

## Judges 12-15 • Chapter Study

### INTRO

[Jeph summary – Ammonites, 18 yrs.]

Jephthah's run-in with the Ephraimites 12:1-7

<sup>1</sup> Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, “Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!”

This is *the 2<sup>nd</sup> time* these guys rebuke a victorious judge; they did it with Gideon too.

They considered themselves the lead tribe in Israel & were jealous of Jeph's victory.

You may remember that Gid handled them with kid gloves, Jeph dealt differently.

They've threatened him so he throws it right back at them.

<sup>2</sup> And Jephthah said to them, “My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands. <sup>3</sup> So when I saw that you would not deliver *me*, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the Lord delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?”

Contrary to their accusation he was a glory-hog, Jeph **HAD** called for their assistance. They'd lagged.

The Ephraimites were *chronic complainers*.

They see it as their task to paly the critic.

They refuse to get involved, but snipe at those who do.

When someone proposes a venture of faith, they have a dozen reasons why it won't work.

When it succeeds, they're indignant they weren't invited to play a part.

Complainers; Negative ninnies, nit-pickers, cynical-Sallys, sour-Sams.

<sup>4</sup> Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, “You Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites *and* among the Manassites.”

All the Ephraimites were good for was talk.

When it came to battle, they were pathetic & quickly whooped by the Gileadites.

<sup>5</sup> The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites *arrived*. And when *any* Ephraimite who escaped said, “Let me cross over,” the men of Gilead would say to him, “*Are* you an Ephraimite?” If he said, “No,” <sup>6</sup> then they would say to him, “Then say, ‘Shibboleth!’” And he would say, “Sibboleth,” for he could not pronounce *it* right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time 42K Ephraimites.

A group of Gileadites secured the place where the Ephraimites would cross the Jordan back to their own land.

When the Ephraimites arrived and saw the ford guarded by Gileadites, they tried to pass themselves off as Gileadites.

But they were quickly exposed by the Hebrew word for stream = Shibboleth.

They couldn't make the “sh” sound.

A total of 42K Ephraimites in this contest with the Gileadites.

<sup>7</sup> And Jephthah judged Israel 6 yrs. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried among the cities of Gilead. Ibzan, Elon, Abdon 12:8-15

<sup>8</sup> After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. <sup>9</sup> He had 30 sons. And he gave away 30 daughters in marriage, and brought in 30 daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel 7 yrs. <sup>10</sup> Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.

<sup>11</sup> After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel 10 years. <sup>12</sup> And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

<sup>13</sup> After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. <sup>14</sup> He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons, who rode on 70 young donkeys. He judged Israel 8 years. <sup>15</sup> Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.

As we saw 1st wk with Gideon's sons, it was *rulers* who rode donkeys as they made the rounds of their domains.

The idea here is that it was *thru* their sons these judges extended their authority.

Samson Chs. 13-16

Following these 3, a long period of oppression began by Israel's perennial enemy; *the Philistines*.

40 yrs they harassed God's people until He raised up probably the best known of the Judges - Samson. His story is a classic example of wasted potential.

<sup>1</sup> Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for 40 yrs.

A little background on the Philistines . . .

For decades, historians were mystified by something they called The Bronze Age Collapse.

The evidence made clear that toward the end of the Bronze Age, all the developing civilizations of the world either stopped advancing, or went into massive decline.

There were huge population-shifts; millions of people were displaced.

They think they know why now.

There was a warming period that led to a population explosion, followed by a mini-ice age.

People in the N fled S for warmer climes and food.

That forced the people in the S, even further S, leading to a domino effect.

When this massive wall of refugees reached the area we know today as Greece, they discovered a highly-advanced sea-faring culture that was now pushed into their ships.

They set sail across the Med, landing on the coast N Africa.

Egypt called them "the Sea-Peoples" and wasn't about to let them stay.

They came out in force and pushed them back into the Sea.

They then sailed E&N along the coast looking for land and found it on the coast just N of Egypt.

They settled down to become, in the S, the Philistines, and a bit further N, the Phoenicians, with their capital at the city of Tyre.

This all happened right about the same time Joshua was conquering Canaan.

By the time we get to ch16, the Philistines have settled in.

Because they'd been unmolested, their civilization had advanced further than Israel's who was being constantly harassed by their neighbors.

And when the wheel turned again with Isrl sliding into idolatry yet again, it was the Philistines God used as the agent of discipline.

<sup>2</sup> Now there was a certain man from Zorah, [**abt 15 mls from Jrz**] of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. <sup>3</sup> And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. <sup>4</sup> Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or *similar* drink, and not to eat anything unclean. <sup>5</sup> For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

This woman's barrenness would be removed with the conception & birth of a child who'd grow to be Israel's deliverer.

She wasn't to drink any beverage made from grapes, & was to be sure to eat kosher.

Because the child was to be devoted to the vow of the Nazirite.

'Nazirite' means "to separate/consecrate." = It has nothing to do with the village of Nazareth where Jesus grew up.

Being a Nazirite was something people could do to dedicate a season of special devotion to God.

The rules for the Nazirite vow are spelled out in Num 6:1-21.

- They weren't allowed any fruit of the vine; so no grapes, raisins, and no wine.
- They were carefully avoid touching any dead bodies.
- And they weren't to cut their hair.

All these aimed at carving the person who'd taken the vow *out of* normal, daily life so they could be set apart to a time of special devotion to and service of God.

The thing is – the Vow was only for a specified time.

Several months, a year. But it had a time limit.

Not so this child's, as the command to his mother made clear.

The child was to be a life-long Nazirite.

So its mother was to keep the vow for it while pregnant.

<sup>6</sup> So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance *was* like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He *was* from, and He did not tell me His name." <sup>7</sup> And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'

<sup>8</sup> Then Manoah prayed to the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born." <sup>9</sup> And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband *was* not with her. <sup>10</sup> Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the *other* day has just now appeared to me!" <sup>11</sup> So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?" And He said, "I *am*." <sup>12</sup> Manoah said, "Now let Your words come *to pass*! What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?" <sup>13</sup> So the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. <sup>14</sup> She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

From the terse way the heavenly Messenger speaks to Manoah, it seems His original message to his wife ought to have been enough.

That Manoah **requires** it be repeated to him doesn't appear to meet with great approval on the Angel's part.

There's the repetition of, "I've already told **her** what to do."

We ought not read too much into this but I find this subtle rebuke of Manoah **provocative**.

The truthfulness of the Angel's prophecy of her conceiving a child would soon be proven when the once barren woman became pregnant.

Her pregnancy would verify her story of meeting an Angel.

Yet Manoah wanted more. He wasn't content with his wife's **testimony** of the encounter.

He asked God to appear and tell him too.

Well, God heard and replied. But note WHO he appeared to when He came back.

Not Manoah – the wife again.

And When Manoah shows up, the Messenger keeps referring **to the word he'd already spoken**.

Friends: God has spoken! THIS is His Word.

God **still** speaks. He guides us by His HS. The Word of Prophecy still comes when God wills.

But we ought not DEMAND God REPEAT Himself to us personally before we'll believe and act.

Manoah seems to have picked up on the Messenger's rebuke so . . .

<sup>15</sup> Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You." <sup>16</sup> And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord." (For Manoah did not know He *was* the Angel of the Lord.)

<sup>17</sup> Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "What *is* Your name, that when Your words come *to pass* we may honor You?" <sup>18</sup> And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it *is* wonderful?" Because hospitality was a mark of piety, Manoah asked the visitor to stay for some food.

The Messenger said an **offering** would be more appropriate.

At that, Manoah said, "Who ARE you?"

The reply, "I'm Wonderful."

In Isa 9:6 we read this prophecy of Jesus . . .

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The Angel of the Lord, this Messenger who appeared to Manoah and his wife is none other than God the Son.

<sup>19</sup> So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on— <sup>20</sup> it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw *this*, they fell on their faces to the ground. <sup>21</sup> When the Angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He *was* the Angel of the Lord.

Smart guy!

<sup>22</sup> And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!”

Okay, maybe not so much. His wife set him straight.

<sup>23</sup> But his wife said to him, “If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these *things*, nor would He have told us *such things* as these at this time.”

Question: Btwn these 2, who’s the sharper? Clearly it’s Ms. Manoah.

<sup>24</sup> So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. <sup>25</sup> And the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

This was in the center of Isrl & a region over which the Philistines ruled.

Ch 14

<sup>1</sup> Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

Timnah was a border town btwn the region of Dan & Philistine territory.

It changed hands several times btwn Israelite & Philistine control.

It was like Tijuana; a place where the rebellious people of Israel could hang out with the godless Philistines and partake of their wicked practices.

While there Samson saw a young **Phillie** he liked.

<sup>2</sup> So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, “I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.”

The first words we hear Samson say “I want to marry a pagan because she LOOKS good.”

Rembr, Samson is a Nazirite; Someone **totally consecrated** to God.

His parents raised him that way.

He knew he was to only marry within his people & faith.

Mom & Dad tried to reason with him . . .

<sup>3</sup> Then his father and mother said to him, “*Is there* no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” And Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she pleases me well.”

Samson’s reply says it all; “I don’t care about right & wrong! I want **her!**”

Samson was governed, not by principle, but by the present desire.

And that desire flowed from his senses rather than a heart devoted to God.

He is, what we’d call a **SENSUAL** man, rather than a **SENSIBLE** man.

<sup>4</sup> But his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

While Manoah & his wife were heart-broken over their son’s lack of wisdom, God was at work behind the scenes to turn Samson’s willful foolishness into a platform to begin Israel’s deliverance.

The lesson for us is this ...

Samson was called by God to be the Judge of Israel.

God gave him remarkable power to fulfill that call.

**As a leader**, he **could** have been 1 of the Bible’s greatest because he was the kind of guy other men would follow – **IF**, & here’s the point – **IF** he’d been faithful to the Lord & obedient to his calling.

But Samson was so dominated by his flesh he couldn’t lead anyone, including himself.

Instead of **being** a leader, he **was lead** around by his lust.

It led him **ultimately** -- to death.

Because God called him, & because God is faithful, God used Samson, **despite** himself.

Even while Samson was blowing it, God used him to bring about the deliverance of Israel.

**But Samson himself missed out!**

Instead of seeking the Lord & surrendering to his call he went after the pleasures of the flesh & ended up missing out on the very deliverance God was working thru him for others.

<sup>5</sup> So Samson went down ...

Folks – Sammy’s going down in more ways than one!

<sup>5</sup> So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.

The what? Vineyards! A Nazirite doesn’t belong there. Samson’s walking the edge.

Now *to his* surprise, a young lion *came* roaring against him.

Enter a roaring lion!

A phrase that moves us to think of Peter’s comment that the devil goes about as a roaring lion.

Because Samson acts in defiance of God’s will, he opens the door to this attack.

If he’d not gone down to Timnah this lion wouldn’t have attacked.

Samson’s put himself in enemy territory, so the enemy did what the enemy does.

If you don’t want to be tempted, don’t go where temptation lurks.

Jesus taught us to pray, “Lead us not into temptation.”

One replied, “We can find the way all by ourselves.”

Even though Samson is being incredibly careless & willful about his lifestyle here, God graciously comes through for him when this lion attacks.

<sup>6</sup> And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as I would have torn apart a young goat, though *he had* nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

Anyone torn a young goat apart lately? Not me.

So I can’t really say how easy it is to tear one apart. But I’m guessing it isn’t all that easy.

The point is, a young goat doesn’t fight back.

This lion inflicted no damage on Samson.

He dispatched it so quickly, it never had a chance.

When he met up with his parents he didn’t say anything about this amazing feat of strength he’d just had.

Now: I have to admit, if I wrestled & slew a lion, I’d write a book & start a lecture series: “***Slaying Lions***” by LE Ralston, Professional Lion-wrestler.

While Samson had some serious problems, pride wasn’t one of them.

<sup>7</sup> Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. <sup>8</sup> After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey *were* in the carcass of the lion. <sup>9</sup> He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave *some* to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

This is totally something a dude would do; “Huh, honey! Think I’ll have me some.”

Most women would be all, “Gross! That’s a dead lion!”

But the guys are like, “So? It’s honey. It’s bacon.”

Guys like to return to the place of their conquests & relive the glory of the moment.

So Samson follows the old path to go take a look at the lion he slew.

Which means he has to once again enter the vineyard, a place he’s not supposed to be as a Nazirite.

And what’s he want to see? A dead body, he’s not supposed to touch.

He does worse! He takes from some of the honey being made inside it and EATS it!

Question, where did the bees that made that honey, likely draw their pollen? The vines!

Sammy’s literally blowing through all the fences around his call to be a Nazirite.

<sup>10</sup> So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so.

Once the arrangements for the marriage were arranged by setting the dowry & bride price, Samson threw a party for the bachelors in Timnah.

You can probably imagine what a ***Philistine*** bachelor party would be like!

<sup>11</sup> And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought 30 companions to be with him.

Samson didn’t have any of his own friends there, so 30 locals gathered to celebrate.

<sup>12</sup> Then Samson said to them, “Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the 7 days of the feast, then I will give you 30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothing. <sup>13</sup> But if you cannot

explain *it* to me, then you shall give me 30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothing.” And they said to him, “Pose your riddle, that we may hear it.”

At the modern rehearsal dinner, the groom gives his groomsmen a present.

That’s the idea here.

The difference is that today’s groomsman gift is usually small; in that time a single outfit was a small fortune.

Samson makes these guys a huge wager.

If they can answer his riddle, he’ll give each of them a new suit.

If they can’t, they each get him 1.

They take the bait.

After all, with 30 working on it, what riddle **couldn’t** they figure out?

<sup>14</sup> So he said to them: “Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet.”

Now for 3 days they could not explain the riddle.

Samson is thinking of his escapade with the lion & beehive.

For 3 days the guys talk it over but get nowhere.

<sup>15</sup> But it came to pass on the 7<sup>th</sup> day that they said to Samson’s wife, “Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father’s house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that not so?*”

Unable to solve the riddle after 3 days, they began to press Samson’s fiancé to help them.

When she told them she didn’t know the answer, they accused her of conspiring with Samson to rip them off.

On the last day came, they were so desperate, they threatened her saying if she didn’t tell them the answer they’d kill her & her family.

<sup>16</sup> Then Samson’s wife wept on him, and said, “You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained *it* to me.” And he said to her, “Look, I have not explained *it* to my father or my mother; so should I explain *it* to you?” <sup>17</sup> Now she had wept on him the 7 days while their lasted. And it happened on the 7<sup>th</sup> day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people.

As soon as he posed the riddle, she had begun to press him for the answer.

When he didn’t tell her, she pouted.

But when they threatened her with death, she turned up the tears.

Samson finally gave in & she went running to the men with the answer.

<sup>18</sup> So the men of the city said to him on the 7<sup>th</sup> day before the sun went down: “What *is* sweeter than honey? And what *is* stronger than a lion?” And he said to them: “If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!”

Such a great line.

His fiancé has gone from being a **prize phillie** he can’t live without to being a cow.

Samson’s been ticked. He knows they would not have been able to answer the riddle without cheating.

Now he’s on the hook to come up with 30 suits.

How can he, as an oppressed Israelite under the thumb of Philistine domination do this?

<sup>19</sup> Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed 30 of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes of *clothing* to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father’s house. <sup>20</sup> And Samson’s wife was *given* to his companion, who had been his best man.

Ashkelon was a major Philistine city.

Samson left the region of Timnah & went to this wealthy region & mugged 30 men, taking their clothes as trophies.

Then he returned to Timnah, handed them over, & left in a huff without concluding the wedding festivities.

His lust for the Philistine woman was drowned in the sting of her betrayal.

While Samson’s actions were driven by petty lust & anger, God worked in spite of them to affect His purpose.

<sup>1</sup> After a while,

When his anger subsided & his lust returned -

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.

Samson assumed they were married. After all, all he'd done was fail to consummate the marriage.

All the rest of the marriage forms had been met.

He thought this gift of a goat would heal the rift caused by his abandoning her.

<sup>2</sup> 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."

Samson gets the bad news.

When he stormed off & returned home, they thought that was the last they'd see of him.

That being the case & since she'd been left without a husband, she was given to designated hitter – His best man.

They'd been living together now as husband & wife for months.

Her father realizes his error & offers a solution; his younger daughter's available.

<sup>3</sup> And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" <sup>4</sup> Then Samson went and caught 300 foxes; and he took torches, turned *the foxes* tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. <sup>5</sup> 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.

'Foxes' can be 'jackals;' probably a better fit.

Foxes are solitary creatures while jackals travel in packs.

Catching 300 foxes would be a monumental task and require a lot of time.

Catching 300 jackals would have been far easier and could be accomplished in far less time.

If Samson had just tied a torch to one jackal's tail, it would have run to its den.

By tying 2 together, they would have striven against each other & cut a zig-zag all over the fields of the Philistines, which was exactly his plan.

Samson knew 1 of the best ways to deal with an enemy is to attack his economic livelihood.

So he set large tracts of their fields to the torch, devastating them economically.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

They do what they'd threatened to earlier – burned them out.

Their target was Samson, but they couldn't find him.

They hoped to smoke him out by going after this woman they knew he'd been in love with.

Well, violence begets violence & Samson now retaliates.

<sup>7</sup> 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." <sup>8</sup> 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.

To attack someone "hip & thigh" was an idiom for a ferocious slaughter.

It's a kind of blood-thirsty, merciless assault where you strike your opponent with a crippling blow, then kill him while he lies helpless.

How many men Samson killed we're not told, but it was a lot.

Once his personal sense of justice was satisfied, he went to a secure hiding place called Etam.

<sup>9</sup> Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi.

While Samson thought the score was even, the Philistines had a grievance they wanted remedied.

They laid siege to Lehi, a town in the region of Judah.

<sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> Then 3000 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.”<sup>12</sup> 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.”

This is curious. The men of Judah could mass 3,000 to go arrest 1 man – 1 of their **OWN**.

But they couldn't gather an army to repel the Philistines. What's up with that?

Samson agrees to go with them but he asks that they don't attack him themselves.

He doesn't want to be guilty of killing any of his fellow Israelites.

<sup>13</sup> 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 2 new ropes and brought him up from the rock.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. When Samson was being handed over to the Philistines, it was obvious their intention was to immediately slay him.

But the ropes holding him snapped as easy as you please.

Since no regular weapon lay at hand, he grabbed the nearest thing; a donkey's jawbone.

And dropped a thousand men with it.

Picture the scene if you can.

See the solitary figure of Samson, piling up the dead.

While 3000 Israelite's stand & watch.

They watch a single one of them utterly victorious over a vast enemy.

One of the reasons Israel cowered before the Philistines is because the Philistines had iron weapons while Israel was till using bronze.

But even those had been confiscated by the Philistines.

All they had left were wood and stone weapons.

So what does Samson use? A bone! And he's utterly victorious.

Because a bone in a blessed hand does more than an iron sword in the hand of the cursed.

<sup>16</sup> Then Samson said: “With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!”

Oops – watch out Sammy! **Who** slew them? Yeah, you did, but it was only by the power of God, pal!

His **reluctance** to boast is put aside as he glories before the men of Judah.

<sup>17</sup> And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.

Jawbone Hill.

<sup>18</sup> 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?”

God has a way of humbling us when we boast.

No sooner had Samson made his boast than an overpowering thirst took hold.

Quickly he realized how dependent on God he was.

He couldn't even satisfy something as simple as the need for a drink without God's help.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

“Spring of the Caller.”

<sup>20</sup> And he judged Israel 20 years in the days of the Philistines.

After the defeat at Ramath Lehi, the Philistines were so humiliated their grip on Israel began to weaken.

A measure of Independence returned to the land. And for 20 yrs no one dared attack Samson.

The Philistines realized he was empowered by God to protect His people.

This would have been a good time for Samson to travel throughout the tribes & attend to the business of being a judge as the previous judges had.

But instead of staying in friendly territory, he kept to his old ways of wandering in the enemy's.

It was only a matter of time before he once again got into trouble.



