Judges 14: my study Bible

Septuagint

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Judges 14

Samson Seeks A Wife

1 Καὶ κατέβη Σαμψὼν εἰς Θαμνάθα, καὶ εἶδεν γυναῖκα εἰς Θαμνάθα ἀπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων τῶν ἀλλοφύλων. 2 καὶ ἀνέβη καὶ ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν Γυναῖκα ἑόρακα ἐν Θαμνάθα ἀπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων Φυλιστιείμ, καὶ νῦν λάβετε αὐτὴν ἐμοὶ εἰς γυναῖκα.

1 And Samson went down into Timnah, and he saw a woman in Timnah from the daughters of the foreigners. 2 And he went up and told his father and his mother and said, "I have seen a woman in Timnah from the daughters of the Philistines, and now, take her for me for a wife."

14:1–20

There are two movements in this chapter, which continues into chapter 15. Chapters 14 & 15 both cover Samson's military victories (if they are worthy to be called victories). This chapter shows how Samson's impetuousness is used by the Lord to set him at odds with the Philistines. Samson has no enmity with the Philistines at the beginning of this, but is incensed by them by the end of chapter 14, which is the means by which the Lord fulfils his purpose through chapter 15.

1. The start of Samson's career: his desire to be married and the first time the Lord prevails to strengthen him. The lion incident shows that the Lord preserves those whom He has set aside for ministry. This sets up a pattern for what follows, even though what follows is not consistently labelled the same way. The pattern roughly follows a cycle of escalation, a provocation, a response, and an outcome, normally death. Here the provocation is the lion attacking, and the outcome is the death of the lion, and the irony of the bees taking up residence in the lion's carcass.

2. Samson's first Philistine slaughter (30 men) (v11-19). In this case the provocation is the harassment of his wife to solve the riddle, and it results in 30 deaths.

Verse 20 then sets up chapter 15.

14:1 θυγατέρων τῶν ἀλλοφύλων.

Israel was prohibited from marrying the prior inhabitants of the land, though the Philistines were not included in this. His sin here, is not necessarily marrying outside, but as his father points out, he could make a better choice, one that is more in keeping with the interests of his own people.

14:2 καὶ ἀνέβη

From the high country where the Israelites had been driven, down to the Shephelah or plains where the Philistines were more populous. Also in v1.

14:2 καὶ ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ

Samson is likely of marrying age, possibly 13-15 years old. Accordingly, he is probably not fully grown, and therefore we see him still living with his parents.

14:2 Γυναῖκα ἑόρακα ἐν Θαμνάθα ἀπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων Φυλιστιείμ,

As with verse 1, the focus is on his seeing the woman, not having had a conversation with her, or building a relationship with her family, so it seems that the author is suggesting he hasn't even spoken to the family yet.

3 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ
Μὴ οὐκ εἰσὶν θυγατέρες τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου καὶ ἐκ
παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ μου γυνή, ὅτι σὺ πορεύῃ λαβεῖν
γυναῖκα ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων τῶν ἀπεριτμήτων;
καὶ εἶπεν Σαμψὼν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ Ταύτην
λάβε μοι, ὅτι αὕτη εὐθεῖα ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς μου. 4 καὶ ὁ
πατὴρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν ὅτι
παρὰ Κυρίου ἐστίν, ὅτι ἐκδίκησιν αὐτὸς ζητεῖ ἐκ
τῶν ἀλλοφύλων. καὶ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ οἱ
ἀλλόφυλοι κυριεύοντες ἐν Ἰσραήλ. 5 καὶ κατέβη
Σαμψὼν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ εἰς
Θαμνάθα· καὶ ἦλθεν ἕως τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος Θαμνάθα,
καὶ ἰδοὺ σκύμνος λέοντος ὠρυόμενος εἰς
συνάντησιν αὐτοῦ. 6 καὶ ἥλατο ἐπ' αὐτὸν πνεῦμα
Κυρίου, καὶ συνέτριψεν αὐτὸν ὡσεὶ συντρίψει
ἔριφον· καὶ οὐδὲν ἦν ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ. καὶ οὐκ
ἀπήγγειλεν τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ ὃ
ἐποίησεν.

3 And his father and his mother said to him, "Is there not a daughter of your brothers and a woman from all my people that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcized foreigners?" And Samson said to his father, "Take[a] her for me, because she is right in my eyes." 4 And his father and his mother did not know that it is from the Lord, that he was seeking vengeance from the foreigners. And in that time, the foreigners were ruling in Israel. 5 And Samson went down and his father and his mother into Timnah and he came as far as the vineyard of Timnah and behold a cub of a lion, was roaring to meet him. 6 And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and he destroyed it just as he will destroy a kid, and nothing was in his hand. And he did not tell what he did to his father and to his mother.

14:3 Deuteronomy 12:8 LXX; Judges 17:6 LXX; Judges 18:1 LXX; Judges 19:1 LXX; Judges 21:25 LXX **14:4** Judges 13:5 LXX **14:6** Judges 15:18–19 LXX

a 14:3 Or "Get"

14:3 ὅτι αὕτη εὐθεῖα ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς μου.

This is similar to the theme strophe of Judges, "everyone did what was right in their own eyes." (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25; cf Deut 12:8).

14:4 כִּי־ תֹאֲנָה הִוא־ מְבַקֵּשׁ מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים

The Lord was seeking an occasion. The antecedent of the pronoun matches מֵיְהוָה and thus YHWH is the one seeking the occasion, not Samson.

14:4 ὅτι ἐκδίκησιν αὐτὸς ζητεῖ ἐκ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων.

LXX: "...because He sought vengeance from the foreigners." The Hebrew is different here, "...because an occasion He was seeking from the Philistines."

14:4 καὶ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι κυριεύοντες ἐν Ἰσραήλ.

This is the fundamental concern the Lord has, and the reason why Samson exists. See Judges 13:5.

14:5 καὶ ἰδοὺ σκύμνος λέοντος ὠρυόμενος εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτοῦ.

Likely Samson was walking alone here (his parents don't apparently witness this event) and perhaps as a result of his smaller size appeared to be prey to this young lion.

14:6 וַיְשַׁסַּעֵהוּ

In this feat of strength, the Lord provides the power to Samson to be able to protect himself from the Lion, demonstrating the Lord's gracious protection of the man He has appointed to perform his task. Samson is not a godly man, but the Lord preserves Him regardless because Samson is serving the Lord's purposes.

7 καὶ κατέβησαν καὶ ἐλάλησαν τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἠὐθύνθη ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς Σαμψών. 8 καὶ ὑπέστρεψεν μεθ’ ἡμέρας λαβεῖν αὐτήν· καὶ ἐξέκλινεν ἰδεῖν τὸ πτῶμα τοῦ λέοντος, καὶ ἰδοὺ συναγωγὴ μελισσῶν ἐν τῷ στόματι τοῦ λέοντος καὶ μέλι. 9 καὶ ἐξεῖλεν αὐτὸ εἰς χεῖρας, καὶ ἐπορεύετο πορευόμενος καὶ ἐσθίων· καὶ ἐπορεύθη πρὸς τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἔφαγον, καὶ οὐκ ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ λέοντος ἐξεῖλεν τὸ μέλι.

7 And they came down and they spoke to the woman and she was right in Samson's eyes. 8 And he returned after days to take her, and he turned aside to see the body of the lion, and behold a gathering of bees was in the mouth of the lion and honey. 9 And he took it out in his hand, and he went going and eating, and he went to his father and his mother and he gave to them and they ate, and he did not tell them that he took the honey from the mouth of the lion.

14:7 Judges 14:3 LXX **14:9** Judges 14:16 LXX

14:8 μεθ’ ἡμέρας

Though neither a number nor an indefinite pronoun is here, this is probably best understood as the accusative plural, "after days" or "some days."

14:9 καὶ οὐκ ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς

The author wants us to see that Samson explicitly doesn't tell his parents. This arises again in Judges 14:16.

WORD STUDY

ποιέω

On ἐποίησεν, Judges 14:6 LXX

This very common word does not have a single English gloss, but has a variety of uses.

Action generally

Judges 15:7 LXX

- ’Ἐὰν ποιήσητε οὕτως ταύτην
- If you **act** in this way

Judges 15:10-11 LXX

- καὶ ποιῆσαι αὐτῷ ὃν τρόπον ἐποίησεν ἡμῖν.
- and to act with him the way he acted with us

WORD STUDY

ἀρχισυνάγωγος, συναγωγή

On συναγωγὴ, Judges 14:8 LXX

Ruler of a synagogue.

Samson's First Incursion

10 καὶ κατέβη ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα· καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐκεῖ Σαμψὼν πότον ζ’ ἡμέρας, ὅτι οὕτως ποιοῦσιν οἱ νεανίσκοι. 11 καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε εἶδον αὐτόν, καὶ ἔλαβον τριάκοντα κλητούς, καὶ ἦσαν μετ’ αὐτοῦ. 12 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Σαμψών Πρόβλημα ὑμῖν προβάλλομαι· ἐὰν ἀπαγγέλλοντες ἀπαγγείλητε αὐτὸ ἐν ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἡμέραις τοῦ πότου καὶ εὕρητε, δώσω ὑμῖν τριάκοντα σινδόνας καὶ τριάκοντα στολὰς ἱματίων· 13 καὶ ἐὰν μὴ δύνησθε ἀπαγγεῖλαί μοι, δώσετε ὑμεῖς ἐμοὶ τριάκοντα ὀθόνια καὶ τριάκοντα ἀλλασσομένας στολὰς ἱματίων. καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ Προβαλοῦ τὸ πρόβλημα καὶ ἀκουσόμεθα αὐτό. 14 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Τί βρωτὸν ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ βιβρώσκοντος καὶ ἀπὸ ἰσχυροῦ γλυκύ; καὶ οὐκ ἠδύναντο ἀπαγγεῖλαι τὸ πρόβλημα ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας.

10 And his father went down to the woman, and Samson made there a drinking party seven days, because this is what the young men did. 11 And it came about when they saw him, and they received thirty who were called, and they were with him. 12 And Samson said to them, "I will put forth a problem to you. If you tell it to me in the seven days of the drinking party and you find it out, I will give to you thirty linen garments and thirty long robes; 13 and if you are not able to tell me, you will give to me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of long robes." And they said to him, "Put forward the problem and we will hear it." 14 And he said to them, "What edible thing comes out from the one who eats and from the strong, something sweet?" and they were not able to explain the problem in three days.

14:10 καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐκεῖ Σαμψὼν

The Greek follows the Hebrew quite woodenly, Samson is the subject of the verb.

14:10 ζ’

The letter zeta ζ is the seventh letter of the alphabet, and is here used in the place of the spelt out "seven" we find in other texts. For example, Ralph's has καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐκεῖ Σαμψων πότον ἡμέρας **ἑπτά**. So seven days is the idea.

14:10 ὅτι οὕτως ποιοῦσιν οἱ νεανίσκοι.

Because this is the way young men do (it), referring to engagement and marriage. This is written as something of an indictment.

14:11 καὶ ἔλαβον τριάκοντα κλητούς,

The Greek and Hebrew differ a little here. But it seems that these were not necessarily people Samson knew. They may have been provided by the bride's father. If so, this would mean the groom's father sets up and pays for the party and the bride's father would supply the guests?

14:12 ἐν ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἡμέραις τοῦ πότου

This suggests that the riddle was put forward on the first day of the seven.

15 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τετάρτῃ καὶ εἶπαν τῇ γυναικὶ Σαμψών Ἀπάτησον δὴ τὸν ἄνδρα σου καὶ ἀπαγγειλάτω σοι τὸ πρόβλημα, μή ποτε κατακαύσωμέν σε καὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρός σου ἐν πυρί· ἢ ἐκβιάσαι ἡμᾶς κεκλήκατε; 16 καὶ ἔκλαυσεν ἡ γυνὴ Σαμψὼν πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπεν Πλὴν μεμίσηκάς με καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησάς με, ὅτι τὸ πρόβλημα ὃ προεβάλου τοῖς υἱοῖς τοῦ λαοῦ μου οὐκ ἀπήγγειλάς μοι. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ Σαμψών Εἰ τῷ πατρί μου καὶ τῇ μητρί μου οὐκ ἀπήγγελκα, σοὶ ἀπαγγείλω; 17 καὶ ἔκλαυσεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας ἃς ἦν αὐτοῖς ὁ πότος· καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ καὶ ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτῇ, ὅτι παρενώχλησεν αὐτῷ· καὶ αὐτὴ ἀπήγγειλεν τοῖς υἱοῖς τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτῆς.

15 And it came about in the fourth day also they spoke to the wife of Samson, "Deceive your husband and make him tell you the problem, so that we don't burn you and your father's house with fire or did you call us to force us out?" 16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and she said, "You have hated me and you have not loved me, because the problem which you put forward to the sons of my people you have not told to me." And Samson said to her, "If I have not told my father and my mother, will I tell you?" 17 And she wept before him for the seven days on which the drinking party was on, and it came about in the seventh day also he told her, because she troubled him, and she told the sons of her people.

14:15 Judges 15:6 LXX **14:17** Judges 14:1–3 LXX; Judges 15:18 LXX; Judges 16 LXX

14:15 εἶπαν τῇ γυναικὶ

It is likely that they had already spoken to her before this point, but it is clear that they are getting more desperate. However, the fact that they resort to threats on the fourth day rather than the last day also suggests something about their character. In this sense, Samson's concern, "if you act like this..." is well founded.

14:15 Ἀπάτησον δὴ

The value of the marital relationship for these men is clearly very low to encourage the marriage start on the foundation of deception and trickery. The Hebrew doesn't use quite the same nuance, "entice." This also anticipates that her loyalty is expected to be first to her people and then to her husband.

14:15 ἢ ἐκβιάσαι ἡμᾶς κεκλήκατε;

This does not appear to follow the MT Hebrew, but is similar. Literally, "or did you call us to force us out?" The Hebrew reads, "Have you not called us to bring us down?"

14:16 Εἰ τῷ πατρί μου καὶ τῇ μητρί μου οὐκ ἀπήγγελκα, σοὶ ἀπαγγείλω;

Samson himself shows little regard for marriage here, regarding his relationship with his parents as closer than with his wife. This would possibly change with time, but it is not a great way to make a wife feel valued.

14:17 καὶ ἔκλαυσεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας

This adds to verse 12 that the riddle was put forward on the first day and the companions of Samson started talking with her on day one. Day four was an escalation.

14:17 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ καὶ ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτῇ,

This introduces another thread to Samson's character which will be obvious from Judges 16 and following, that he is able to be manipulated by women. There is a sense of irony here. The manipulation we see Samson exercising in Judges 14:1-3 is repeated in the women he loves, leading to his own downfall.

18 καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ πρὸ τοῦ ἀνατεῖλαι τὸν ἥλιον Τί γλυκύτερον μέλιτος, καὶ τί ἰσχυρότερον λέοντος; καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Σαμψών Εἰ μὴ ἠροτριάσατε ἐν τῇ δαμάλει μου, οὐκ ἂν ἔγνωτε τὸ πρόβλημά μου.
19 καὶ ἥλατο ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν πνεῦμα Κυρίου, καὶ κατέβη εἰς Ἀσκάλωνα καὶ ἐπάταξεν ἐξ αὐτῶν τριάκοντα ἄνδρας καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔδωκεν τὰς στολὰς τοῖς ἀπαγγείλασιν τὸ πρόβλημα· καὶ ὠργίσθη θυμῷ Σαμψών, καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ. 20 καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ γυνὴ Σαμψὼν ἑνὶ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ ὧν ἐφιλίασεν.

18 And the men of the city said to him in the seventh day, before the sun rose, "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" And Samson said to them, "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not know my problem."
19 And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him, and he went down into Ashkelon and he struck from them thirty men and he took their garments and he gave the robes to those who told him the problem, and Samson was extremely angry, and went up into the house of his father. 20 And the wife of Samson came to belong to one of the friends whom he befriended.

14:19 Genesis 29:21–26 LXX; Judges 14:6 LXX

14:18 πρὸ τοῦ ἀνατεῖλαι τὸν ἥλιον

It seems that Samson sold her early in the morning and she immediately passed it on. The seventh day of the feast became a bloodbath and in a sense the feast did not correctly conclude, no consummation took place, and therefore, the father took his daughter to be unmarried still at the end of the feast.

14:18 Εἰ μὴ ἠροτριάσατε ἐν τῇ δαμάλει μου,

While the replies here are intended to be poetic, referring to his wife as a heifer is likely not endearing.

14:19 ἥλατο ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν πνεῦμα Κυρίου,

The pattern is established from Judges 14:6.

14:19 ἀνέβη εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ.

Normally the husband would stay over on the last night and consummate the union with his wife. See Gen 29:21-26. Samson effectively abandons his marriage in rage.