion carcass

- ✧ After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion. He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion. [Judges 14:8-9]
- ✧ When Samson returned it was to take her as his wife, and his parents came also for the wedding.
- ✧ According to the Law of God, Anyone who touches a carcass is made unclean. [Leviticus 5:2]

### Samson, the wedding feast and the riddle [Judges 15:10-19]

- ✧ So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. [Judges 14:10]
- ✧ The father's visit to the bride was as the groom's family representative to show family acceptance of the union and the father's duty was to get the bride for his son.
- ✧ Marriages were arranged by the parents of both bride and groom or by a match-maker as in the case where Abraham sent his servant to Padan Aram to get a wife for Isaac. [Genesis 24:1-4]
- ✧ It was the same reasoning that caused Samson at first to asked his father to get her for him as a wife. [Judges 14:1-2]
- ✧ Samson made a feast as was customary.
- ✧ And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. [Judges 14:11]
- ✧ The Philistines brought thirty "companions" to keep an eye on Samson as enemy spies.

### The Riddle

- ✧ Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing." And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it." [Judges 14:12-13]
- ✧ So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet."

Now for three days they could not explain the riddle. [Judges 14:14]

✧ But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "**Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? Is that not so?**" [Judges 14:15]

✧ The threat of violence was real because of the savage nature of the Philistine "companions" who were enemies of Israel and disapproved of the wedding. They were therefore willing to turn on the family of the bride with violence.

✧ The Philistines could not accept being bettered by the enemy even in a riddle.

✧ The effectiveness of the threat is demonstrated by the following behavior of the bride.

✧ Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me." And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained it to my father or my mother; so should I explain it to you?" [Judges 14:16]

✧ Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people. [Judges 14:17]

✧ So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down:

"What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them:

"If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!" [Judges 14:18]

✧ Then **Ruach Yehowah (the Spirit of the LORD – Holy Spirit)** came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. [Judges 14:19]

✧ God was beginning to move against the Philistines and seeking an occasion against them. [Judges 14:4]

✧ The Holy Spirit provided the enablement for Samson to do mighty exploits against the Philistines.

✧ The Philistines were one of the nations Israel had been commanded to dispossess. [Joshua 13:1-6]

✧ Samson paid the price agreed upon when the riddle was introduced, by killing thirty Philistines and giving their apparel to the thirty Philistine "companions."

✧ Samson returned to his father's house in anger, leaving his bride in her father's house in Timnah.

**Samson's wife given to his best man**

✧ And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man. [Judges 14:20]

✧ The father of the bride saw that Samson had left her in his house, so he gave her to one of the thirty Philistine "companions" that had been brought to the wedding.

## Judges 15:1-20

### Samson forbidden access to his wife – She is given to another – Her younger sister offered in exchange

- ✧ After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into her room." But her father would not permit him to go in. Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead." [Judges 15:1-2]
- ✧ Samson waited until the time of wheat harvest to return for his wife, and he brought a young goat as a gesture of appeasement for her father.
- ✧ Her father had already given her as wife to the Philistine "Companion" so Samson could not see her.
- ✧ Her father made an excuse and offered his younger daughter in her place.

### Samson, 300 foxes, burn Philistine grain fields, vineyards and olive groves

- ✧ And Samson said to them,  
"This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!"
- ✧ Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves. [Judges 15:3-5]
- ✧ Jealousy and the Holy Spirit drove Samson to respond by burning the crops of the Philistine enemy, just as the Philistines had been destroying the harvest of the Children of Israel for 40 years. [Judges 10:6-7, 13:1]

### Philistine retaliation

- ✧ Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. [Judges 15:6]
- ✧ The threat of the Philistines at the time of the wedding was not an idle threat, and now they demonstrated that they could do exactly as vile as they had threatened. [Judges 14:15, 15:6]

### Samson's revenge

- ✧ Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." **So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.** [Judges 15:7-8]
- ✧ By the enablement of the Holy Spirit, Samson was able to accomplish a great feat as the move of Yehowah grew against the Philistines [Judges 13:25, 14:4, 19]
- ✧ This served to entice the Philistines to increase their oppression against Israel.

### Men of Judah deliver Samson to the Philistines

- ✧ Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. [Judges 15:9]
- ✧ And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us." [Judges 15:10]
- ✧ Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them." But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines." [Judges 15:11-12]
- ✧ Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves." 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. [Judges 15:12-13]

- ✧ The tribe of Judah gets embroiled in the conflict between Samson and the Philistines.
- ✧ Samson made an agreement with the men of Judah and allowed them to bind him and deliver him to the Philistines.

### Samson killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey – Ramath Lehi

- ✧ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then **Ruach Yehowah (the Spirit of the LORD – Holy Spirit)** 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. He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. Then Samson said: [Judges 15:14-16]

"With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!" [Judges 15:16]

- ✧ And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi. [Judges 15:17]

### Water from the hollow in Lehi

- ✧ Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to Yehowah (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?" [Judges 15:18]
- ✧ 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. [Judges 15:19]

### Samson judged Israel 20 years

- ✧ **Samson judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.** [Judges 15:20]