

Judges 15

Verses 1 - 3

But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat, and said, “I will go in to my wife in *her* room.” But her father did not let him enter. ² Her father said, “I really thought that you hated her intensely; so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please let her be yours instead.” ³ Samson then said to them, “This time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm.”

But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat, and said, “I will go in to my wife in *her* room.”

	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Barley	x	x	x				
Flax	x	x	x				
Wheat			x	x	x		
Figs			x	x	x		
Grapes				x	x		
Pomegranates				x	x		
Olives					x	x	
Dates						x	x
Figs 2nd crop						x	x

Wheat harvest began in May and ended in July.

We don't know how long Samson waited to return to his wife but since her father had given her to another man immediately after Samson left, the time issue is of little consequence. The father-in-law had no right to do this so we can only assume it was at the request of his daughter. Perhaps she nagged him for a week.

² Her father said, “I really thought that you hated her intensely; so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please let her be yours instead.”

What was the 1st thing that the father-in-law should have done after Samson left? He should have tried to reconcile the two of them. Giving her to another man without a serious attempt at reconciliation was foolish.

The offer of the younger sister was an admission of the injustice done to Samson. Since Samson did not reply to his offer we can assume he rejected the offer of her younger sister.

³ Samson then said to them, “This time I shall be blameless in regard to the Philistines when I do them harm.”

This appears to be an admission from Samson that he was wrong for killing the 30 Philistines at Ashkelon. He was wrong because he had made a foolish bet and then killed 30 men to pay off the bet.

However, this time he felt he would be justified in his actions against the Philistines. Samson had been wronged by his father-in-law and yet he is taking it out on the Philistine community. How does that make him blameless?

Nevertheless, this was a blessing for Israel because the ensuing conflict was between Samson and the Philistines.

Verses 4 - 8

⁴ Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches, and turned *the foxes tail to tail* and put one torch in the middle between two tails. ⁵ When he had set fire to the torches, he released the foxes into the standing grain of the Philistines, thus burning up both the shocks and the standing grain, along with the vineyards *and* groves. ⁶ Then the Philistines said, “Who did this?” And they said, “Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to his companion.” So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. ⁷ Samson said to them, “Since you act like this, I will surely take revenge on you, but after that I will quit.” ⁸ He struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter; and he went down and lived in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

⁵ When he had set fire to the torches, he released the foxes into the standing grain of the Philistines, thus burning up both the shocks and the standing grain, along with the vineyards *and* groves.

We don't know how far the fire spread but the wheat-fields in that part of Palestine extended for thirty miles. In addition, the fire spread to the vineyards and groves.

⁶ Then the Philistines said, "Who did this?" And they said, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire

The Timnite refers to a person from the town of Timnah.

See map 1510



Samson's wife tried to prevent her family's house from being burned down but in the end a much greater punishment came her way.

The chief priests said of Christ, "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" See John 11:48

Their decision to kill the Christ resulted in the loss of Jerusalem, and nearly a million Jews were killed by the Romans! Another 100,000 were enslaved.

⁷ Samson said to them, “Since you act like this, I will surely take revenge on you, but after that I will quit.” ⁸ He struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter; and he went down and lived in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

Samson confessed that he was wrong in killing the 30 men at Ashkelon. But the text says that the Spirit of God came upon him mightily in order for him to do this. So how do we square these two contradictory statements?

While his motives were not in line with God’s Word he was fulfilling his mission of being a judge for Israel. And warring against an enemy of Israel was a part of that job. It may not seem like a war because Samson never called on Israel to raise any army against the Philistines but that is because he was an army of ONE.

Verses 9 - 13

Then the Philistines went up and camped in Judah, and spread out in Lehi. ¹⁰ The men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?” And they said, “We have come up to bind Samson in order to do to him as he did to us.” ¹¹ Then 3,000 men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Elam and said to Samson, “Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?” And he said to them, “As they did to me, so I have done to them.” ¹² They said to him, “We have come down to bind you so that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines.” And Samson said to them, “Swear to me that you will not kill me.” ¹³ So they said to him, “No, but we will bind you fast and give you into their hands; yet surely we will not kill you.” Then they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

Then the Philistines went up and camped in Judah, and spread out in Lehi.

Lehi was about 7 miles southeast of Timnah.

¹⁰ The men of Judah said, “Why have you come up against us?” And they said, “We have come up to bind Samson in order to do to him as he did to us.

Israel had been under the control of the Philistines for 20 plus years, so they had no option but to turn over Samson to them.

They said to Samson, “Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?” And he said to them, “As they did to me, so I have done to them.”

Samson knew exactly the situation Israel was in and he was willing to give himself up to the Philistines. He must have done this knowing God would give him the ability to overcome them no matter how outnumbered he was at the time.

¹² They said to him, “We have come down to bind you so that we may give you into the hands of the Philistines.” And Samson said to them, “Swear to me that you will not kill me.” ¹³ So they said to him, “No, but we will bind you fast and give you into their hands; yet surely we will not kill you.” Then they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

Samson consented to be bound as long as they swore not to kill him. This does not speak well of Israel that Samson was concerned that they might try to kill him.

Verses 14 – 20

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands. ¹⁵ He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it. ¹⁶ Then Samson said,

**“With the jawbone of a donkey,
Heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have killed a thousand men.”**

¹⁷ When he had finished speaking, he threw the jawbone from his hand; and he named that place Ramath-lehi. ¹⁸ Then he became very thirsty, and he called to the Lord and said, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?” ¹⁹ But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that water came out of it. When he drank, his strength returned and he revived. Therefore he named it En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. ²⁰ So he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

¹⁴ When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands. ¹⁵ He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, so he reached out and took it and killed a thousand men with it.

We have seen this phrase about the Spirit of the Lord coming upon him mightily three times now.

1. When he tore the lion with his bare hands Verse 14:6
2. When he killed the 30 Philistines Verse 14:19
3. And here when he kills 1,000 Philistines

How can someone kill 1000 men with a fresh jawbone of a donkey?

See Pic 1515



¹⁸ Then he became very thirsty, and he called to the Lord and said, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?” ¹⁹ But God split the hollow place that is in Lehi so that water came out of it. When he drank, his strength returned and he revived. Therefore he named it En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day.

After this great victory Samson was now afraid that he might die of thirst but God responded by providing him with the water he needed at that moment plus a source of water that lasted for many years.

²⁰ So he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Samson was a judge for 20 years but he never recruited an army from the Israelites. It seems he may have preferred to work alone. On the other hand, maybe God wanted it done this way for a reason that we have not yet explored.