

## 14.18b Thirteenth Judge – Samson: His Wife and Riddle (Judges 13:25–14:20)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Beka Flash-a-Cards for Judges are recommended.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Nazarite* or *Nazirite*: someone dedicated to God who was not to eat anything with grapes or anything unclean, not to cut his hair, or not to touch a dead body
- *riddle*: a question with an unexpected, humorous, or difficult answer. [Tell a riddle like the following: “What’s black and white and read [pronounced |red|] all over?” A newspaper.]
- *heifer*: young female cow
- *best man*: the man who stands closest to the groom at his wedding and is usually a good friend

### Scripture: (ESV)

Judges 13:24 And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew, and the Lord blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

14:1 Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 Then he came up and told his father and mother, “I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife.” 3 But his father and mother said to him, “Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.”

4 His father and mother did not know that it was from the Lord, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

5 Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. 6 Then the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat. 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 was right in Samson’s eyes.

8 After some days he returned to take her. And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. 9 He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went. And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate. But he did not tell them that he had scraped the honey from the carcass of the lion.

10 His father went down to the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there, for so the young men used to do. 11 As soon as the people saw him, they brought thirty companions to be with him. 12 And Samson said to them, “Let me now put a riddle to you. If you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes, 13 but if you cannot tell me what it is, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes.” And they said to him, “Put your riddle, that we may hear it.” 14 And he said to them,

“Out of the eater came something to eat.

Out of the strong came something sweet.”

And in three days they could not solve the riddle. 15 On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?" 16 And Samson's wife wept over him and said, "You only hate me; you do not love me. You have put a riddle to my people, and you have not told me what it is." And he said to her, "Behold, I have not told my father nor my mother, and shall I tell you?" 17 She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her people. 18 And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

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

And he said to them, "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle." 19 And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father's house. 20 And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Tell me about Samson's birth. [His mother was barren. The Angel of the Lord (Jesus Himself) appeared to her and told her she would have a son who was a Nazarite. He would begin to drive out the Philistines.]

I want to talk to you about God's will. Two aspects describe God's will: His revealed will and His secret will. Let me explain. God's revealed or shown will is what the Bible commands us to do. For example, the Bible says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14). It is our duty to obey God's revealed will.

The second aspect is God's secret will, which is His accomplishing His purposes through all of life's experiences, good and bad, whether people are obedient or disobedient. I want His secret will to come to pass while I'm obedient, don't you?

We will see how disobedience to God's revealed will works out His secret will in today's story of Samson. In fact, as I tell the story, I want you to note the times Samson disobeyed God's Word and the Nazirite vow. Just interrupt me when you hear something that you think is disobedience. If you don't notice, I will notice for you. [Teacher, these places will be marked in the story with \*\*.]

### **Story:**

Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord (Judges 13:1), and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years. Philistia was next door to the tribe of Dan [locate], Samson's tribe. The Spirit began to move Samson, ✓which might mean he was in training and/or becoming stronger, between Zorah and Eshtaol (southeast corner of Dan).

#### ***Arranging for marriage***

Samson went down, northwest of Eshtaol about 12–15 miles, to Timnath (Timnah) and saw a girl he liked. He came back "up" and told his parents about her and that they should get her for his wife.

✓This is certainly not what Samson's parents expected of their son—the son who was to be consecrated as a Nazirite and was to go against the Philistines. Hadn't they trained him better than that? Why would he want to marry a Philistine, a heathen and not a believer!? \*\* They said as much: "Isn't there a girl in Dan or all Israel for you to marry?"

Samson replied, "I like the Philistine girl. Get her for me to marry." Was Samson obeying God? No. Apparently, though, the parents gave in to Samson's wishes.

The parents and Samson went on down to Timnath, not always walking together. As they got to vineyards near Timnath (hopefully, Samson wasn't eating those grapes!), a young lion roared against Samson. The Spirit of the Lord stirred up Samson so that he was able to kill that lion as easily as anyone might kill a goat.

But he didn't boast about this feat, not even telling his mother and father.

✓It seems as if the three took care of the business of arranging for Samson's marriage and went back home.

### ***Getting married***

Going to Timnath again ✓a year later with his parents and going aside by himself, Samson decided to see if that lion he had killed was still where he had left it. Probably by now the animals and birds of prey had eaten all the meat off the carcass. But, to his surprise, a swarm of bees had made a home in that lion's skeleton, and there was honey dripping from the skeleton. [\*\*Nazirite not to touch a dead body.] He grabbed some to eat and gave to his parents to eat but didn't tell where he had gotten the honey.

Now it was time for the wedding, a seven-day feast given by Samson. When the people in Timnath saw Samson, they got thirty companions to be with him ✓(maybe to watch out for him). Samson proposed a riddle, ✓perhaps for entertainment. He said, "If you can't guess my riddle, you will give me thirty shirts and thirty coats/robes. If you do guess the answer, I'll get you thirty shirts and thirty changes of garments." [\*\*Wagering or gambling is not wise use of God's resources.]

"Okay," answered the companions. "Let's hear the riddle."

### ***Finding out the riddle***

Students, see if *you* can tell what the solution to Samson's riddle is.

"Out of the eater came forth meat (or food).

"Out of the strong came forth sweet."

Can you figure out the riddle? [Allow answers.] Well, those thirty companions couldn't figure it out. Three days went by, and the men could not solve that riddle. So they went to Samson's wife and threatened her. "Get your husband to tell the riddle. If you don't, we'll burn you and burn your father's house down. You called us to this feast. Do you want to ruin us—leaving us with no money if we have to buy thirty shirts and thirty changes of clothes?"

What would you do if you were the wife? I guess I might have done what Samson's wife did—cry and beg. "You hate me! You don't love me! You gave a riddle to my people and haven't told me the answer. Isn't a husband supposed to tell his wife everything?" she wailed.

Samson replied, "I haven't even told my father and mother. How could I tell you?"

The wife kept crying on day four, day five, day six. (What a way to start a marriage! But Samson should have known better.) Finally, on day seven Samson's wife was really putting the pressure on Samson, and he gave in and told her the answer. Immediately, she told her people.

Before the sun went down on that last day, the men of the city came to Samson and said, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?"

Samson said, "If you hadn't plowed with my heifer" (meaning, "If my wife hadn't told you"), "you wouldn't have guessed my riddle."

### ***Paying his debts***

But God was working even in this calamity, for "the "Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Samson went down to Ashkelon [locate], a city 24 miles away on the seacoast—far enough away so that the men of Timnath wouldn't know—and took the lives of thirty men. [\*\*Nazirite: dead bodies again.] He took the clothes from the dead bodies of these dead men and gave them to the thirty men of Timnath.

But Samson was angry, so angry that he left his disloyal wife and went back home to his father's house. He didn't know it, but his wife became the wife of Samson's best man.

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus:

“Samson was a type of Christ, who has destroyed our adversary the devil, compared to a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8)” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-14-6.html>).

He was a type of Christ in keeping from his parents information about the killing of the lion,

“concealing this, lest his great strength should be known too soon”

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-14-6.html>).

“Now this marriage of Samson with a daughter of the Philistines was a type of the marriage of Christ with his people, especially with the Gentile church, such as were not of the commonwealth of Israel, but sinners of the Gentiles” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/judges-14-10.htm>).

### Activities:

- Play dough: bee; lion; coats
- Snack: “Honey Peanut Butter Yogurt Dip” found at <https://siouxhoney.com/recipe/honey-peanut-butter-yogurt-dip/> or “Honey Apple Nachos” found at <https://siouxhoney.com/recipe/honey-apple-nachos/> or Honeycomb® cereal made by Post Foods.
- Sing the names of the judges to the tune, “Ten Little Indians.”  
Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah,  
Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair,  
Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon,  
Samson, Eli, Samuel.
- Review questions: (Game: Print the page of clipart bees found below on cardstock or paper. If printed on paper, back with paper towel. Cut out the circles. Students who answer questions correctly may place a bee in the pocket chart or on a flannel board.)
  1. Who did Samson see in Timnath? [A woman he wanted to marry.]
  2. Why were Samson’s parents less than happy about Samson’s choice of a wife? [The woman was a Philistine, not an Israelite. Israelites were not to marry outside of Israel.]
  3. What animal did Samson encounter on the way to Timnath? [A lion.]
  4. What did Samson do to the lion? [Killed it with his bare hands.]
  5. What did Samson find in the lion’s skeleton when he passed by it about a year later? [Honeycomb.]
  6. What would the thirty Philistine men get from Samson if they guessed his riddle? [Thirty shirts and coats.]
  7. How did the thirty men learn the answer to the riddle? [Threatened his wife, who begged Samson for the answer.]
  8. How did Samson get the thirty sets of clothes he owed to the thirty Philistines? [He went to Ashkelon, slew thirty Philistines, and took their clothing.]

### Memory Verse[s]: (ESV)

- 1 John 2:17—The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

### Handwork:

- Honey in the skeleton as seen at <https://www.pinterest.co.kr/pin/671599363160320602/>. Instead of the honey image shown in the photo, place three pieces of bubble wrap (that has small bubbles) in the skeleton. If possible, paint the bubble wrap with yellow acrylic paint ahead of time.

Nazirite

riddle

heifer

best man



# Samson

## Judges 13-16

**1118-1078 BC, 40 Years**

Zorah + Ashtaol: home  
 Timna: wants woman  
 Zorah: home  
 Timna: riddle  
 Ashkelon: kills 30, pay off debt  
 Zorah: home  
 Timna: Burns crops  
 Etam: 1000 jawbone ass  
 Gaza: harlot  
 Hebron: Gaza gates  
 Valley of Sorek: Delilah  
 Gaza: blinded, jailed  
 3000 killed  
 Zorah + Ashtaol: buried

**Ashkelon**

**Philistine Empire**  
 Five capital cities:  
 Ashdod, Ashkelon, Lachish  
 Gaza, Ekron, Gath

**Gaza**

**Steve Rudd**  
[www.bible.ca/maps](http://www.bible.ca/maps)



Lydda, Lod

Timnath-heres-serah (Buri el-Isaneh)  
 Jeshanah (Tell esh-Si)

Jabneh (Jammia)

Gizmo  
 Beth-Horon (Bira, Jug. 20:27)  
 Beth-aven (Beiti)

Gezer Shaalbin (el Foga)  
 Beerth (et Tahta)

Gibbethon (Tell Malat)

Emmaus (t.Yau)  
 Chephirah (Kefireh)  
 Ramah, Naioth: (Samuel)

**Ashdod**

(Tell Migne)

Eshtaol (Kh. Shubeib)  
 Kiriaith-jearim (Tell el-Azhar)  
 Nob  
 Bethany

Beth-Shemesh (Tell er-Rumeileh)

**Jerusalem**

Qum

Valley of Sorek: Delilah  
 Gaza: blinded, jailed  
 3000 killed  
 Zorah + Ashtaol: buried

Moresheh (Tell es-Safi)

Azekah  
 Jarmuth  
 Bethlehem  
 Etam  
 Herodilium  
 Hyrcani

Betogabris (Beth-guvrin)

Keilah (Kh. Qila)  
 Makkedah (Onomast.)  
 Beth-zur, Bethsura (Khirbet et-Tubeiqah)

Adoraim (Dura)  
 Judah  
 Hebron, Kiriaith-arba

Apphekah of Judah fortress (Kh. el Hadab)

Kiriaith-sannah/sepher (Khirbat Rabud)

Gerar (Tel Haror)  
 Ziklag

**Key**

- Amorite capital city 1400 BC
- City of refuge 1380 BC
- Philistine capital city 1200 BC
- Levitical City
- City of special significance
- Mountain





























