

Judges 14

Samson's Marriage

14 Then Samson went down to Timnah, and he saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he came back and told his father and mother, "I saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines; so now, get her for me as a wife." 3 But his father and his mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?"

Yet Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, because she is right for me." 4 However, his father and mother did not know that this was of the LORD, for He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. And at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

5 Then Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came as far as the vineyards of Timnah; and behold, a young lion came roaring toward him. 6 And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, so that he tore it apart as one tears apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand; but he did not tell his father or mother what he had done. 7 So he went down and talked to the woman; and she looked pleasing to Samson. 8 When he returned later to take her, he turned aside to look at the carcass of the lion; and behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the body of the lion.

So he took out the honey on his hands and went on, eating as he went. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them and they ate it; but he did not tell them that he had took the honey out of the body of the lion. 10 Then his father went down to the woman; and Samson held a feast there, for the young men customarily did this. 11 When they saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him.

Samson's Riddle

12 Then Samson said to them, "Let me now propose a riddle for you; if you actually tell me the answer within the seven days of the feast, and solve it, then I will give you thirty linen wraps and thirty outfits of clothes. 13 But if you are unable to tell me, then you shall give me thirty linen wraps and thirty outfits of clothes." And they said to him, "Propose your riddle, so 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." But they could not tell the answer to the riddle in three days.

15 Then it came about on the fourth day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, so that he will tell us the riddle, or we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us to impoverish us? Is this not so?"

16 So Samson's wife wept in front of him and said, "You only hate me, and you do not love me; you have proposed a riddle to the sons of my people, and have not told it to me." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told it to my father or mother; so should I tell you?" 17 However she wept before him for seven days while their feast lasted. And on the seventh day he told her because she pressed him so hard. She then told 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 ploughed with my heifer, You would not have found out my riddle." 19 Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty men of them and took what they were wearing and gave the outfits of clothes to those who told the riddle. And his anger burned, and he went up to his father's house. 20 But Samson's wife was given to his companion who had been his friend.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

1. What questions were provoked within you?
2. Did anything confuse you?
3. Did anything move you emotionally?
4. Did God instruct you to do something?
5. Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Paul's observations and insights

1. Why did Samson look for a wife outside of the nation of Israel? Remember he was a Nazarite.
2. Why did he ask his mum and dad to get the woman for him and not go himself?
3. Samson was driven by his appetites!
4. His parents saw the dangers of taking a Philistine wife, they try and make him see sense. Why did he not get it?
5. You get the impression Samson is spoilt! He says to his parents 'Get her for me'. Why did he talk to them like this? Feed me, feed me now.
6. Samson was not motivated by love but 'she looks good to me'.
7. Any relationship built on what a person looks like, is going to fall into difficulties as the years roll on!
8. Unbeknown to the parents, God was in this encounter, for He would use this situation to bring a judgement on the Philistine nation, who were ruling Israel at this time.
9. How did Samson overcome the lion with his bare hands?

10. What is it for the spirit of the Lord to come upon a person? Have you ever had such an experience as this?
11. Why did Samson not tell his mum and dad?
12. Samson talked to her 'for she looked good'. How shallow!
13. Samson saw the bees and the honey in the carcass of the lion and it fascinated him.
14. Taking the honey from the dead carcass was against the law, as a Nazarite and a Jew.
15. He even incriminates his mum and dad. Do you think they were guilty of breaking the law in God's eyes?
16. Samson provokes the Philistines at his wedding feast with a riddle he knew they would never get.
17. He set them a challenge that they could not refuse and his intention was to bring humiliation upon them.
18. The acceptance of this challenge provided God with a way, to bring about His judgement upon the Philistines.
19. Now the Philistines, having tried but failed to work out the riddle, strong armed Samson's bride into telling them.
20. Why does Samson call his new wife a heifer?
21. Did the wife have any choice but to betray Samson's secret?
22. The pressure the Philistines put on the wife was surely too great. What do you think?
23. And why did Samson tell her the answer to the riddle in the first place? Did he not know that she would be forced to tell them!
24. Why are women able to get men to do what they would rather not do?
25. How does Samson feel when the Philistines first convey the solution to the riddle?
26. The spirit of the Lord came upon Samson again, enabling him to bring a judgement on thirty other Philistine men and remove their clothes to pay for the outstanding debt.
27. Why did they give Samson's new wife to his best man?