

Title: 'As We See Fit': A study of the book of Judges- Part 17- "What a Weapon"

Key text: Judges 15:1-20

Suppl. texts:

Introduction: Last time, we saw the worst wedding ever. We realized Samson had no control over his eyes, which led him to lust after a foreign woman merely by her appearance. He was also a man who lost respect for his parents as he ignored their advice to marry within Israel. He was also a man with no integrity as he flirted with breaking his Nazarite vow before fully breaking it. He then lost control of his tongue as he gambled without the ability to pay the bet. He wanted others to know what he had done to the lion he had torn apart. Finally, we noted that Samson was a man with an uncontrolled temper. To pay his debt, he took the lives of thirty Philistines & took their garments to satisfy those he gambled with. We left him back at his father's house, alone & angry, with his would-be bride given to another. Tonight, we'll see how Samson receives the slight of giving his wife away to another.

Outline: *read Judges 15:1-20.*

1. Samson's frustration

- We left Samson fuming at his father's house in Israel.
- ***Vs. 1; "Later on, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He said, "I'm going to my wife's room." But her father would not let him go in."***
- Now calm, Samson goes to visit his wife, presumably to consummate his marriage.
- He thinks of his actions & the consequences, & he is frustrated by the outcome.
- His family has negotiated a marriage; they've paid for the feast, only to make a poor bet, lose that bet, kill thirty Philistines, & run home angry & pouting.
- We assume his family has paid the bride price; they were betrothed & were in the midst of the seven-day wedding feast leading up to the wedding night, when he had to pay off his gambling debt.
- He must assume that he is in the 'doghouse', so he comes with a gift, a young goat for the family. Remember the wife cried the entire seven days of her wedding week.
- ***Vs. 2; "I was so sure you thoroughly hated her," he said, "that I gave her to your friend. Isn't her younger sister more attractive? Take her instead."***
- As mentioned last time, the best man stepped in & married Samson's betrothed, apparently at the father's urging.
- Knowing that he has accepted a bride price, dad creepily offers the younger, more attractive sister. This is an offer I am shocked a man like Samson didn't accept, given that the lust of his eyes rules him.

2. Samson's vengeance

- **Vs. 3;** *"Samson said to them, 'This time I have a right to get even with the Philistines; I will really harm them.'"* Samson uses a personal offense as a national offense.
- **Vs. 4-5;** *"So he went out and caught **three hundred foxes** (jackals) and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves."*
- When an unexpected fire starts, you start seeking the starting point to snuff it out.
- With hundreds of flashpoints, there's no way to stop the destruction.
- **How did he get so many foxes/jackals? Did he have help?**
- The animals, afraid for their lives, would've been frantic, running through the fields.
- Essentially, they become the source of agricultural arson.
- Samson employs the familiar vengeance of many a man; burning the world down.
- **Vs. 6;** *"When the Philistines asked, 'Who did this?' they were told, 'Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, because his wife was given to his friend.' So the Philistines went up and burned her and her father to death."*
- The woman who saved her & her family's lives by revealing Samson's riddle has now lost her life & the lives of her family after all. This adds fuel to Samson's fire!
- **Vs. 7-8;** *"Samson said to them, 'Since you've acted like this, I won't stop until I get my revenge on you.' He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them. Then he went down and stayed in a cave in the rock of Etam."*
- We aren't told exactly how many he killed, but he is satisfied in his revenge. He has destroyed their livelihood, their food stores, & some of their lives.
- **Did you notice what is missing?** No mention of the Spirit of the Lord. Apparently, Samson is acting on his own violent streak. **'Bruce Banner always angry' movie clip.**
- The only time in Samson's story when the Spirit of the Lord doesn't empower him.

3. Samson's thirst

- Samson has satiated his bloodlust & he hides out in a cave, but the Philistines come after him & threaten all of Israel.
- **Vs. 9;** *"The Philistines went up and camped in Judah, spreading out near Lehi."*
- Now, Israel is quaking in fear & they come to make a bargain with the Philistines.
- **Vs. 10-11;** *"The men of Judah asked, 'Why have you come to fight us? We have come to take Samson prisoner,' they answered, 'to do to him as he did to us.' Then **three thousand men from Judah** went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, 'Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?' He answered, 'I merely did to them what they did to me.'"*
- Israel also comes out in force, not to fight the Philistines, but to restrain their judge.

- **Vs. 12-13;** *"They said to him, 'We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines.'" Samson said, "Swear to me that you won't kill me yourselves." 'Agreed,' they answered. 'We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We will not kill you.' So they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock."*
- The Israelites are **content** in **oppression**, with the status quo. Don't rock the boat!
- Yet, Samson knows that his calling is to destroy the Philistines, not God's people.
- **Vs. 14;** *"As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. **The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power.** The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands."* In line with God's plan & will.
- The Spirit of the Lord **returns** & **accomplishes** God's will in victory over His enemies.
- **Vs. 15;** *"Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men."* Again, Samson breaks his vow by touching something dead.
- **Sidenote:** If it had been an **old, dried**-out bone, it likely would have **broken** when used as a weapon to kill the Philistines.
- **Vs. 16;** *"Then Samson said, 'With a donkey's jawbone I have made donkeys of them. With a donkey's jawbone I have killed a thousand men.'"*
- Commentators & translators have done their best to translate Samson's poem with various results depending on your translation. It is **meant** to be a **taunt** of victory.
- **Vs. 17;** *"When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone; and the place was called Ramath Lehi. Because he was very thirsty, he cried out to the LORD, 'You have given your servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?' Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called En Hakkore, and it is still there in Lehi."*
- Samson recognizes the **victory** is from the **Lord** but worries he will thirst to death?
- The original KJV translation contains a poor translation here. It says: *"But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore, which is in Lehi unto this day."*
- **Lehi** means **jawbone**. The two words are **interchangeable**. A misunderstanding led KJV translators to think a hollow place opened in the jawbone.
- However, reading the rest of the verse makes it clear that it was a hidden spring that God opened, & it is still there to this day. This has been corrected in the NKJV & other newer translations: *"So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day."*
- **Vs. 20;** *"Samson led Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines."*

As We See Fit

A Study of the Book of Judges- Part 17

Last time, we saw the worst wedding ever. We realized Samson had no control over his eyes, which led him to lust after a foreign woman merely by her appearance. He was also a man who lost respect for his parents as he ignored their advice to marry within Israel. He was also a man with no integrity as he flirted with breaking his Nazarite vow before fully breaking it. He then lost control of his tongue as he gambled without the ability to pay the bet. He wanted others to know what he had done to the lion he had torn apart. Finally, we noted that Samson was a man with an uncontrolled temper. To pay his debt, he took the lives of thirty Philistines & took their garments to satisfy those he gambled with. We left him back at his father's house, alone & angry, with his would-be bride given to another. Tonight, we'll see how Samson receives the slight of giving his wife away to another.

1. Samson's _____

- We left Samson _____ at his _____ house in Israel.
- Now calm, Samson goes to visit his wife, presumably to _____ his marriage.
- He thinks of his _____ & the _____, & he is frustrated by the outcome.
- He must assume that he is in the ' _____ ', so he comes with a gift, a young goat for the family.

2. Samson's _____

- Samson uses a _____ offense as a _____ offense.
- When an unexpected fire starts, you start _____ the _____ point to _____ it out.
- With _____ of _____, there's no way to stop the destruction.
- Essentially, they become the source of _____.
- Samson employs the familiar vengeance of many a man; _____ the _____ down.
- Apparently, Samson is acting on his own _____ streak.

3. Samson's _____

- Now, Israel is _____ in fear & they come to make a _____ with the Philistines.
- Israel also comes _____ in _____, not to fight the Philistines, but to restrain their judge.
- The Israelites are _____ in _____, with the status quo.

- ### Small Group Questions:

- 1.** We saw Samson operating outside of the Spirit of God in this chapter. Acting according to his own anger. Discuss the overall morality portrayed in Samson's story & does it shock you?
- 2.** Instead of destroying property & eventually taking lives, what wiser approach could Samson have taken?
- 3.** Share a time when you responded impulsively & the situation worsened.
- 4.** How does the Lord teach the believer the following: patience, peace, & forgiveness?