

Judges 12-14 • Samson (Part 1)

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Judges chapter 12, as I said, really goes along with the previous story of the judgeship of Jephthah. And it's really just kind of a conclusion to this man's life, and his work as a judge, which wasn't stellar necessarily. He did a pretty great work in terms of just his leadership related to defeating the Ammonites, but the man made some really poor decisions, some really poor choices. We talked about it last time, particularly as it relates to his daughter.

You can go through if you missed some of that, but he does it again here at the very end of his kind of his judgeship, and it takes the form of a clash between his clan, which was part of this group of people that were living in the area of Gad. And he was challenged, if you take a look at the first few verses, by the men of Ephraim, who came to him, and this isn't the first time the men of Ephraim have done this, and they were complaining, and they were saying, why didn't you call us when the battle was at the beginning? We wanted to be a part of this.

You might remember, those of you that have really good memories, it was the same Ephraimites who critically attacked Gideon when he went against the Midianites, and the same group of Ephraimites came to Gideon, and why didn't you call us out, and they were angry, and it says that they were just very mad and so forth, and Gideon handled it very, very differently. Jephthah, on the other hand, handled it very badly, and it issues forth in a battle between his clan and these Ephraimites, and as a result 42,000 men lost their lives.

Now, these are brothers. These are all Jews. These are all Jews. These are all Israelites. Forty now, it's a lot of people, as we've said on other times in the past. If you woke up in the morning and you opened up the paper or got online and looked at the news and you saw that 42,000 people had died overnight, you'd be shocked. You'd be blown away, and you'd say, what in the world happened? This is a lot of people. Imagine something close to four times the size of Ontario. Those people all died.

And why? Because of jealousy and pride? I mean, the stupidity of that. And so, I'm going to kind of just let you go through and look at those verses on your own. Verses then 8 through 15 at the very end, it's not a long chapter, cover three more minor judges. And again, we call them minor judges, not because of necessarily what they did, but because of the lack of information regarding their

judgeship. But those men are Ibzan, Ilan, and Abdan. You ladies can take notes of that in case you're thinking of names for your next children.

And again, not a lot of information given about these men, just that they served in a role following Jephthah and in what role, we're not entirely certain, but they judged Israel during that time. And then we move on for our purposes tonight, beginning at chapter 13 to the story of Samson.

Judges, chapter 13. And it says in verse 1, *“And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD gave them into the hand of the Philistines (look at this, look at this) for forty years.” (ESV)*

Now, a couple of interesting things. First of all, this is the seventh cycle of apostasy that we have seen Israel fall into since the beginning of the book of Judges, and this is the longest, this is an unprecedented period of bondage that they enter into now with the Philistines. Forty years and they are crushed by these people.

Now, since these people, called the Philistines, are going to take a fairly prominent place in our study of the old Testament from this point forward, I think it probably is worth us taking just a few minutes here this evening and talking about them because they are not going to be reduced in terms of their threat to Israel until the time of David.

And David is the one who is going to really kind of eventually conquer the Philistines and they will come to a point where after that they die out and aren't mentioned anymore. But there's some things that I want you to know about the Philistines. They have been around a long time, even as it relates to the time period, we're looking at here this evening. They are first mentioned in the book of Genesis, the 21st chapter, and they have been around since really the time of Abraham dating back to around 1200 BC when they came into this area after being displaced from the area, which is Greece.

They lived in the area of Greece, but they were essentially kicked out of that area. So, they came down into this region and first tried to get into Egypt and conquer the Egyptians, but they were beaten back. And so, they came, and they settled in an area between Egypt and Israel, which is today referred to as the Gaza Strip.

Now, that has led some people to believe that possibly the Philistines are the forefathers, if you will, of the modern-day Palestinians. But the fact of the matter is there's absolutely no relationship between the two except the area of

land essentially in which they live, and it's even not a perfect connection even there.

The word Philistine or the name Philistine essentially means invaders. So, they were referred to as, the invaders. They came into the land to invade the land. They eventually found a home in that area, which is referred to as the Gaza Strip, and they are extinct today. They are essentially extinct. There were some Philistines that remained even after the time of king David, but he essentially weakened them through his kingship.

But it was when Nebuchadnezzar finally came into the land and took out Judah, and frankly, all of the other land around them, that we see the end of the Philistines after that point, after the point of the Judean exile into Babylon, we hear nothing more of the Philistines after that point.

So, if you ever see something in the paper about a Philistine reunion, it's just they're just blowing smoke. There's nobody to come. There's nobody to go to the reunion because they don't exist. They can't, there's no determination, bloodline, DNA. It's not going to happen. They're not around anymore. And again, they have no connection with the Palestinians. And one other thing that is interesting about the Philistines is that they were advanced technologically. They had computers. No, they didn't.

Actually, when I say advanced technologically, they were able to smelt iron in ways that were way beyond Israel and so they were able to make weapons of warfare which made them a very serious military threat to the people of Israel. In fact, the people of Israel would go into the land of the Philistines to do that kind of thing, to buy, purchase those sorts of implements and so forth, both for agriculture and for military use and that sort of thing. But there you go. There's just kind of a little information on the Philistines.

Verse 2 goes on to tell us that, *“There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and had no children. ³ And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.”*

Now, you've got to know, for a woman in that time period, that she's not going to hear anything past this point. Even though a man might keep listening for some more information, this is all she needs to hear. This is going to be the greatest news possible for her. In that time period, in that culture, you're going

to have a child. Everything else, all bets are off from that point on. That's all she needs to hear. The Lord has told her this.

And, *“Therefore (the angel of the Lord goes on to say in verse 4) be careful and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, ⁵for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite (And we'll talk about that in a minute) to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”*

Now, a Nazirite, not to be confused with a Nazarene, which is a locality, a Nazirite is an individual who had taken a vow, and that is a vow of consecration. It included abstaining for a period of time from certain things so as to be consecrated to the Lord. And they would usually abstain from any kind of fermented beverage. Wine, of course, they would abstain from the touching of anything or eating of anything that was considered in a Jewish sense, unclean. Touching something unclean would be a dead body. You would become ceremonially unclean according to the Law of Moses.

And so, a Nazirite would stay away from all of those things just because in their vow, it was a vow of consecration. Lord, I give myself during this period of time to you. Now, typically a person would take a Nazirite vow for a temporary period.

They might take it for a week, or two, or a month, or six months or something like that. But you'll notice here that the angel of the Lord says to this woman that your son is going to be a Nazirite. In other words, he is going to be bound by this vow for his entire life. And the sign of this Nazirite vow would be that he would not cut his hair for his entire life and so forth.

The word Nazirite, in fact, means devoted. All right? Or consecrated, and essentially that's the life that they would live while they were under this particular vow. Now, as we're going to see those, we get into the story of Samson. He breaks every, he violates every aspect of this vow at a whim. We're going to find out some interesting things about Samson as we go through these chapters.

We mentioned previously in a study here in Judges that as we go through Judges, the people who serve as Judges become increasingly more like their culture. More like their ungodly surroundings than they do actually, consecrated to the Lord.

They become more lascivious and separated from an understanding of the things of the Word of God. We saw it in the life of Jephthah, the man who came previously before these other three minor judges and we're going to see it in spades here in the person of Samson. We're going to see a man who is tremendously gifted by the Lord, tremendously anointed. And we're going to see a man who literally fritters away that anointing, that calling. Who takes that calling that God has placed on his life and just following his own urges, his own desires just sets it all at naught.

Considers it as nothing, essentially. I want to also just make one final point too, about what the Lord says here to this woman in verse 5. If you look with me again, it says that He said that Samson would begin, did you notice that? Begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. Samson does not, by any stretch of the imagination eliminate the threat of the Philistine nation, the people, and the problems that Israel has with them. But he does begin it, and God is going to use Samson's disobedience actually to do that.

Verse 6 goes on. It says, *"Then the woman came and told her husband, 'A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. I did not ask him where he was from, and he did not tell me his name,'"*

Which kind of gives you the impression that her husband had already been asking these questions. Well, who is he? What was his name? Well, I didn't ask. Well, where is he from? Well, I didn't ask. Why? She heard that she was going to have a baby, and that was all. That was all that was necessary. The guy wants more information, right? She heard I don't care where he's from. I don't care what his name is. He told me some good news. We're going to have a baby. That's pretty, pretty wonderful.

*"but (verse 7) he said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"*⁸ *Then Manoah prayed to the LORD (And I like this. Look at this prayer. He says) and said, "O Lord, please let the man of God whom you sent come again to us and teach us what we are to do with the child who will be born."*

Stop there for just a moment. I want you to notice just the context and the essence of this prayer because this is going on at a time in Israel when it's very, very dark spiritually speaking. These people are surrounded by paganism, and it has been 40 years now that they've been thrust under the bondage of the Palestinians there. I just made them my mistake, myself, the Philistines. And the

Philistine gods and all of their pagan ways and so forth. And I mean, it just permeates the land. You've got to wonder. Are there any people who are even believers anymore? Are there any people in the land who even pray to God anymore?

And what we find in Samson's parents is, although we're going to definitely uncover some weaknesses in their parental ability as we kind of go into these chapters, we find people who are, in essence, godly folk. And here's a man who upon hearing from his wife that she has seen this person, and he doesn't know yet. She says he was pretty incredible, but who knows? He doesn't know. He doesn't know the person's name. He doesn't know where he's from. He just says his wife said we're going to have a baby.

And so, he begins to pray and say, Lord, send again this messenger that was sent originally to my wife, because we want to know how to raise this child. You've told my wife that this child is going to live under this Nazirite vow of consecration. Well, we need to know more about this. And I like this prayer because this is a prayer asking for wisdom.

And in the Book of James it says if any man lacks wisdom, let him ask. Let him come to God and let him ask and God will give generously without finding fault. And we need to be people who quickly come if we're lacking wisdom. I like a parent. who is willing to say, I don't know how to do this.

The one interesting thing about parenting, and we do parenting classes, we've got parenting videos, we've got parenting stuff. What we learn about parenting primarily is what we've seen our parents do. And many of us for many, for some of us anyway, that was a great deal of what not to do.

And I've even talked to people who said I learned what not to do while I was being raised. But as far as what to do, we all go into parenting really green. I mean, we're young and we're green and we don't know what we're doing. And God gives us some of the most precious cargo to take care of in a manner of stewardship that you can imagine.

And we are inexperienced people, and we go into it, and I shudder to think about all the mistakes that I made as a dad. But I remember one time when my oldest son, who's now 28, was really little. I mean like two. I remember having a revelation, an epiphany, that maybe, just maybe, if I prayed about it, God might answer me, in regard to parenting, how to do this thing.

And you know what? I was pastoring at the time, I'm ashamed to say. And I was, it was like this, it's just this epiphany and I had to forget what he did. Little guy did something dumb and we didn't, we weren't sure how to respond. What do you do?

I didn't want to take, do what the world says. Go in the corner and have a time out. Now that works good. Not. It didn't work in my home. I didn't know what to do, but I didn't want to just follow somebody else's advice just because that's what they said to do. What am I going to do? I remember that one day I prayed about it. Lord, give me wisdom. I don't know what to do. I need wisdom to know how to deal with my son.

The Lord just immediately just laid something upon my heart, very clear direction about how to handle that area of parenting, and I was so blessed. But that's in keeping with the promise that we're given in James. If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask. (James 1:5)

We treat God like He's really kind of uninvolved or disinterested. Let's admit it, we do sometimes. When we have issues going on in our lives, our families, our children, whatever, we treat Him like He's there, but He doesn't really care, and so we don't ask. We've got an issue going on, it's like, well, have you talked to God about it? Well, I don't know, He's busy. I actually had somebody tell me that one time, that God was busy. I love it when people, it's a great thing just asking God.

Look at verse 9. It says, *"And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman as she sat in the field. But Manoah her husband was not with her."*

Kind of like that. God keeps coming to the woman. ¹⁰ *So the woman ran quickly and told her husband* ¹¹ *And Manoah arose and went after his wife and came to the man and said to him, "Are you the man who spoke to this woman?" And he said, "I am."* ¹² *And Manoah said, "Now when your words come true"* (Did you catch that? That's faith, you guys. He didn't say, now if this happens the way you said. He just said, *when your words come true*) *what is to be the child's manner of life, and what is his mission?"*

¹³ *And (then the angel doesn't really answer a whole lot different here. But) the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. ¹⁴ She may not eat of anything that comes from the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, or eat any unclean thing. (Obviously while she's carrying the baby) All that I commanded her let her observe."* ¹⁵ *Manoah said to*

the angel of the LORD, (All right) "Please let us detain you and prepare a young goat for you."

You get that? Prepare, that's not going down to McDonald's and grabbing a burger or Albertsons and getting some chicken, fried chicken. It's like, hey, just hang on, we're going to go grab some fried chicken and some French bread. Why don't we come back and we'll just sit down.

No, they were talking about preparing a goat. I don't know if you've ever, I haven't, but it can't be a quickie. I mean, he's basically saying we're going to go slaughter one of the goats and we'll butcher them and then just hang out.

They had a lot of time. They had a lot of time back then. We don't have time for stuff like that anymore. We've got to go through the drive-up window and get it now. Right? I like, I just, yeah, it was a very chill kind of a time. So, he says, hang out here. We're going to prepare some food.

"¹⁶ And the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "If you detain me, I will not eat of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the LORD." (For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of the LORD.) ¹⁷ And Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that, when your words come true, we may honor you?" ¹⁸ And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?"

Or as the NIV, if you have one on your lap says, *"it is beyond understanding."* And, of course, the whole idea of wonderful means, essentially, it's just so far beyond you that you can't know it. Why do you ask me my name? It's beyond your ability to understand. It's wonderful.

The Book of Isaiah tells us that the Son who is to be given will be called Wonderful. He'll be called Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. He'll be called Wonderful. So, I believe that we're dealing here with a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. This is the Word of God prior to Him being made flesh, but His appearance is now to these individuals.

"¹⁹ So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it on the rock to the LORD, to the one who works wonders, and Manoah and his wife were watching. ²⁰ And when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the LORD went up in the flame of the altar. (That must have been amazing to see. Wouldn't you love to see that?) Now Manoah and his wife were watching, and they fell on their faces to the ground." That's pretty amazing. So, they literally just hit the ground like that.

*“²¹ The angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. (And I love this response)
²² And Manoah said to his wife, (that’s it) “We shall surely die, for we have seen God.””*

Isn't that great? I mean, there's a little pagan roots going on here as far as that response goes because the Jews knew and understood that to see God was to invite death. You do not look upon the face of God, because God had told Moses. Remember, Moses is the one who wanted to see His face. Moses asked to see His face. Because what God said to Moses up on the mountain was, He said, Moses, you're a good guy. That's a paraphrase. But He said, you're a good guy. And Moses said, wonderful, now let me see your face. And God's response was, no can do because in that body that you are in right now, you cannot see the glory, the full-on glory of the Lord.

You just can't. Your body would be so much vapor. So, I'll tell you what I'll do. I will pass by, and I'll declare myself in your hearing, but I'm going to put my hand over you as I pass by, and then as I'm passing, I will lift my hand only so that you can see the fading glory of my presence as I pass by. But that's the best I can do for you.

So, this understanding came to be known among the Jews very clearly as you can't look upon the face of God or you will die. So, Manoah, after hearing from the Lord that they're going to have a baby, and they're going to raise this baby, comes back and says, oh that's it, we're dead. Praise God, He gives us women who are sensible. And this man married a sensible woman. And look at the sense she speaks. She should have just smacked him, but that wouldn't have been respectful.

But he says we're going to, and his wife says, verse 23, *“But his wife said to him, “If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have (first of all) accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering at our hands, or (you know what? I don’t think He would have) shown us all these things, or now announced to us such things as these.”*

Things that He's going to do. In other words, dude, I don't think He'd tell us that we're going to have a baby and then kill us. What do you think? And, he's kind of like, oh yeah. Let's just keep this between the two of us, okay? And then it gets in the Bible for everybody to read for all time. Best-selling book forever. Yeah, I know, isn't that wonderful? Aren't you glad they didn't write the Bible about your life? Anyway so, she says, no I seriously doubt that's what's going to happen.

Verse 24, *“And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson.”* And Samson basically kind of means, it comes from an understanding of light or illumination. And they really believed. This is a godly couple, and they really believed that Samson was going to shine a very important light upon their nation and their culture in this sense of his deliverance of the people, at least partially from the hands of the Philistines.

It doesn't go quite as well as they probably desired, but it says, *“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.*

¹ *Samson went down (now he's older now, and he went) to Timnah, (and that is an area, a small area of the Philistine area) and at Timnah he saw one of the daughters of the Philistines.”* And we're going to, we're going to learn a lot about Samson here because it says, *“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.”*

And what he's doing is he's helping us to understand that a man just couldn't go in and take a woman. Marriages had to be arranged by the parents. And so, he is following the cultural traditions and saying you guys arrange this for me, but he's calling all the shots already. He's a grown man. He's already got pretty incredible strength, and mom and dad are even a little intimidated of him right now or by him.

And so he goes, he says. I've done this and what we see here at the very outset of understanding Samson's life and character in this chapter is that he's a man who already has set aside the Word of God and the commands of God because as a Jew, it was completely forbidden for him to take a wife from among a pagan people.

God strictly forbade that sort of intermarrying with these pagan cultures. So immediately we see that Samson is willing for the sake of what? For the sake of lust, for the sake of, I mean, he hasn't even talked to this girl yet. He just saw her. Saw that she was pretty hot. So, he goes back and tells dad, hey, whoa, baby, I found the one. Let's go, we're going to make arrangements. She's going to be mine, and so forth.

And what he saw with his eyes was enough for him to set aside the Word of God. Here's a man who is dedicated under a Nazirite vow of consecration to the Lord, to follow the Lord, to seek the Lord to obey the Lord in everything.

I don't care. I'm going to do what I want to do. This is going to characterize Samson's life. Now, listen to me here. This is important. God is going to use Samson's character. God is even going to use Samson's disobedience. That doesn't justify his character nor his disobedience in any way.

What it helps you and I to understand is that even the disobedience of man does not thwart the purpose and will of God from being accomplished. You hear me? God is never in heaven wringing his hands thinking, oh my, now what am I going to do? Because this person isn't following me to the uttermost.

Listen, the purpose and the plan of God will not be thwarted. That is what sovereignty means. When you and I say God is sovereign, that means there's no one or nothing above Him that controls Him, that dictates to Him, that directs Him in any way. He is the director of all. And even the disobedience of man can be used by a sovereign God to carry out His purpose and will. And that's not in any way to give you and I some sense of license to just say, well, I can do whatever I wanted to because God can use it, He's big enough. Let me tell you something.

All you've got to do is get to the end of the book of Judges, or at least, not even to the end of the book, the end of the chapters that deal with the life of Samson, and you're going to find out that the disobedience of Samson has devastating consequences. I mean, devastating. This man lives his life to fritter away the gifts and the calling of God, and his life ends in a very horrible way.

We're not going to soft pedal anything as it relates to disobedience or sin here, but we are going to assert the sovereignty and the purpose of God above and beyond those things. All right? So he tells his dad, I want you to go get this woman.

And I want you to notice in verse 3 that his mother and father at least attempt to try to talk some reason. He says, *"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?'"*

By referring to the Philistines as uncircumcised he's setting them apart from the Jews and in so doing rebuking his son. He's saying, these people are, in essence, unclean and there's no women among all of your people that you have to go to the Philistines? Look at Samson's response. *"But Samson said to his father, 'Get her for me, (Look at the reason why) for she is right in my eyes.'"*

And that is a very clear characterization of the way Samson lived his life. It's good for me. It looks good to me. It talks about how every man did what was right in his own eyes. And that's a description of what the world might hail as strong independence, but it's rebellion in the pages of Scripture because the Scripture would speak to you and I to our submission to the Spirit and our desire to please the Lord in all things and to fear God, to fear the Lord, which means to shun evil and to seek to know the will of the Lord for our lives.

But an individual who does only what is right in his own eyes is someone who says, I don't care. I don't care what you think. I don't care what God thinks. I reject your authority. I reject God's authority. I'm going to do what I want. If it looks good, I'll have it. If I like it, I'll get it. That will be my life. That will be my way. And even though again, the world would, they would write songs about that kind of character and hail it and exalt it, the Bible refers to that as some of the worst kind of character that you can imagine.

“His father and mother (verse 4 said they) did (it says, they 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 so they're going to go down there and they're going to start the process of the betrothal) and they came to the vineyards of Timnah.”

Now he's not supposed to be around vineyards. He's not supposed to be around any kind of possibility of fermented drink and stuff like that. But he doesn't really care and apparently, they got separated by some distance or whatever. And it says, *“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, (and meaning no weapon) he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat.”

Now, I have a sense that ripping a goat would be pretty tough for me, you know? I fold a page in about six times, and I can't, I can no longer tear it apart. But it says the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he tore apart this lion with his bare hands! *“But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.”* Why? Because he was, as a Nazirite, having, under that vow, he was not to touch a carcass. A dead body. And so, he's not going to tell mom and dad.

“⁷ Then he went down and talked with the woman, (Now he finally got a chance to talk to her) and (it says) she was right in Samson's eyes.” So, he liked, he liked her even more. And again, that simply means Samson made a

determination based on what he liked. Nothing else. “⁸ *After some days (we're not sure exactly how long, but) he returned to take her....*”

Now, when it says he returned to take her, it means essentially that when he went with his parents, his parents would have talked to her parents, and they would have created the betrothal period. All right? And then he would go away, and he would prepare a place for them to live together, and then he would come back and get her. All right?

And now she would be considered his wife in this interim time, although they had not consummated the relationship. In fact, he would come back for her, and they would enter into a feasting period. We're going to talk about this more on Sunday, by the way.

They would enter into a feasting period of seven days, where it would be kind of a drunken brawl. And seriously, I mean, this is a pagan country, too. And at the end of the seven days of celebration, the couple would come together and consummate the marriage, and then from then on, they are, in that full sense of the term, husband and wife. Although she is going to be, she's considered his wife technically from the betrothal onward. So, he's gone away, prepared wherever they're going to live, and now he's coming back to get her. So, he's coming back,

“*...And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, (He thought, yeah, I'm going to check where I killed that lion and see what's there) and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and (there was) honey.* ⁹ *He scraped it out into his hands and went on, eating as he went.*”

Now, again, touching a dead carcass, eating the honey, which in and of itself was not a problem for a Jew to eat, but this had been inside a dead body. Again, for a man with a Nazirite vow, we're talking breaking the rules once again.

“*And he came to his father and mother and gave some to them, and they ate. (Didn't tell them what was going on, it says there) 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.*”

And that was something that they would do for a wedding type ceremony for the feast. Give him companions to help him celebrate. But these aren't his friends. These are given to him. They're like hired companions, if you will, to

celebrate with you. They hired people for everything. They even hired people to cry at your funeral. And the more people you had wailing and the louder they wailed, the more respectful it was. And so, you've got a lot of people helping you celebrate. It looks like you're having a great time. It looks like you're the bell of the ball.

So anyway *“And Samson said to them, (verse 12) “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,”*

Now, this is not just going down to Kmart and getting clothes. These are nice garments. These were special, expensive dress garments for an individual. And so, this is quite a bit on the line here. But he says in verse 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, (fine) “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.” Obviously referring to the honey that was scraped out of the carcass of the lion, and they couldn't have known it without knowing he had killed the lion and then went back and saw it and that there was a beehive inside the carcass.

And it says, *“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?”*

And so, they're saying, have you hired us? Have you brought us into this whole thing just to take our goods? And by the way, this is not an empty threat. These people didn't make empty threats. If they said they were going to burn their house, they were going to burn their house. They were going to, they were going to kill him.

“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....””

Now, by the way, you're going to find out this is Samson's one weakness. He was a strong man physically, but when it came to women, this is where he was exceedingly weak, very weak, and it will be his undoing in the end. And so, the

one thing, I mean, Samson could stand up against an army by himself, but one nagging woman was all it took to bring him down. So, she's weeping.

Verse 17. *“She wept before him the seven days that their feast lasted, (This is to be a time of rejoicing and she's crying the whole time. Isn't that fun?) 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? (They waited till the last minute, by the way, right to the deadline. And they said, oh, by the way, what's sweeter than honey?) What is stronger than a lion?” (It's like, we got you, buddy) And he said to them, “If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle.”*

Which tells you right there, this man is not ready for marriage. I don't care who you are, you do not call your wife a heifer. This does not translate well in any language, at all. You just don't do that. He's not really, he's not really calling his wife a heifer. That's the truth of the matter. What you people didn't plow with heifers technically. You plowed with an ox. And so, he's basically saying if you hadn't done that, which is improper or inappropriate. If you hadn't done what you shouldn't have done, you wouldn't have known these things.

“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.”

Why is Samson hot with anger? Because his riddle got found out. Is he upset at all because he was doing wrong? About ready to, you know consummate a marriage with a Philistine woman? No. No. He's just mad because his party kind of got rained on. And Samson's wife, because they didn't actually consummate the relationship. They didn't finish. The very end.

“²⁰ And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.” Which by the way, is a huge insult and we'll talk more about that.