

Life Lesson 53
Samson, Part 2
Text: Judges 14-15

Introduction

Samson had everything going for him. He had parents who loved the Lord and loved him. He knew from the time he was a small child that God had called him to an important leadership position. God had even given him unusual strength, so that everyone was afraid to argue with him. You would think with all these blessings that Samson would be happy and a good servant of God. I'm afraid that isn't how the story goes!

The Story

Samson was a Nazarite from birth. That meant that he was set apart for God's special use and was to keep special rules for living a holy life. Samson's main interest wasn't in pleasing God, though. It was in pleasing Samson. He always had to have his own way – and that led to trouble.

He decided he wanted to get married, and who did he pick out but one of the Philistine girls? The Israelites weren't supposed to marry the women from other nations. The Philistines worshiped an ugly fish-god called Dagon. Should a man set apart for God's special use be married to someone who worshiped a deformed fish statue? Of course not! But that's what Samson did. He kept hanging around the Philistines until something happened that turned the Philistines into his enemies.

He was traveling along the road one day and a lion attacked him. Samson was so strong that he killed that big lion just as easily as if it had been a chicken. When he went by that way again, he saw that some bees had made a hive right inside that dead lion. It was a rule for a Nazarite never to touch a dead body, so he should have stayed away from that lion. But he took some of the honey and ate it.

Later he was having a party with his Philistine friends and they started asking riddles.

“If you can tell me the answer to this riddle, I’ll give you each a suit of clothes,” Samson said. “If you can’t answer, you have to each give me a suit of clothes.”

Since there were 30 men who took him up on his challenge, he must have figured he would have a new wardrobe all lined up.

“Here’s the riddle,” he said. “Out of the strong came forth sweet. Out of the eater came forth meat.”

Nobody had any idea what that riddle meant. He was talking about the lion he had killed. The lion was strong – and out of it’s dead body there came the sweet honey. Out of the strong came forth sweet.

The lion is an “eater” and the word “meat” just means “food.” So out of the lion who is an eater, there came honey, which is good to eat.

The Philistines couldn’t guess the riddle, so they threatened his wife.

“Get him to tell you the answer,” they said. “If you don’t, we’ll burn down your father’s fields.”

So Samson’s wife began to tease and beg, trying to get him to tell her the answer to the riddle.

“You don’t love me,” she cried. “If you loved me you would tell me the answer to the riddle.”

She cried and nagged until Samson could stand it no longer. He told her that the lion he had killed was the eater. The honey was the sweet part in the riddle.

She lost no time in telling the 30 guests the answer.

“We’ve figured out your riddle,” the men told Samson. “What is stronger than a lion, and what is sweeter than honey?”

Samson knew right away that they had tricked him.

“If you hadn’t plowed with my heifer, you wouldn’t have found out my riddle,” he exclaimed.

That was his way of saying that he knew his wife had told them the answer.

Samson was angry. He was so angry that he went to a nearby village and killed 30 people. He took their clothes and gave them to the 30 men who found out the riddle. Then he marched off, leaving his new wife behind.

After a while, though, he decided to forgive her. He came back to get her, only to find that her father had given her to someone else.

“I thought you didn’t like her anymore, so I gave her to your friend,” his father-in-law said.

Samson was mad again. This time he caught 300 foxes and tied their tails together. Then he put burning torches on their tails and turned them loose in the fields. They burned up the fields and destroyed the crops of the Philistines.

Now the Philistines were through being friends with Samson. They were determined to kill him. They ganged up against him and tried to kill him, but God gave him the victory and he killed all of them instead. He did what he should have done all along – fought against the enemies of God and God’s people. He delivered them and judged the Israelites for about 20 years.

The Life Lesson

Samson had lots of trouble, didn’t he? Yet, none of those terrible things would have happened if he had taken his vows of holiness to God more seriously. God would have used him to defeat the Philistines, but no doubt He would have done it in a way more honoring to God and less painful to Samson.

Sometimes we forget that we who are Christians have some serious vows to God. We are to love and serve Him with our whole hearts. He is our boss, our master. Sometimes boys and girls forget that and let other things take that first place in their hearts. That will lead to trouble for us, as surely as it did for Samson.

Review Questions

Who did Samson marry?

A Philistine girl.

Did God approve of his choice?

No, we shouldn't marry people who are God's enemies.

What animal attacked Samson as he was visiting the Philistines?

A lion

What happened to the lion?

Samson killed it.

What did Samson find in the dead lion's body when he passed that way again?

Bees had made a hive in the dead body.

Should Samson have touched the dead lion?

No, because it was forbidden of a Nazarite to touch things that were dead.

What challenge did he give the Philistine men at the party?

If you guess the riddle, I'll give you each a suit of clothing. If you don't guess, everyone gives me a suit of clothing.

How did the Philistines find the answer to the riddle?

They threatened Samson's wife and she nagged him into telling it.

Where did Samson get the 30 suits of clothing?

He killed 30 Philistines and took their clothes.

What happened to Samson's wife?

Her father gave her to someone else to marry.

What did Samson do when he found out that his "friend" had taken his wife?

He caught foxes, tied their tails together, and tied torches to them. He set them loose and they burned up the fields.

How did the Philistines feel about Samson?

They hated him and tried to kill him.