

**T**HEN WENT SAMSON down,  
 AND HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER, to TIMNATH,  
 AND CAME to the VINEYARDS  
 of TIMNATH: AND, behold,  
 A young LION  
 ROARED AGAINST HIM.

Judges 14v5



וירד  
 שמשון  
 ואביו ואמו, תִּמְנַתָּה,  
 ויבאו, עד-כַּרְמֵי תִּמְנַתָּה,  
 והנה כִּפִּיר אֲרִיֹת,  
 שָׁאג לִקְרֹאתוֹ.

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## **Judges 14:1-14** **(Samson, Judge of Israel, Part III)**

In the verses of the passage today, it appears Samson is pulling a fast one on the Philistines. At least, that is how I have always taken it. Imagine someone finding a turtle shell filled with a hornet's nest and making up a riddle about it.

That would be a really tough riddle to solve unless you knew the context. In fact, most people posed with such a riddle would say you were cheating because there is no common reference to know what is being asked.

However, there are a couple of possible explanations for why this is not necessarily the case with Samson's riddle. As I didn't go searching for more, there could be plenty of other things that might make such a riddle less difficult than it seems.

This is not unlike the word itself. When you first pick it up, it seems mysterious, even baffling. One Jew who wrote a book about his time reading the Bible and trying to observe everything required in the books of Moses said something like, "This book must be the word of God. Otherwise, it makes no sense at all."

That is how many in the church read the word today. They claim to believe it is the word of God, and yet they state that it is incomprehensible to them.

However, when one looks at the word through the lens of Christ, it eventually makes complete sense.

**Text Verse:** *"But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. <sup>15</sup> But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. <sup>16</sup> Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."*

*-2 Corinthians 3:14-16*

There are problems with many who attempt to interpret the Bible, even when Jesus is the lens by which they do so. One of the problems is a lack of knowing the word sufficiently to understand the context. Another is having an incorrect understanding of the word, even if a passage is known.

People have a tendency to insert their beliefs into typology, even if what they think is incorrect. I was curious about a couple of verses in this passage and did a search on possible interpretations. Some were so outlandish that they left the realm of possibility behind.

Some had a general feel for what is going on, but they misapplied many of the details being conveyed. This is the case with a lot of older scholars. They don't understand the dispensational model and so they shove unrelated ideas into areas where they don't belong.

In the end, we all need to carefully consider what we hear and then evaluate if it makes sense or not. Checking with several sources can help weed out improbable options as you remind yourself about things that you have learned.

Consider what you are presented with, enjoy the participation in God's word, but be careful not to simply accept what you hear at face value. We have gray matter in our heads for a reason. Use it wisely and judiciously.

In the end, when we look carefully, we will always see that great things are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. She Pleases Me Well (verses 1-6)**

We had the introduction of Samson in Chapter 13 but the actual narrative of his life begins here in Chapter 14. Judges 13 ended, saying –

“So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. <sup>25</sup>And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.” Judges 13:24, 25

With that remembered, Chapter 14 begins with...

**<sup>1</sup>Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.**

*vayered Shimshon timnathah vayar ishah b'timnathah mib'noth plishtim* – “And descends, Samson, Timnah-ward. And sees woman Timnah-ward from daughters Philistines.” The narrative of Samson's life jumps right into a note about women. From here, it will be a constant and main theme of his existence, driving him along the path of his life.

Timnah was a town that lay on the northern border of the tribe of Judah. It was assigned to Judah in Joshua 15:10, but then it is designated as a city of Dan in Joshua 19:43.

This city is probably the same as noted in Genesis 38 in the story of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. If the same location, it is noted twelve times in the Old Testament in Genesis, Joshua, Judges, and 2 Chronicles.

However, in Joshua 15 and 2 Chronicles, it is spelled Timnah. All other times, it says Timnathah, meaning either Timnah-ward (in the direction of) or “her Timnah” (showing possession). Today, the location is known as Tel Batash, an archaeological site lying along the Soreq Valley about 4 miles northwest of the popular tourist site Beth Shemesh.

As for the words “and descends,” this indicates that he dwelt in an area elevated above Timnah. In Genesis, however, Judah is said to have ascended to Timnah. Thus, if it is the same location, Judah dwelt in an area lower in elevation. Otherwise, two different locations might be indicated.

The fact that he went to Timnah indicates that there was at least a sense of harmony between Israel and the Philistines. This is more evident from the note about seeing a daughter of the Philistines. Samson is interested.

Samson’s name comes from *shemesh*, the sun. The *vav-nun* extension that ends his name either localizes or personifies it. Thus, his name means Sun Man, Place of the Sun, Sun-like, Sunlight, or something similar. Jones’ says Splendid Sun.

Timnah (Heb: Thimnathah) means Allotted Portion.

The Philistines means the Weakeners or something similar.

<sup>2</sup> **So he went up and told his father and mother,**

*vayaal vayaged l’aviv u-l’imo* – “And ascends, and declares to his father and to his mother.” Samson is said to ascend from Timnah to where he resided with his parents at Mahaneh Dan, located between Zorah and Eshtaol, as noted earlier. He has something on his mind that his parents would be involved in...

<sup>2 (con’t)</sup> **saying, “I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines;**

*vayomer ishah raiti b’timnathah mib’noth plishtim* – “and says, ‘Woman, I saw, in Timnah-ward from daughters Philistines.’” Samson has eyes for a Philistine woman. Although she is not of Israel, she is also not one of those forbidden to be intermarried with as indicated in Deuteronomy 7 –

“When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, <sup>2</sup> and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. <sup>3</sup> Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. <sup>4</sup> For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. <sup>5</sup> But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.” Deuteronomy 7:1-5

The Philistines were not natives of the land, and thus not under the ban. Despite not being of Israel, there is room for Samson to act in this manner without violating the law, even if the spirit and intent of the law would be to stay away from foreign women in Canaan. As such, he petitions his mom and dad...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **now therefore, get her for me as a wife.”**

*v'atah q'hu othah li l'ishah* – “And now, take her to me to wife.” Arranged marriages were common in Israel at the time, and they still occur in cultures and countries today. Deuteronomy 7:3 noted, “You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.”

This pertains to the list of seven nations noted there, but the point is that it was cultural to arrange marriages for a son still living in the house. There would normally be an agreed upon dowry which the parents would pay. That is seen, for example, in Genesis 34 –

“Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, ‘Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. <sup>12</sup> Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife.’” Genesis 34:11, 12

It continued on after the time of Samson as well –

“Then Saul said, ‘Thus you shall say to David: ‘The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies.’ But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. <sup>26</sup> So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the

king's son-in-law. Now the days had not expired; <sup>27</sup> therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife." 1 Samuel 18:25-27

This is what Samson is petitioning for. His eyes are on the Philistine woman and he wants her as wife. His parents are the ones who are to secure her for him through an arrangement with her parents and the payment of any dowry that is expected.

<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,**

The words are masculine singular even though mom is included: *vayomer lo aviv v'imo haen bivnoth akhekha u-b'khal ami ishah* – "And says to him, his father and his mother, not in daughters your brothers and in all my people woman?" Their obvious disappointment in Samson's choice of women is highlighted.

The father, using an argument known as *a minore ad maius*, from lesser to greater, first notes the daughters of your brothers, meaning, "of the tribe of Dan." He then says, "in all my people," as a way of saying, "out of all of Israel." In essence, he is saying, "Out of all of the tribe of Dan, there isn't a woman you like? How about from all the women of Israel? Not one? How can it be..."

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?"**

*ki atah holekh laqakhath ishah miplishtim haarelim* – "For you walking to take woman from Philistines, the foreskinned?" Samson descended to the area of Timnah when he could have walked in any direction in Canaan where Israelites were. Instead, he walked down toward Timnah and down in his choice of women, selecting one from the foreskinned Philistines!

The word here is *arel*, foreskin. Rather than "uncircumcised," which is an explanation, the father gives the descriptor, calling them "the foreskinned." It is a sign of reproach that was exactly addressed in Genesis 34:13, 14 –

"But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. <sup>14</sup> And they said to them, 'We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that *would be* a reproach to us.'"

Even though this is dealing with a woman, she is the product of a union of the foreskinned. Her culture reflects that state in the thinking of the people of Israel. John Gill says, “Ben Gersom observes, that their Rabbins say he made her a proselyte first, though he did not acquaint his parents with it.”

That is a false assertion on the surface. First, the point is that she is a product of the foreskinned Philistines. But more, if she had been converted, Samson would have argued that point and the text would have assured us that it was so. Further, such an assertion misses the entire point of the narrative, as will be seen.

There is another reason that this attraction has come about. It is first noted by Samson and will be further clarified in the next verse. For now...

<sup>3</sup> (con't) **And Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she pleases me well.”**

*vayomer Shimshon el aviv othah qakh li ki hi yash'rah b'enay* – “And says, Samson, unto his father, ‘Her taking to me. For she leveled in my eyes.’” The reason why Samson wants her is because he is enticed by her. The word *yashar* that he uses forms an idiomatic expression which is similar to what we might say in English.

It means to be smooth or straight. As such, that is then used to figuratively signify things such as pleasing, right, good, upright, esteemed, and so forth. But to take the word literally and in the perfect aspect of the verb, she was leveled in his eyes.

We talk in a similar way by saying, “She is right on the level to me.” The girl looked right in whatever way Samson was attracted to women and so he has petitioned for his parents to act on his behalf...

<sup>4</sup> **But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord—**

Only the Peshitta and the ISV translate these words in the way I do: *v'aviv v'imo lo yadu ki me'Yehovah hi* – “And his father and his mother no knew for from Yehovah, she.” All other translations say that the feminine word *hi* should be translated as “it,” and thus, “it was from the Lord.”

However, translating it that way must look forward to the feminine word “occasion” of the next clause. Rather, it is looking back to the words of the previous verse – *ki hi yash'rah b'enay* – “For she leveled in my eyes.” Here is how the ISV translates this –

“Meanwhile, his father and mother did not know that she was from the LORD.”

Probably, translators, following innumerable scholars' comments, don't want to give the sense that the Lord would choose a Philistine for Samson and so they translate this as "it," meaning a matter that the Lord is dealing with, instead of "she" having been chosen by the Lord to attract Samson.

As for the content of this clause, when the Lord first appeared to his mother, He said –

“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.” Judges 13:5

This turn of events must have made them question that assertion by the Lord. Here he was raised as a Nazirite to God, and yet he is seeking to marry a girl who isn't even of the covenant people. This probably had them completely conflicted in their hearts and minds. One can think of the prophecy that was spoken to Mary –

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

-Luke 1:31-33

Later, she heard the prophecy of Simeon –

“For my eyes have seen Your salvation  
<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,  
And the glory of Your people Israel.” Luke 2:30-32

That was immediately followed up with these words –

“Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” Luke 2:34, 35

Whether Mary remembered these things or not, the same state of mental confusion must have ruled her thoughts that here run through the minds of Samson parents. Despite this, we are informed that this was of the Lord...

<sup>4 (con't)</sup> **that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines.**



There is a question about who “he” is referring to. Is it the Lord or Samson: *ki toanah hu m’baqesh miplishtim* – “for opportunity He seeking from Philistines.” The NKJV assumes it is the Lord because they capitalize He. I agree with this. The nearest masculine antecedent is the Lord, not Samson.

The Lord is using the girl to whom Samson is attracted as the efficient cause to incite Samson to act against the Philistines. In the words is a new and rare noun, *ta’anah*, opportunity. This is the first of two times it will be seen. The second is in Jeremiah 2:24 when referring to the time of copulation of a wild donkey –

“A wild donkey used to the wilderness,  
That sniffs at the wind in her desire;  
In her time of mating [*ta’anah*], who can turn her away?  
All those who seek her will not weary themselves;  
In her month they will find her.” Jeremiah 2:24

The state of Samson at this time is not unlike that of the wild donkey. He is fixated on his desire and who can turn him away from it? The Lord is using this opportunity to cause Samson to act against the Philistines. This is then exactly explained in the next words...

<sup>4</sup> (con’t) **For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.**

*uvaeth ha’hi plishtim moshlim b’yisrael* – “and in the time, the it, Philistines ruling in Israel.” Judges 10 noted that Israel did evil in the eyes of Yehovah and His anger burned against them. Therefore, He delivered them into the hands of their enemies, including the Philistines. This is the time that is being referred to.

Chapters 11 and 12 dealt with Jephthah east of the Jordan. That was followed by the chronological rules of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, all of which were explained regarding the typology.

Samson now returns to the thought of Judges 10 and deals with matters west of the Jordan where the Philistines were mentioned as those from whom the Lord had delivered Israel. The people cried out to Him as was noted in Judges 10:15, 16. Samson has been chosen to initiate their deliverance. It is with a Gentile woman that He begins this...

<sup>5</sup> **So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.**

*vayered Shimshon v'aviv v'imo timnathah vayavou ad karme thimnathah* – “And descended, Samson and his father and his mother, Timnah-ward. And comes until vineyards, Timnah-ward.” In order to secure the bride for Samson, his parents accompany him in his descent toward Timnah where it says that they came to the vineyards in the area of Timnah.

As a reminder from Chapter 13, the vine symbolizes the basic expression of a thing. The basic expression of a wine vine is that it comes from a vineyard. Vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. As for being in this area, along comes a shocker...

<sup>5 (con't)</sup> **Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him.**

*v'hineh k'phir arayoth shoeg liqrato* – “And behold! Whelp lions roaring to meet him.” It is likely that Samson was ahead of his parents, as most youth usually are. He was checking things out and having an adventure while they ambled along at their own pace.

At some point near the vineyards, out came this lion. As it was roaring to meet him, it was set to attack. The lion is described with two words. The first is a new word, *k'phir*. It is derived from *kaphar*, to cover over, pacify, make atonement, disannul, pardon, etc. Strong's sees the connection as probably his mane covering him.

The second word is *ari*, a lion. That comes from *arah*, to gather or pluck, as in the sense of violence. As for what the lion represents, Genesis 49 gives the sense of kingship along with possessing land and taking kingdoms by force. This is one of many varied descriptions of a lion. The devil is equated with a lion by Peter.

Another new word in this verse is *shaag*, to roar. The roar is equated to lions, but it is also equated to the roar of the Lord, of a psalmist, or even enemies. As for this lion, he should have chosen other prey...

<sup>6</sup> **And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him,**

*vatitslakh alav ruakh Yehovah* – “And surges upon him, Spirit Yehovah.” Here, the Spirit of Yehovah is said to have surged upon Samson. The word is *tsalakh*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to push forward. Thus, it surged or rushed upon him...

<sup>6 (con't)</sup> **and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand.**

*vayshasehu k'shasa ha'gedi umumah ein b'yado* – “And rends him according to rending the kid. And, anything, naught in his hand.” The word translated as rend signifies to split, tear, divide, etc. In Leviticus, it speaks of the divided hooves of animals. With nothing but his bare hands, Samson grabbed the lion and tore it apart.

The point of this statement seems to be that Samson went down toward Timnah looking for love, not a battle. He had no weapon. And more, the Philistines would not have allowed him to have a weapon, as it says in 1 Samuel 13. Any work on Israeli iron implements was done by the Philistines.

The *gedi*, or kid, to which the lion is compared is a word that comes from a root signifying to cut off. The use of the definite article, the kid, appears to be a way of emphasizing the event. Thus, there was as little resistance to his tearing apart this powerful lion as there would be to anyone else tearing apart a little goat.

<sup>6</sup> (con't) **But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.**

*v'lo higid l'aviv u-l'imo eth asher asah* – “And no declared to his father and to his mother what done.” These words anticipate the verses ahead, but they do not explain them. The explanation may be that he didn't want to boast, he didn't want his parents to fear, he thought nothing of it because of the power he possessed, or some other reason.

*What is it that weakens the faith of men  
Who would be so brash as to do such a thing  
We have been told time and again  
Salvation is a gift, let that message ring*

*We cannot earn what is given for free  
Trying to do so isn't very nice  
In fact that can only make God angry  
Because He through Jesus paid the full price*

*Let us learn the lesson of grace  
And accept the gift without attaching a thing  
To do otherwise is a total disgrace  
And only the wrath of God will that bring*

## **II. Sweet (Verses 7-14)**

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

The same word as in verse 3 is seen here in the imperfect aspect: *vayered vaydaber laishah vatishar b'ene Shimshon* – “And descends, and speaks to the woman. And levels in eyes Samson.” From the vineyards, he continued on to meet the girl with his parents. Before, he only saw her, but now he speaks to her. She looked right to him, but after speaking to her, she continues to level in his eyes. Nice grouping.

<sup>8</sup> **After some time, when he returned to get her,**

*vayashav miyamim l'qakhtah* – “And returns, from days, to take her.” The amount of time is unknown and could extend to a year or more. This tells us that she was betrothed to him. The parents made an agreement, it was settled, and he came at the agreed-upon time to collect his wife. On the way down...

<sup>8 (con't)</sup> **he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion.**

*vayasar liroth eth mapeleth ha'aryeh* – “And veers to see fallen the lion.” The word *sur* is used. It means to turn aside. A single word that gets the point across is *veer*. He is on his way to see his betrothed, and yet he takes time to veer from his path to check out the dead lion.

Also, the noun *mappeleth* is introduced. It comes from *naphal*, to fall. In this case, it is a fallen body and thus a carcass. However, depending on the amount of time, it could be a completely desiccated carcass, meaning a skeleton surrounded by skin or even just a skeleton.

<sup>8 (con't)</sup> **And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion.**

*v'hineh adath d'vorim bigviath ha'aryeh u-d'vash* – Literally: “And behold! Congregation bees in body the lion, and honey.” Obviously, it is a swarm of bees, but the word used normally signifies a congregation.

The word translated here as carcass is not the same. It is *g'vayah*, coming from *gevah*, the back. It refers to a body, whether alive or dead. In this case, the back stands for the body. We use similar terminology when we say, “He really put his back into it.”

In this case, the use of the word is important. It is not the word *peger*, corpse. It is a word that can indicate anything including a skeleton. Bees are known to avoid rotting corpses, but this one is sufficiently dried out, being consumed by prey and insects, making it a perfectly suitable place for the bees to nest.

As for the *d'vorah*, or bee, it is the same as the name Deborah, coming from the verb *davar*, to speak. It is the root of the noun “speech” or “word.” Just as words are spoken in an orderly fashion, so are the movements of bees.

Honey pictures sweetness and abundance. It also is equated in Scripture to the word of God.

There in the body of this fallen lion was a swarm of bees busy at work making honey, and so...

<sup>9</sup> **He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating.**

Rather: *vayirdehu el kapav vayelexh halokh v'akhol* – “And dominates unto his palms, and walks, walking and eating.” The word is *radah*, to rule, dominate, etc., coming from a root signifying to tread down. Samson didn't just take honey, he reached in and grasped it, took dominion over it, and drew the honey and the comb to himself.

Further, this wasn't into his hands as every one of the 39 translations I checked says, but into his palms. Though similar in meaning, the hand signifies power and/or authority. The palm (and sole) signifies possession and/or the state of something.

<sup>9 (con't)</sup> **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.**

*vayelexh el aviv v'el imo vayiten lahem vayokhlu v'lo higid lahem ki mig'viath ha'aryeh radah hadvash* – “and walks unto his father and unto his mother, and gives to them, and eats. And no declares to them that from body the lion scraped the honey.” As in verse 6, the words anticipate what will be said in the verses ahead, but they do not explain them.

Some find his actions a violation of the law of the Nazirite. In Numbers 6, it says *nephesh meth*, soul dying. He may have reasoned that this was only a skeleton of a lion, not a person and so it didn't apply. It may be that in grasping the honeycomb, he didn't touch the body of the animal. It may be that because of the state of the lion, it no longer qualified as a dead soul.

It's hard to say if an animal is even included in a Nazirite vow or not. If so, does it include insects? Could a Nazirite not swat a fly or a mosquito? They are included in the overall use of *nephesh*, soul, in Genesis 1:30. As such, the Nazirite vow seems to be referring to humans who die, but this is speculation.

Why Samson didn't tell his parents is probably the same as why he didn't tell them he killed the lion in the first place. To him, it just happened. He felt no need to boast of his power over the lion. Or he may have been considering a riddle and how he may use it, not even wanting them to know it until he sprung it on them.

**<sup>10</sup> So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so.**

*vayered avihu el ha'ishah vayaas sham Shimshon mishteh ki ken yaasu habakhurim* – “And descends, his father, unto the woman, and makes there, Samson, banquet. For thus makes the selected.” As in verse 3, the text focuses on the father even though the mother has also come along. The father represents the family unit for the sake of the text.

From there, it then notes that Samson made a banquet. The word is *mishteh*, coming from *shathah*, to drink. Thus, it is a banqueting feast where drinking is the main substance of the event.

As for the words “the selected,” the word is *bakhur*, the passive participle of *bakhar*, to choose. Thus, it is “the selected,” or “the chosen,” which is almost universally translated as “young men.” That is an explanation rather than a translation.

**<sup>11</sup> And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.**

*vayhi kirotham otho vayiqkhu s'loshim mereim vayihyu ito* – “And is, in their seeing him, and takes thirty companions and is with him.” The words are highly debated. There is no antecedent to tell who is being spoken of. Some say the mother and father of the bride, some the people of the town, etc.

Whoever it is, they have supplied thirty male companions to be with Samson. These would be what is referred to in the gospels, such as in Matthew 9:15 –

“And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

Of the number, Bullinger says –

“THIRTY being 3 x 10, denotes in a higher degree the perfection of Divine order, as marking the right moment.” E.W. Bullinger

<sup>12</sup> **Then Samson said to them, “Let me pose a riddle to you.**

The words include a cohortative: *vayomer lahem Shimshon akhudah na lakhem khidah* – “And says to them, Samson, ‘Riddling, I pray, to you riddle.’” Samson, as if speaking an imperative, offers to pose a riddle. It is a new word, *khud*, to tie a knot and thus to propound a riddle. Even more literally, it would read, “Knotting, I pray, to you knot.” The word is seen three times in this chapter and once in Ezekiel 17. His proposition is...

<sup>12</sup> **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.**

*im haged tagidu othah li shivath y’me ha’mishteh u-matsathem v’nathati lakhem sh’loshim s’dinim u-sh’loshim khaliphoth b’gadim* – “If declaring, you declare it to me seven days the banquet and attain, and I gave to you thirty wraps and thirty changes garments.” They have seven days to untie the knot. If they can do so, each will receive a reward.

The wrap is derived from a new word, *sadin*. It comes from an unused root signifying to envelope. It is widely debated what these are, but most accept that they were fine linen worn close to the body. They are seen here twice, once in Proverbs 31, and once in Isaiah 3.

The words *khaliphoth b’gadim*, changes garments, comes from *khalaph*, to change, and *bagad*, treachery. The word means garment, but the root meaning probably is used because one changes his outer garments so easily it is like the acts of a treacherous person.

Seven is the number of spiritual perfection.

<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.”**

*v’im lo thukhlu l’hagid li unthatem atem li sh’loshim s’dinim u-sloshim khaliphoth b’gadim vayomru lo khudah khidath’kha v’nishmaenah* – “And if no able to declare to me, and gave, you, to me, thirty wraps and thirty changes garments. And says to him, ‘Riddling her, your riddle, and we hear her.’”

It is one garment to each if they can untie the knot. It is one from each to him if they cannot. To them, it sounds like a sweet deal, and so, they agree. The problem with this,

however, is that clothing was very expensive. Many people had one garment, or maybe a common garment and one special garment for such occasions.

The word *khidah*, riddle, is a feminine noun, and so I have translated it directly, “Riddling her, your riddle, and we hear her.” We might still say the same type of thing about a difficult puzzle or riddle, speaking in the feminine, “This puzzle, she’s a tough one to crack.”

<sup>14</sup> **So he said to them:**

**“Out of the eater came something to eat,  
And out of the strong came something sweet.”**

The riddle comes in two lines of three beats each: *vayomer lahem mehaokhel yatsa maakhal u-meaz yatsa mathoq* – “And says to them: ‘From the eating came food. And from strong came sweet.’” Without any context, the words would be impossible to explain.

However, it could be that Samson is using the constellations as Jacob did in Genesis 49. Peak production of honey in Israel comes forth in the summer, between May and August ([www.israeltoday.co.il/read/honey-in-the-land-of-milk-and-honey-israel/](http://www.israeltoday.co.il/read/honey-in-the-land-of-milk-and-honey-israel/)). Likewise, the Sun (represented by Samson), appears in front of Leo for 37 days from August 10<sup>th</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>.

A second possibility is that because Samson was attacked near the vineyards by Timnah, it would seem incredible that someone would not have noticed a dead lion in the area, first because of the stink, and then later because of the buzzing of bees, something that makes a hive readily apparent to anyone close by.

As such, he could not be accused of giving an impossible riddle. Instead, it would be something that required attention and contemplation, and maybe a little asking around.

Therefore, Samson could ostensibly be given a pass on the riddle, even if the original meaning was at first only known to him. Regardless, the companions of the feast found themselves in a pinch...

<sup>14 (fin)</sup> **Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.**

*v’lo yakhlū l’hagid hakhidah sh’losheth yamim* – “And no enabled to declare the riddle three days.” They could not solve the riddle, and the first three days passed without any explanation at all.



The number three is the number of Divine fulness. Bullinger says, "It signifies and represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and making them real and solid in our experience. It is only by the Spirit that we realise spiritual things."

This is the end of the verses today. We will finish the chapter next week, the Lord willing. For now, think about what is being presented. We will hope that interesting things will be revealed after the verses of the chapter are finished.

Until then, we can remember that God has placed the story and details of Samson's life into His word to teach us actual history, moral lessons, prophetic insights, and typological anticipations of future events.

As we read the word, we should consider it from such varied angles. It is a wealth of knowledge and we should read it and ponder it as such. If we have Jesus as the lens through which we read it, the Bible will never seem like a confused or unintelligible word.

Rather, we will see it for what it is: God's precious letter to us concerning His love for the people of the world who will seek Him out and come to Him through faith in His Christ. Let us do this daily, picking it up and treasuring it more than our necessary food.

**Closing Verse:** *"A wise man will hear and increase learning,  
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,  
To understand a proverb and an enigma,  
The words of the wise and their riddles." Proverbs 1:5, 6*

**Next Week:** Judges 14:15-20 *A Load of fun, like ringing the bell at someone's door...*  
(Samson, Judge of Israel, Part IV) (42<sup>nd</sup> Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **Samson, Judge of Israel, Part III**

Now Samson went down to Timnah  
And in Timnah, a woman he saw  
Of the daughters of the Philistines  
He really like her... yee haw!

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 wife, c'mon mama and papa

Then his father and mother said to him  
"Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren  
-----or among all my people too  
That you must go and get a wife  
From the uncircumcised Philistines – this you must do?

And Samson said to his father, yes he did tell  
"Get her for me, for she pleases me well

But his father and mother did not know  
That it was of the LORD (working behind the scenes)  
That He was seeking an occasion  
To move against the Philistines

For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel  
So Samson down to Timnah went  
With his father and mother  
And came to the vineyards of Timnah where grapes ferment

Now to his surprise, the circumstances seemed grim  
A young lion came roaring against him

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: limbs one by one  
Though he had nothing in his hand  
But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done

Then he went down and talked with the woman  
-----she was lookin' swell  
And she pleased Samson well

After some time, when he returned to get her  
He turned aside to see the lion's carcass  
And behold, a swarm of bees and honey  
Were in the carcass of the lion, kinda gross I guess

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 – carcass honey, I'll take a plate

So his father went down to the woman  
And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to so do  
And it happened, when they saw him  
That they brought thirty companions to be with him  
-----yes, with him too

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 changes of clothing thirty

But if you cannot explain it to me  
Then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes  
-----of clothing, so I submit  
And they said to him  
"Pose your riddle, that we may hear it

So he said to them:  
"Out of the eater came something to eat,  
And out of the strong came something sweet."

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

*Hallelujah and Amen...*