

Day 253 - SUNDAY: September 10th

Judges 15

Judges 15:1-20 NKJV

After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into her room." But her father would not permit him to go in. Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead." And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned the foxes tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. When he had set the torches on fire, he let the foxes go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards and olive groves. Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire. Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam. Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?" So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us." Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?" And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them." But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines." Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves." So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you

securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock. When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. Then Samson said: "With the jawbone of a donkey, Heaps upon heaps, With the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!" And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi. Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out 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 hand of the uncircumcised?" 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. And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "The shenanigans at Samson's marriage, and the giving of his wife to another, provoked him into taking vengeance on the Philistine oppressors. He wrought havoc on their harvest. To do this, he trapped foxes—or jackals, as the Hebrew can also be translated (which seems more likely as jackals, unlike the more solitary foxes, traveled in packs, making it easier to catch them in greater numbers). He then tied torches—"firebrands" as the King James Version has it—between the tails of pairs of these jackals or foxes before releasing them into fields of grain, vineyards and olive groves. One can imagine the panic-stricken animals, unable to run in a straight line, zigzagging all over the fields, setting them on fire wherever they ran, thus burning whole crops. Samson became a wanted man, and it was his own people who turned him over to the Philistines.

Another element in the Christlike symbolism of Samson's life: Samson is turned over to the Philistine oppressors by Israelites of the tribe of Judah; Christ is turned over to the Roman oppressors by Israelites of the tribe of Judah.

Samson then slew a thousand Philistine men with the jawbone of a donkey. His utterance in verse 16 after slaying the Philistines is poetic, as the New King James Version indicates. However, the translation into English does not do justice to the Hebrew play on words. The Moffatt Translation is perhaps better: "With the jawbone of an ass I have piled them in a mass." At least Samson realizes that the strength and power he had to perform this incredible feat came from God. "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant," he acknowledges (verse 18). He even calls on God to further deliver Him from thirst, which God does.

All this is building to a grand climax as God continues to seek an occasion to deal with the Philistines." [END]

Verse 1 – The time of the wheat harvest was at Pentecost, as the barley harvest began at Passover.

Verse 2 – It was against God's law to take a sister as a wife (compare Leviticus 18:18).

Verse 8 – Adam Clarke's commentary states: "This also is variously understood; but the general meaning seems plain; he appears to have had no kind of defensive weapon, therefore he was obliged to grapple with them, and, according to the custom of wrestlers, trip up their feet, and then bruise them to death. Some translate heaps upon heaps; others, he smote horsemen and footmen; others, he wounded them from their legs to their thighs, etc., etc. See the different versions. Some think in their running away from him he kicked them down, and then trod them to

death: thus his leg or thigh was against their hip; hence the expression.”
[END]

Verse 9 – Lehi means “jaw”. It likely was named this after Samson kills these men with a “jaw bone”.

Verse 15 – The word translated “new” in the NKJV is only used two times in the Bible and means “moist” or “dripping”. It’s interesting that we are told this is the jawbone of a freshly killed animal. This tells us that it was not dry and brittle but still tough and strong.

Verse 19 – After God causes water to spring forth, Samson names the place a name meaning “spring (fountain) of One calling”.