

## A Man of Strength and Poetry

Can a man be both strong and poetic?

Judges 14

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### **Prelude:**

#### **I. Someone said, "Samson was a he-man with a she-weakness."**

- A. Is that not like all men and women?
- B. We are all strong in some areas, but weak in others.

### **Persuasion:**

#### **I. Judges 14.1–3 – Samson wanted a Philistine wife**

1 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 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."

- A. From Samson's birth in chapter 13 we jump to his manhood.
  - 1. The first clause of verse 1 is profound.
  - 2. Samson left home,
    - a) went to a city of the Philistines and
    - b) trouble began.
  - 3. We cannot number the young people who have left home,
    - a) went to another place and
    - b) got into trouble.
    - c) Without the restrictions of home and church, and
      - (1) the excitement of a new place
      - (2) they go wild.
  - 4. Only God knows the numbers of new converts, or
    - a) even mature Christians,

- b) who have moved and fallen away.
5. Remember the parable of the Prodigal Son.

B. His parents objected,

3 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."

1. This woman had not converted to Israel's faith, because
  - a) she was of the "uncircumcised" Philistines.
  - b) Therefore, his wise parents question why he would want to marry her.
  - c) Marry someone who is of your faith, because
    - (1) marriage is such a bond that this is necessary.
    - (2) It is rare that a Christian is as strong as he can be
      - (a) when married outside of the faith.
      - (b) It can be done, but with extreme difficulty.
  - d) Since this is true,
    - (1) some Christians think they should separate from an unbeliever, but
    - (2) First Corinthians 7 was written
      - (a) to us know that God does not require you to leave your mate.
2. Samson was of a dual nature:
  - a) He had godly characteristics.
  - b) Like us, he also had weaknesses.
3. Regardless of the wise advice of his parents,
  - a) regardless of the teaching of the Law of Moses (Exo 3.12–16),
  - b) regardless of the history of Israel during the times of the judges,
  - c) Samson insisted on having this woman for his wife.

4. What Samson said to his father summarizes the problem.

a) At the end of verse 3, he said,

“Get her for me, for she pleases me well.”

(1) Samson was a man who lived by faith in God, but

(2) but sometimes this judge lived by faith in himself.

(a) We are reminded of that last verse in Judges

(b) that summarizes Israel’s history during this time period,

25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Jdg 21.25).

b) This is like our age.

(1) We struggle between wanting to live as God directs, and

(2) with what we want.

(a) We want to find a church that we like,

i) showing that we want God’s will on this matter, but

ii) we often let our tastes overrule what God says.

(b) We want to find a spouse who pleases us.

i) We know that God created marriage, but

ii) we want out of the marriage what pleases us,

iii) rather than thinking about pleasing our spouses.

## II. Judges 14.4 – It was of the Lord

4 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.

A. This does not mean that Samson was right.

B. God used Samson to save Israel from the Philistines.

- C. It is also possible that Samson operated by faith, and
1. Hebrews 11 highlights him as a person of faith.
  2. We know that faith comes from hearing God's word (Rom. 10.17),
    - a) therefore, it is not unreasonable to conclude
    - b) that at least some of what we see in his story came from God.

### III. Judges 14.5–7 – Samson tore apart a lion

5 So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. 6 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.

- A. This man's strength, agility and quickness were astounding, but
1. it only happened because the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson.
  2. Likewise, we can defeat the lion who stalks us by the Spirit of the Lord.
- B. Samson kept it a secret,

But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. 7 Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

1. Samson was either a humble man, or
2. he knew that he would use this incident later, or
3. he had touched a dead body,
  - a) breaking the Nazirite vow and
  - b) did not want his parents to know.

“Why didn't Samson tell his parents? Because the lion was dead, and he was a Nazarite [sic]. He knows he's blowing it right here—but it seemed so sweet; it seemed so right” (Courson).

### IV. Judges 14.8–18 – A riddle

8 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. 9 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.

A. Enough time passed

1. for scavengers to eat the carcass,
2. for it to dry, and
3. for bees to make a hive in it and produce honey.

B. He loved his parents and

1. blessed them
2. even as they had blessed him.

C. The feast began,

10 So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. 11 And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

1. He was alone.
  - a) Either he did not have friends, or
  - b) his Israelite friends did not want to go to the Philistines.
2. Either way, it provided a good opportunity against the Philistines.

D. Samson posed a riddle,

12 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. 13 But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing."

1. Even today, the bride and groom buy gifts for their wedding party.
  - a) In this case, the groom had to get thirty gifts.

- b) Perhaps Samson devised a way to avoid that huge expense.
- 2. Or it might have been the way to defeat the Philistines.
  - a) Samson was a man of great strength, but
  - b) he was also a man of clever language.

E. An unsolvable riddle,

And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it." 14 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.

- 1. Samson was like David.
  - a) Both men could do exploits in the body, and
  - b) both were thinkers.
- 2. Samson was like the lion.
  - a) He was strong like the lion.
  - b) What came out of him was sweet like honey.

F. His "friends" cheated,

15 But it came to pass on the seventh {Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read fourth.} 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?" 16 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?"

- 1. Think of what they said to her.
  - a) They wanted to know the riddle so bad,
  - b) they threatened her with a fiery death,
    - (1) if she did not entice her husband to tell the riddle!

- (2) Human life could be dispensed with at a whim.
- 2. She willingly manipulated her husband.
  - a) She took advantage of his love for her
  - b) to serve her own selfish purposes.

G. Samson gave in to her,

17 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!"

- 1. The Philistine men had approached Samson's wife either
  - a) on the fourth or
  - b) seventh day.
- 2. However, she had been bugging him the whole week.
  - a) She always wanted to know.
  - b) It was just that later in the week the men approach her and want her to tell them.

#### V. Judges 14.19 – The Spirit of the Lord worked

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.

- A. This is the third time the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson.
- B. Therefore, he could easily take on 30 men.
  - 1. This is nothing compared to later exploits.
  - 2. When you live by faith,

- a) the number of the enemy, and
- b) the power of the enemy
- c) is no match for you.

## **VI. Judges 14.20 – His wife was given to his best man**

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

- A. She belonged to Samson.
- B. This was not right and they would pay for it.

### **Exhortation:**

#### **I. See the paradox of the life of Samson,**

"...he emerges primarily as a heroic individual whose major preoccupation is loving Philistine women and fighting Philistine men" (James S. Ackerman, p. 140).

#### **II. See his paradox as our paradox:**

- A. We simultaneously love the world and fight it.
- B. Subsequently our lives are in turmoil as his often was.