

# JUDGES 15:5

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 stocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves.



וַיִּבְעַר אִישׁ בְּלִפְיָדָיִם  
וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּקִמּוֹת  
פְּלִשְׁתִּים, וַיִּבְעַר  
מֵאֲדָישׁ וְעַד-קָמָה,  
וְעַד-כְּרֵם זֵיתַיִם.

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Artwork by Douglas Kallerson

## **Judges 15:1-15** **(Samson, Judge of Israel, Part V)**

The war between Israel and Iran is more or less a tit-for-tat type of thing at this point, but it is Iran who has been the aggressor from the beginning.

The two countries used to be close allies until the Shia Muslims took power. In fact, Iran was the second Muslim country after Turkey to recognize Israel as a sovereign state. In 1953, a *coup d'état* reinstated Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as the Shah, and things got even better. However, once Khomeini took over, things between the two countries immediately devolved.

In recent times, Iran's general, Mohammad Reza Zahedi, under the authority of the Iranian government, orchestrated an attack against Israel on October 7, 2023. He was identified and eliminated by Israel on 1 April 2024. Israel flattened a building in the Iran embassy compound in Syria, and he got flattened (flattened like a pancake!), along with it.

From there, Iran launched a retaliatory attack on Israel with hundreds of drones and missiles. It was a resounding failure. There was a 99% success rate in Israel's defenses, and the only injury incurred was a seven-year-old Bedouin girl. She was severely injured.

**Text Verse:** *"Arise, O Lord;  
Save me, O my God!  
For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone;  
You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.  
<sup>8</sup>Salvation belongs to the Lord.  
Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah" Psalm 3:7, 8*

In response to Iran's egregious but failed attack against Israel, Israel fired three missiles in a limited strike on Iran. The strike was directed at a defense radar site at an air base and nuclear site near Isfahan. The missiles were fired from Israeli fighters outside of Iran.

The strike was brilliant. It sent a signal to Iran that Israel has the capability to do much greater damage and with impunity, but their restraint was intended to not escalate the situation any further.

In today's passage, we'll see Samson act with restraint in repaying the Philistines as well. He will attack and then cease. However, the Philistines, like the Iranians, will never be satisfied by such things. When the Lord goes for the victory, He goes all the way.

Samson just needed the prodding to take it there. No point in trying to reason with the devil.

Such great things as this 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. And After, I Cease (verses 1-8)**

**<sup>1</sup>After a while, in the time of wheat harvest,**

*vayhi miyamim bime qetsir khitim* – “And is, from days, in days harvest wheat.” The wheat harvest begins around the time of Pentecost, in the May-June timeframe. Wheat is considered the finest of the grains in the Bible. Jesus used wheat to represent Himself in John 12:24, where He metaphorically says, “unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

If the conjecture made concerning the timing in Judges 14:14 is correct, meaning that Samson’s riddle was posed during the main honey-producing season and was based on the sun appearing in Leo between August and September, then it has been about six months or more since the wedding feast. Regardless, around the time of the wheat harvest in the late spring...

<sup>1</sup> (con’t) **it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat.**

*vayiphqod Shimshon eth ishto bigdi izim* – “And visits, Samson, his wife, in kid goats.” It is the same thing Judah offered to his daughter-in-law Tamar in Genesis 38:17, and which was presented to the Lord by Gideon in Judges 6 and Manoah in Judges 13.

The animal is described as a *gedi*, a kid. That comes from an unused root signifying to cut off. In the times it has been used in Scripture to this point, one can get the sense of finality or a matter being decided (cut off). The goat is what finishes the matter between the two concerning the agreement.

The next word, *izim*, signifies goats. It is derived from the verb *azaz*, to be strong, to prevail, etc. It is the term used for the sin offering, including that mandated on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:5.

<sup>1</sup> (con’t) **And he said, “Let me go in to my wife, into her room.”**

The words include a cohortative: *vayomer avoah el ishti hekhadrah* – “and says, ‘I will go in unto my wife, the her chamber.’” It is similar to an imperative, “I am over my anger,

and it is time for me to enter into the chamber of my wife.” This isn’t a request so much as it is a statement of intent. He had married her, and despite the grief she had given him, he fully intended to unite with her at this time of the wheat harvest. However...

<sup>1</sup> (con’t) **But her father would not permit him to go in.**

*v’lo nathono aviha la’vo* – “And no gave him, her father, to go in.” It is his house, and she is living with him. As such, he has control over her. Samson assumed that he would be allowed to go in, but that is no longer an option...

<sup>2</sup> **Her father said, “I really thought that you thoroughly hated her;**

The words contain a discussion the father had in his own mind that resulted in an emphatic conclusion: *vayomer aviha amor amarti ki sano s’netah* – “And says, her father, ‘Saying, I said, for hating, you hated her.’” Samson was miffed with the girl and with the companions of the wedding. He had been gone for an indeterminate amount of time, but long enough to note that it was during the wheat harvest, implying that the previous events were not during the time of the wheat harvest.

All in all, the father’s conclusion was that Samson wouldn’t be back, and the girl was again available to marry off...

<sup>2</sup> (con’t) **therefore I gave her to your companion.**

*va’etnenah l’mereekha* – “And I gave her to your companion.” He uses the word *merea*, the same word from Judges 14:20, where it said, “And is, wife Samson, to his companion who tended to him.” It is derived from *ra’ah* which signifies to tend a flock. When Samson didn’t return, the father reasoned it was best to allow one of those companions who tended to him to take over as her husband. As a consolation prize, the father says...

<sup>2</sup> (con’t) **Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead.”**

The words contain a jussive: *halo akhothah haqtanah tovah mimenah t’hi na lekha takhteha* – “Not her sister, the younger, good from her? Is, I pray, to you under her.” The moment is probably quite embarrassing, and maybe even fearful, to the father. And so, he offers his younger daughter instead, practically insisting through the use of the jussive – “Check this one out! This is the girl for you. I insist you have her instead.”

However, God determined to respond to the cries of Israel for relief. Therefore, he had selected the impulsive Samson to begin to deliver them. As such...

<sup>3</sup> **And Samson said to them,**

*vayomer lahem Shimshon* – “And says, to them, Samson.” The question is, “Who is ‘them’?” It is perhaps the people of Samson’s town in general or his family in particular. It may be that his previous actions were looked down on. Samson could have caused trouble for himself and his people by what he did, which they thought was unjustifiable. However...

<sup>3</sup> (con’t) **“This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!”**

*niqethi ha’paam miplishtim ki oseh ani imam raah* – “I clean, the beat, from Philistines, for doing I with them evil.” Samson is saying that he will be free from guilt (clean) when he does evil to the Philistines. The word *ha’paam*, the beat, is being compared to what he did previously.

In Judges 14, instead of taking out anger on her for the indiscretion of telling his riddle to the Philistines, Samson took it out on her people in general, those who weakened her resolve and forced her into the difficult position of choosing against him.

He went down to Ashkelon and killed the men there to get the garments he had promised. The people in Ashkelon were disinterested parties who got caught up in the deceit of their people against Samson.

However, Samson now sees that the culture of the Philistines is simply corrupt. He will have no compunction about bringing disaster on them. As he did before, he will direct his attention on the Philistines in general, instead of toward the girl and her family only...

<sup>4</sup> **Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes;**

*vayelekh Shimshon vayilkod s’losh meoth shualim* – “And walks, Samson, and catches three hundred foxes.” The narrative introduces the means of Samson’s retribution first by noting the instruments he will use: three hundred foxes.

Three hundred was the number of men whom Gideon employed against Midian. It is a multiple of three and ten. Three signifies Divine Perfection. Expanding on that, Bullinger says –

“The number three, therefore, must be taken as the number of Divine fulness. 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. Without Him and His gracious operation, all is surface work: all is what a plane figure is to a solid.”

Of the number ten, Bullinger says –

“Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number ten. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

The *shual*, or fox, is introduced into the Bible here. The word comes from *shoal*, hollow hand, or handful, and the meaning extends to this. The connection is that foxes dig out a hollow to live in. In the gospels, Jesus said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matthew 8:20). In Luke, it says—

“On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, ‘Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.’

<sup>32</sup> And He said to them, ‘Go, tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.”’

<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.” Luke 13:31-33

The significance of a fox is that of a hole digger, and thus, one who is there to trip others up. Along with catching foxes...

<sup>4 (con’t)</sup> **and he took torches, turned *the foxes* tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails.**

*vayiqakh lapidim vayephen zanav el zanav vayasem lapid ekhad ben sh’neh haznavoth vatavekh* – “And takes torches. And turns tail unto tail. And places torch one between two the tails in the midst.” Some translations say jackals instead of foxes. Either way, it is an animal that could be found and caught.

Some think it is impossible that he could have caught three hundred foxes, but that is because we are reading an account with mere sentences to describe the events. For all we know, he caught them over a period of time and employed help in the process. Nothing is said of him performing all the coming actions at the same time.

Scripture shows that the fox was quite common. Cities are named after it. The animal is named in Judges, Nehemiah, the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, Ezekiel, and in the New Testament. This shows that foxes were something common and that they continued throughout Israel’s history.



The *lapid*, or torch, comes from an unused root, probably meaning to shine. In this case, it is a torch that would not be easily extinguished and which would increase in brightness and intensity when waved to and fro.

Turning the foxes tail to tail implies that they are tied that way with the torch between them. As for the word *zanav*, or tail, it is used in Isaiah 9:15 to refer to one who teaches falsehood. It is derived from the verb *zinev*, to cut off, such as to attack the rear of a group of people.

Samson got the foxes, tied a cord to the tails of each pair of them with a torch trailing behind them. He lit the torch and let them go. In doing this, they would run to get away from him, but each would go off in its own direction. As the foxes pulled against one another with the torch flailing between them, they would set on fire whatever they passed by in a zigzagging, confused manner.

A single fox would run straight and cause a single line of burning, but with two tied in this manner, a large conflagration would result. This is seen next...

**<sup>5</sup> 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.**

*vayaver esh balapidim vay'shalakh b'qamoth plishtim vayaver migadish v'ad qamah v'ad kerem zayith* – “And burns fire in the torches, and sends in standings Philistines, and burns from shocks, and until standing, and until vineyard olive.”

Gideon had an army of three hundred men carrying torches that he sent out against the Midianites. Samson, likewise, has an army of three hundred. However, he directs his attention against the Philistines, burning their labor, sustenance, and profit away.

Samson targeted the *qamah*, or standing grain. That comes from *qum*, to arise or stand. This would be highly flammable and would burn very quickly. The fire would be so intense that it would spread to the *gadiysh*, shocks.

It is from an unused root, signifying to heap up. Thus, it is the piles of grain that are already cut and set aside. The stalks would be cut, gathered into bundles, and stood up with the butt end down. Eventually, they are taken to the threshing floor for processing.

The fire is also said to have spread to the *kerem zayith*, literally, vineyard olive. The words seem to make no sense. Ellicott says, “Literally, *and to vineyard, to olive.*” That is

not what it says. Cambridge says, “lit. *vineyard of oliveyard*, which cannot be right; read *vineyard* and *oliveyard*.” No, we don’t change the word of God based on suppositions!

Such arbitrary changes suppose that the word is corrupt and that the people who maintain it are incompetent doofs. Rather, it is vineyard olive. It is true that vineyards are normally thought to be of grapes, but here it is applied to olives. Vineyards represent the cultural side of humanity. There are various vineyards that represent various cultures. The olive is a symbol of religious privilege.

Samson’s actions were probably done at night when there would be no one around to save the fields. It would have been done in many locations as well. Because of this, it was evident that it was sabotage...

**<sup>6</sup> Then the Philistines said, “Who has done this?”  
And they answered, “Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite,**

*vayomru plishtim mi asah zoth vayomru Shimshon khathan hatimni* – “And say, Philistines, ‘Who done this?’ And say, ‘Samson, affinity the Timnite.’” The word is *khathan*, a relative by marriage, and thus an affinity. They acknowledge the relationship as valid between him and his father-in-law, meaning Samson was considered the woman’s husband. He has done this...

**<sup>6 (con’t)</sup> because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion.”**

*ki laqakh eth ishto vayitnah l’mereehu* – “for took his wife and gives her to his companion.” It is debated if what the Philistines will do is punish Samson or appease him. If they punish him, it is because she is his wife. If they appease him so that he will stop harming them, it is because of the act of adultery that occurred because her father gave her away.

Either way, Samson’s reaction will show that he found their actions were wholly inappropriate. As for what they did...

**<sup>6 (con’t)</sup> So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.**

*vayaalu plishtim vayisr’phu othah v’eth aviha ba’esh* – “And ascend, Philistines, and burn her and her father in the fire.” Some scholars say that this was because of the act of adultery, and that precedent for this is found in Genesis 38:24 and Leviticus 20:14 & 21:9. However, this dismisses the words of Judges 14:15 –



“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?*”

This was something the Philistines had promised to do in the past. Thus, there is no reason to assume they were doing this because of adultery. It is just what they did because of the loss they suffered. They were brutal people carrying out their brutal designs.

The notably ironic point is that the very thing the girl hoped to avoid by acting treacherously toward Samson is ultimately what happened to her and her father. It is something that would later happen to Israel –

“Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.’” John 11:47, 48

What Israel tried to avoid by coming against their Messiah is exactly what came upon them. As for what the Philistines did...

**<sup>7</sup> 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.”**

The words are rather difficult. Despite this, there is a strong emphasis in them: *vayomer lahem Shimshon im taasun kazoth ki im niqamti bakhem v’akhar ekhdal* – “And says to them, Samson, ‘If (surely) doing according to this, when if I revenge in you, and after, I cease.’”

Various suggestions are given as to his intent, but the repetition of the word *if* is purposeful. Also, depending on the context, the word *ki* can mean for, when, or that, etc. It indicates a causal relationship. It appears that he is giving a limited response to their atrocity, upon which he will be satisfied as long as that ends the matter –

“And says to them, Samson:

Based on: ‘If (surely) doing according to this

Therefore: when if I revenge in you,

Result: and after, I cease.”

The Philistines did something atrocious. Samson will respond accordingly, but once he has done so, he will go no further. It is not unlike Israel's response to Iran's huge aerial assault against them. It would be unthinkable that they would not respond, but it would be harmful if they did so in an overwhelming manner.

Thus, they masterfully handled their actions, demonstrating their ability to attack Iran with impunity and yet doing so with restraint, giving Iran the chance to save *face* while also cowering in *disgrace*. In Samson's case...

<sup>8</sup> **So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter;**

*vayakh otham shoq al yarekh makah g'dolah* – “And strikes them leg upon thigh, slaughter whopping.” There are numerous suggestions as to what this means. However, it is certainly a proverbial saying. It is not unlike what Jacob said to the Lord –

“Deliver me, I pray from hand my brother Esau. For fear I, him, lest comes and struck me, mother upon sons” Genesis 32:11 (CG).

Thus, it would mean “completely,” as in the bodies of the mothers lying dead upon the sons. This seems likely because the same expression is used in Hosea 10:14, where it says, “mother upon sons, dashed” (CG).

If this is so, then it signifies bodies of men lying scattered so abundantly that their appendages lay upon one another. Whether this or something else, the words leg upon thigh are given to accentuate the words “slaughter whopping.”

<sup>8 (con't)</sup> **then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.**

*vayered vayeshev bisiph sela etam* – “And descends, and sits in cleft, Crag Etam.” It does not say where Samson descended from, so it is likely it indicates his home at Mahaneh Dan. Wherever it is, he descended and sat, meaning dwelling, in cleft, Crag Etam.

The word *saiph* is introduced here. It comes from *saaph*, a lopped off bough. The root of that means to divide up. As such, this is a division in a *sela*, or craggy rock. That word comes from a root signifying to be lofty. There is a crag with a fissure in it where Samson dwelt known as Etam.

The name has various interpretations. The NASB thinks its root is *iyt*, to fly as if swooping down upon. Strong's indirectly identifies it coming from *ayit* – bird of prey (which is from *iyt*). As such it is Place of Ravenous Birds (McClintock), Place of Ravenous Creatures (Jones), or Wild Beasts Lair (Young's).

It is possible that this isn't speaking of a place where wild beasts dwelt but that it is named after Samson because he dwelt there. He was the slayer of the lion and the one who caught and sent forth the foxes against the enemy. He is being equated to his prey.

Or it could be that this was a place where others wouldn't dare to dwell because of such beasts, but Samson willingly stayed there because he knew he was greater than them and could easily defeat them.

*Foxes and torches and three hundred tails  
And up goes the standing grain  
The shocks burned up like billowing sails  
Taking away the enemy's financial gain*

*And there go the shocks, up to the sky  
And the olive vineyard, it went too  
As for the Philistines, they just stand and cry  
And bid their toil and efforts "Adieu."*

*Just recompense for the thing they did  
When they interfered in Samson's life  
Burning up a man along with his kid  
And – oh my! – she happened to be Samson's wife*

## **II. A Fresh Jawbone (verses 9-15)**

**<sup>9</sup> Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi.**

*vayaalu plishtim vayakhanu bihudah vayinatsu ba'lekhi* – “And ascend, Philistines, and encamp in Judah, and disperse in the Jawbone.” The word *natash* comes from a root signifying to pound. When you pound something, it spreads out. As such, one can think of an army spreading out in an area as it deploys its men, tents, etc. The Philistines came up from their area to the higher land in Judah and there deployed “in the Lehi.”

Lehi is the same as the Hebrew *lekhi*, the jaw or cheek, which was used in our text verse today. By extension, it means Jawbone. It is either a place that resembles a jawbone or the narrative is anticipating the events ahead where Samson will use a jawbone to wipe out the foe. Based on verse 17, I would go with the latter, but that is not definitive.

Judah means Praise. Of Lehi, Abarim has more to say –

“The noun להי (lehi) means jawbone or cheek. It’s not clear where this noun comes from, and creative observers might be forgiven to see a resemblance with the particle ל (le), meaning for, and the noun ין (hay) meaning life. The jaw allows food to be chewed, and it’s essential in speaking. And when one dominates the jaw of an animal (or human, for that matter), one dominates the whole animal.” Abarim

More than “for,” the ל signifies “to” or “toward.” It signifies motion toward an object, purpose, goal, etc. As such, Lehi means Cheek or Jawbone, but with a qualifier that the name can be extended to mean To Life.

**<sup>10</sup> And the men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?”**

*vayomru ish Yehudah lamah alithem alenu* – “And says, man Judah, ‘Why ascended upon us?’” Samson was from Dan, not Judah. They were unaware of anything they had done to offend the Philistines, so their question is perfectly natural.

<sup>10</sup> (con’t) **So they answered, “We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us.”**

*vayomru leesor eth shimshon alinu laasoth lo kaasher asah lanu* – “And say, ‘To bind Samson, ascended. To doing to him according to which done to us.’” Their target is solely Samson. The battle array meant that further trouble would ensue, however, if he was not delivered to them.

Judah has failed to recognize Samson as their savior, raised up by the Lord to deliver them. Because of their peevish attitude, little choice is left concerning the matter...

**<sup>11</sup> Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam,**

*vayirdu sh’loshet alaphim ish mihudah el s’iph sela etam* – “And descended three thousands men from Judah unto cleft, Crag Etam.” The large number sent against one man clearly indicates they knew what Samson was capable of. It should have been an obvious clue that he was capable of more, if they would just accept his leadership. Instead, they reject the obvious.

The number 3000 is simply a multiple of 300 and 10, both of which have been explained.

<sup>11</sup> (con’t) **and said to Samson, “Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?”**

*vayomru l’shimshon halo yadata ki moshlim banu plishtim umah zoth asitha lanu* – “And say, to Samson, ‘Not you know for ruling in us Philistines? And what this you done to

us?” Having completely rejected any notion of freedom from the Philistines, even with a champion like Samson, they admit their subjugation and the consequences they were sure to face if they didn't get rid of him. Samson, however, explains his position...

<sup>11</sup> (con't) **And he said to them, “As they did to me, so I have done to them.”**

*vayomer lahem kaasher asu li ken asiti lahem* – “And says, to them, ‘According to which done to me, thus done to them.’” Samson treated their conduct like the retribution of the *lex talionis* – kind for kind. The Philistines harmed him, and he returned punishment accordingly without being overly vengeful against them.

<sup>12</sup> **But they said to him, “We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines.”**

*vayomru lo leesarkha yaradnu l'titkha b'yad plishtim* – “And say, to him, ‘To bind you we descended, to give you in hand Philistines.’” Said the three thousand to the one! The Lord, through Gideon and his three hundred, defeated Midian. It shows how faithless these men of Judah were. They were gathered together to deliver their savior to the Philistines instead of rallying behind him. However, he graciously allows himself to be so treated...

<sup>12</sup> (con't) **Then Samson said to them, “Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves.”**

There is a strong emphasis: *vayomer lahem Shimshon hishavru li pen tiphgun bi atem* – “And say to them, Samson, ‘Swear to me, lest (surely) impinging in me, you.’” He does not use the word *harag*, kill, but rather *phaga*. It comes from a primitive root signifying to impinge. It is where there is an interaction between the two. In this case, he says *tiphgun bi*, (surely) impinging in me.

He doesn't want conflict with them, so he is willing to yield himself to them if they do not forcefully interact with him...

<sup>13</sup> **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.”**

Their words are emphatic: *vayomru lo lemor lo ki asor neesar'kha u-n'thanukha b'yadam v'hameth lo n'mithekha* – “And says, to him, saying, ‘No, for binding we will bind you, and give you in their hand, and killing no we kill you.’” They are more interested in handing him over than attempting to do their own dirty work, which would inevitably mean plenty of trouble for them.

And so, with a sure word, they let him know that they have no intention of harming him at all. Instead...

<sup>13</sup> (con't) **And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.**

*vayaasruhu bishnayim avotim khadashim vyaaluhu min ha'sala* – “And bind him in two ropes, new. And ascend him from the crag.” The word translated as rope is *avoth*. It signifies something intertwined like a string, a wreath, a chain, etc. That comes from *avath*, to wind or weave. It is used just once, in a figurative sense –

“That they may successfully do evil with both hands—  
The prince asks *for gifts*,  
The judge *seeks* a bribe,  
And the great *man* utters his evil desire;  
So they scheme [*avath*] together.” Micah 7:4

In Micah, there is an entangling or conspiring of the people that is not at all unlike the way Samson is bound by those of Judah.

As for the number two, it is the number of division or difference. The two will contrast, and yet they will confirm the whole. As for Samson, once he was so betrayed, they ascend him back to Lehi...

<sup>14</sup> **When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him.**

The word “when” obliterates the intent: *hu va ad lekhi u-plishtim heriu liqratov* – “He coming until Lehi. And Philistines shouted to meet him.” Almost always, a sentence like this begins with “And...” Here, it simply describes him nonchalantly being conducted along by Judah. There is no resistance and no impulse upon him.

However, once the Philistines saw him coming, they either stood and gave a resounding shout of victory which rushed to meet him, or they shouted as they surged forward to meet him. Either way, it was one army against one man who has ambled into their presence. Samson came supposedly defeated. Only then does the Lord intervene...

<sup>14</sup> (con't) **Then the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him;**

*vatitslakh alav Ruakh Yehovah* – “And surges, upon him, Spirit Yehovah.” It is letter for letter the same as Judges 14:6 and 14:19. The lion came roaring against Samson, and a surge of the Spirit was the result. The Philistines had plowed with his heifer, and again it happened. Now, at the victory shouts of the Philistines, it happens a third time...

14 (con't) **and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.**

The words are poetic in nature: *vatihyannah ha'avotim asher al zerothav kapishtim asher baaru baesh vayimasu esurav me'al yadav* – “And becomes, the ropes, which upon his arms, according to the flax which burned in the fire. And melts, his bonds, from upon his hands.” It interestingly notes ropes upon both the arm and bands upon the hand. That is probably why two new ropes were mentioned.

The *zeroth*, or arm, comes from the word *zara*, meaning “to sow” or “scatter seed.” The arm thus speaks of power and exertion, but also effectual reach to accomplish. When a man desires to show his strength or to defeat an enemy, he will stretch his arms out. In this one stance, he will both defend some and work against others.

The hand signifies power and/or authority. Samson was bound in order to withhold these attributes from him. However, with the cheer of the enemy at their supposed victory, the ropes on his arms became like burned flax and fell from him.

There is also a new word, *esur*. It signifies a band or bond. Whether the bands on his hands were also rope or something else, they simply melted off of him from the surge of the Holy Spirit.

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

*vayimtsa lekhi khamor t'riyah vayishlakh yado vayiqahaha vayak bah eleph ish* – “And finds, jawbone donkey, fresh. And sends his hand. And takes her. And strikes, in her, thousand man.” In his state, any weapon will do. The first thing at hand would suffice, and it happens to be a fresh jawbone of a donkey.

It is a new word, *tari*, coming from an unused root meaning to be moist. As such, it signifies dripping and, therefore, fresh. It would not be brittle and could endure a sustained battle, even to striking a thousand of the foes. Using the hand to wield it signifies he is using his position and authority.

It is with this fresh donkey's jaw that Samson was able to strike a thousand Philistines. The number is simply a derivative of ten, and it bears the significance of that number.

This is where we will stop for now. There are just five more verses in this detail-filled chapter. If the patterns of the past continue, we can – and certainly should – expect what is being said is to tell us about Jesus or some other part of His redemptive plans.



This is key in understanding the otherwise obscure, quaint, or even seemingly purposeless detail contained in so many stories of the Bible. When we can't seem to figure out what God is telling us, we need to just step back and ask ourselves, "How does this point to Jesus?"

Read things over again this week, look at the verses ahead, and see if you can figure out what is going on. I will do the same in anticipation of my sermon typing day. May the Lord bless the effort with exciting details.

For now, get right with Jesus! This is what God is telling us to do time and again in His word. Keep away from law observance, rest in Christ, and trust that God's grace alone will bring you back to Himself. May the grace of God in Christ Jesus fill you and continue to do so until we meet here again.

**Closing Verse:** *"I gave My back to those who struck Me,  
And My cheeks [lekhi] to those who plucked out the beard;  
I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." Isaiah 50:6*

**Next Week:** Judges 15:16-20 *Isn't it fun! What a story to tell when you need a Scripture fix...* (Samson, Judge of Israel, Part VI) (44<sup>th</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 V**

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, he got the No vote

Her father said, "I really thought  
That you thoroughly hated her, and that you didn't want to wed  
Therefore I gave her to your companion  
Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead

And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless  
-----without haw or hem  
Regarding the Philistines if I harm them

Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes  
And he took torches (here come the details)  
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 Philistines' standing grain  
And burned up both the shocks and the standing grain  
As well as the vineyards and olive groves and all they did contain

Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?"  
And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite  
-----was the fire applier  
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 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  
-----looking for some peace

Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah by and by  
And deployed themselves against Lehi

And the men of Judah said  
"Why have you come up against us? What is this fuss?  
So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson  
To do to him as he has done to us

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? Us you will condemn!  
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."  
Then Samson said to them  
"Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves by any means

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, just as they planned

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. For the Philistines  
-----things were lookin’ grim

He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, cool we must admit  
Reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it

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...*