



A Study of the Book of Judges

Lesson 11: Samson...The Lion and the Honey Judges 13:1-14:20

Now I made the point last week that the general movement of Judges is from south to north. What I meant by that is that the first judge in the book is from a tribe in the south and the second from a tribe a little further north and so on until the central portion of the book culminates in a story about the tribe of Dan...Israel's northern most tribe.¹

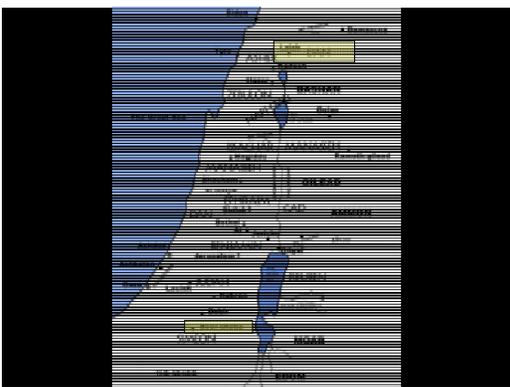
That observation is not new to me.

It is a fact Bible scholars have noted for many, many years. And that ought not to be too surprising to you. You see there is a sense in the Bible in which any movement away from Jerusalem, which happens to be in the south, is always thought of as being downhill. In the Bible, people always go up to Jerusalem. That was not because Jerusalem was the highest point in Israel elevation wise. No, it was almost certainly because Jerusalem was the city of God. Whenever a person went up to Jerusalem, they were ascending upward toward the presence of God. Whenever a person left Jerusalem, they were, by definition, headed downhill.

Now there is a sense in which the Book of Judges picks up that metaphor and extends it. The Book of Judges portrays the south as good and the north as bad...the south as up...and the north as down...the south as pure...and the north as less pure. Now it doesn't do that overtly. That is, it never says say, **"And the further north things went the worse things got."** Instead it lays out the stories from south to north and lets the stories themselves make the point. Literarily the point is understated. Nevertheless the point is still there.

Now I bring that up because the character we're going to look at this morning, the character Samson, is from the northern most tribe in Israel...the tribe of Dan. Yet his story takes place in the south. In fact, the whole story takes place in Judah's backyard. That alone ought to get your attention.

Now the fact that Dan was the northern most tribe is something you ought to know already. If you've made a habit of reading Scripture you have no doubt run across the phrase **"from Dan to Beersheba."**



^{NIV} **Judges 20:1**...Then all the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came out as one man and assembled before the LORD in Mizpah.

What that means is something like **“from Brownsville to Wichita Falls.”** It means from the farther most point south to the farther most point north.

To start off a story with a character from Dan hanging around in the south would be a little like me starting off a story and saying, **“Now I want to tell you a story about a man from one of the principal families in North Dakota...anyway one day this man was walking around in Ft. Worth and such and such happened to him.”**

Do you see what I mean?

You would probably be thinking to yourself, **“Now I thought this story was going to be about a man from North Dakota...but now you’re telling me he is in Ft. Worth. Why is so far from where he is supposed to be?”**

But that is exactly what happens with the story of Samson. He is from the northern most tribe or at least he was from the northern most tribe in Israel at the time the Book of Judges was put together. Yet, his story takes place in the south. Now because of that and because the writer of Judges assumes that his readers know that, I thought I might ought to take a minute or two and explain something of the history of the tribe of Dan. I hope that such an explanation might give you a sense of why Samson is presented as a figure who acts in total isolation from his people. Samson never leads an army. He never heads up a band of any kind. What he does...he does alone. I am making the point because I want, as we study Samson, for you to get a sense of both his isolation and his independence...from his family...from his tribe and from the people of Israel.

But I digress. Let's talk for a minute about the tribe of Dan.

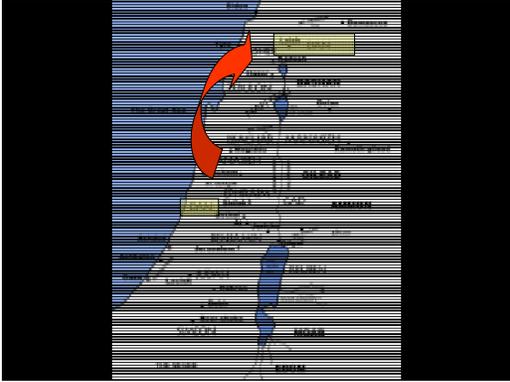
The tribe of Dan wound up being Israel's northern most tribe. I have already said that and said it several different ways. But it did not start out that way.²

Originally the tribe of Dan was assigned a portion of land to the west of Judah...that strip of land between the mountains and the Mediterranean that today we call the Gaza strip.³



But over time they were pushed off of the fertile coastal plain and into the mountains near Judah. They were first oppressed by the Amorites and then by the sea people, the Philistines. We know from the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges that that is what happened.

^{NIV} **Joshua 19:40**...The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan, clan by clan. ⁴¹ The territory of their inheritance included: Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, ⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, ⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron...⁴⁷ (But the Danites had difficulty taking possession of their territory, so they went up and attacked Leshem, took it, put it to the sword and occupied it. They settled in Leshem and named it Dan after their forefather.) ⁴⁸ These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Dan, clan by clan.



Now here is what that means. It means the tribe of Dan gave up trying to take possession of its inheritance and moved to the far north of Israel and took possession there.⁴ Verse 47 tells us that they centered their tribe around the city of Leshem...also known as Laish and that it later became the city of Dan.

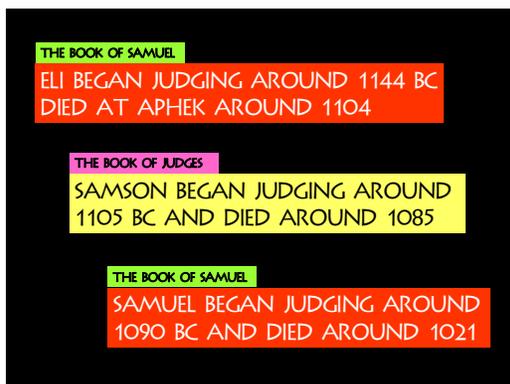
Now that same topic is discussed in Judges 18...the first of the two concluding sections of Judges. But here's the thing...apparently Samson and his family did not go with their tribe. Or it may have been that their tribe went in stages and that Samson and his family was holding out to see if things were going to get better. What is funny about the Samson's story is that other than his mother and father no other members of the tribe of Dan are mentioned. The only other people mentioned are the Philistines and some 300 men from the tribe of Judah.



Now the other thing I ought to talk about before we look at the text is the nation of people called the Philistines. They were an extraordinary group of people. We know about them mainly from the exploits of David later on in the Book of Samuel. They were apparently not a Semitic people at all. Apparently they were Hamitic.⁵ Most scholars think they were a sea people that came out of the island of Crete. Apparently when the Philistines landed in Israel they took possession of the southern coast of Israel displacing the Hittites and establishing five principal cities. Those five principal cities were of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath.⁶ It is interesting because of the story of Samson that the Philistines were also noted for shaving their heads. That may or may not have a bearing on the story of Samson's haircut later on.

One final thing...the word Palestine, which is the currently politically correct term for ancient Israel, is the Greek form of the word for Philistia.⁷

The Philistines were the principal enemies faced by Judah and Benjamin simply because of their proximity to southern Israel. What we are going to see in our study is that Samson only started Israel's deliverance from the hand of the Philistines. That deliverance was not completed until the time of David.



Now what that means is that Samson and Eli and Samuel were all contemporaneous. What that means is that they overlapped historically. I think we tend to think of the stories in the Book of Judges starting and finishing prior to the stories in Samuel but it is much more likely that they overlapped. Dr. Tom Constable see them happening like this.

Now are there any questions at this point? If not let's look at last at the text starting in Judges 13.

^{NIV} **Judges 13:1**...Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

Now it is really hard to work out the chronology of the life of Samson. At first reading, it sounds like the Philistines were already oppressing the Israelites when the announcement of Samson's birth was given by the angel of the Lord...you will see that in just a minute or two. But we also know from the end of chapter 16 that Samson's ministry of delivering the Israelites from the Philistines only lasted some twenty years. Even if he started when he was teenager that would mean that by the end of his life the oppression was about to quickly come to an end. That would mean that Samuel's deliverance of the nation and David's ultimate deliverance of the nation were not very far behind the work of Samson. It would also mean that Samson died very young perhaps 35 or so.

The account of Samson's miraculous birth starts in verse 2.

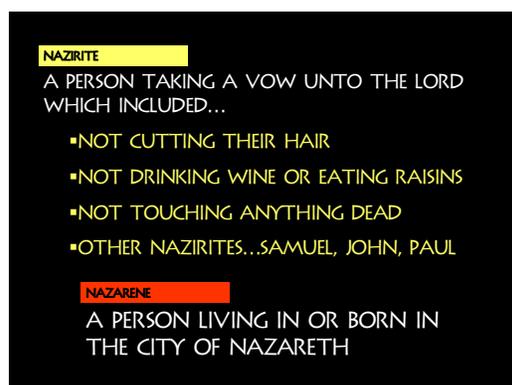
^{NIV} **Judges 13:2**...A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless. ³ The angel of the

LORD appeared to her and said, "**You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. ⁴ Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, ⁵ because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines.**"

Notice that last verse...**he will begin the deliverance from the hands of the Philistines.** You can see that that is substantially different than any of the previous announcements made regarding the deliverance of the nation. It was prophesied from the beginning as being an incomplete deliverance.

Now I ought to also point out that a Nazirite and a Nazarene are not the same thing.

I ought to do that for my benefit and not for yours. For years, I thought it was the same word. But it is not. A Nazirite is a person who has taken a certain sort of vow. It is outlined both in Judges and in Numbers 6. It was a vow that could be taken by either a man or a woman. A person taking a Naziritic vow was promising not to...cut their hair...or drink wine or eat any product of the vine...or touch any dead thing.



^{NIV} Numbers 6:2... "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the LORD as a Nazirite, ³ he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. ⁴ As long as he is a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins. ⁵ During the entire period of his vow of separation no razor may be used on his head. He must be holy until the period of his separation to the LORD is over; he must let the hair of his head grow long. ⁶ Throughout the period of his separation to the LORD he must not go near a dead body. ⁷ Even if his own father or mother or brother or sister dies, he must not make himself ceremonially unclean on account of them, because the symbol of his separation to God is on his head. ⁸ Throughout the period of his separation he is consecrated to the LORD."

Now a Nazarene was not a Nazirite. A Nazarene was a person from the city of Nazareth. Jesus was a Nazarene...not a Nazirite. John the Baptist, however, was almost certainly a Nazirite...perhaps not one for life but during his public ministry.

Most scholars think that the vow Paul took in Acts 18:18 was a temporary or short term Nazirite vow.

Now in Judges 13:6, Manoah's wife tells him about her encounter with the Angel of the Lord.

^{NIV} Judges 13:6... Then the woman went to her husband and told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name. ⁷ But he said to me, 'You will conceive and give birth to a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from birth until the day of his death.'" ⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born." ⁹ God heard Manoah,

and the angel of God came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her. ¹⁰ The woman hurried to tell her husband, **"He's here! The man who appeared to me the other day!"** ¹¹ Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, **"Are you the one who talked to my wife?"** **"I am,"** he said. ¹² So Manoah asked him, **"When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule for the boy's life and work?"** ¹³ The angel of the LORD answered, **"Your wife must do all that I have told her. ¹⁴ She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her."** ¹⁵ Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, **"We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you."** ¹⁶ The angel of the LORD replied, **"Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD."** (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the LORD.) ¹⁷ Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, **"What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?"** ¹⁸ He replied, **"Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding."**

Now it is almost certain that this Angel of the Lord was the preincarnate Lord Jesus Himself and the same person that appeared earlier in the Book of Judges to Gideon.⁸

I particularly love that verse 18 where the Angel of the Lord answers Manoah by saying, **"Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding. "**

But I like the NAS translation better than the NIV. The NAS translates the His answer this way.

^{NAS} **Judges 13:18...But the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?"**

A variant form of the same word is used Isaiah 9.¹⁰

^{NIV} **Isaiah 9:6**...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Now Manoah's explains to the Angel of the Lord why he wanted to know His name. He wanted to know His name so that when the prophecy came true regarding the birth of Samson he could give him the honor He was due. But the Angel of the Lord doesn't give Manoah any additional information. He simply repeats what he had already said to Manoah's wife and he refuses to give him His name. What he does do, instead, is to give Manoah and his wife an authenticating sign. That happens in verses 19 and following when Manoah offers up his sacrifice.

^{NIV} **Judges 13:19**...Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched:

I should point out that that word "**amazing**" that occurs in verse 19...the Lord did an amazing thing...is a participle form of the same word the Lord used talking about His name...it is the word "**wonderful**."

You see, in Hebrew, the two sentences are close together and the author repeats an important word for emphasis. So it comes out like this, "**Why do you ask my name seeing that it is wonderful and then the Lord did a wonderful thing.**" The idea is that the Lord's name and character are wonderful and He proves it by doing wonderful things.

Reading the passage in English, however, especially when translators are fearful of being redundant makes it a lot harder to pick up. Anyway the wonderful action is described in verse 20.

^{NIV} **Judges 13:20**...As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. ²¹ When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD. ²² **"We are doomed to die!"** he said to his wife. **"We have seen God!"** ²³ But his wife answered, **"If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this."** ²⁴ The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him, ²⁵ and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Now I cannot even imagine what the Angel of the Lord's ascension in the flame looked like but it must have been extraordinary.¹¹

Manoah thought he and his wife were about to die having seen the Lord but his wife understood that if the Lord's word was going to come true that would not happen.

Verse 24 tells us that the boy was born and named. His name is a diminutive form of the Hebrew word for "sun" and would have meant something like **"little sunshine."**¹² Probably a good English rendering would have been something like **"Sunny"** which to me seems pretty funny especially when you think about him being the strongest man that ever lived.

Now the text more or less skips over his childhood. The only thing it suggests in verse 25 is that the Spirit of the Lord began to move on him after he had grown a

bit which may indicate that he did not gain his extraordinary strength until he approached manhood. Anyway, the story moves in a very straightforward way up to the time when Samson became interested in women. The transition is abrupt and is obviously intended to be startling. Look at chapter 14:1.

^{NIV} **Judges 14:1...**Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. ² When he returned, he said to his father and mother, **"I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife."**

Now you ought to be troubled by his request.

That is, you ought to be troubled by the fact that he wants to marry a Philistine woman, a daughter of the very people oppressing the children of Israel. While such a marriage would not have been expressly forbidden under the law, as it would have been with a Canaanite, the reasons for avoiding such a marriage would have been exactly the same.¹³ The Philistines had different gods. Entering into a relationship with such a woman would have created all kinds of ceremonial and religious issues.

But Samson doesn't seem to care about any of that...even though his parents are quick to object. Look at verse 3.

^{NIV} **Judges 14:3...**His father and mother replied, **"Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?"** But Samson said to his father, **"Get her for me. She's the right one for me."**

Now if that was the text had to say about the matter we would come away thinking Samson was a pig-headed little brat but the author of Judges gives an

editorial explanation that creates almost as many questions as it answer. Look at verse 4.

^{NIV} **Judges 14:4**...(His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

Now you can see the problem, I think, right off. The text says the Lord allows Samson to pursue his desire for the woman simply to provoke a conflict with the Philistines. Now there are some important theological implications to be derived from that. One such implication is that the Lord sometimes allows bad things and bad choices to occur to accomplish His purpose.

The second thing that you ought to notice is that the Philistines were not as harsh as some of the other people that oppressed God's people. In fact, later on we are going to see the men of Judah chew out Samson for making trouble with the Philistines. It seems to me that the point is that Philistines were especially dangerous simply because they were so adept at absorbing their enemies into their number. That is, the Philistines excelled in drawing in their enemies into their own numbers.

The story continues in verse 5.

^{NIV} **Judges 14:5**...Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. ⁶ The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done.

Now on their trip down to Timnah, Samson and his mother and father apparently became separated. While they were separated, a young lion came roaring toward Samson and he simply grabbed the lion and ripped it apart with his bare hands as a normal man might have been able to do with a baby goat. Now, that happened because the Spirit of the Lord was upon him.

We do not know if there had ever been any superhuman feats of strength prior to this encounter with the lion or not. The text simply does not say. But what is strange is that he does not so much as even mention the encounter with the lion to his parents, which I find utterly remarkable.

The three or four times I've killed young lions with my bare hands I always rushed home to tell everyone I knew.

But Samson does not. Samson, it seems, is more interested in the woman than the lion. Look at verse 7.

^{NIV} **Judges 14:7**...Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her. ⁸ Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass. In it was a swarm of bees and some honey, ⁹ which he scooped out with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion's carcass.

Now I wanted to get to this point in Samson's story this morning because it plays an important part in all that follows. The lion and the honey become the basis for a riddle which Samson will later tell his wedding guests. And that riddle will become a point of contention that it will ultimately lead to such a terrible breach between Samson and the Philistines that it will result in Samson killing

thousands and thousands of Philistines and in them gouging out his eyes, humiliating him and killing him. Now there are two ways you can look at the story of the lion's carcass and honey. You can either think of it as an indication of Samson's complete disregard for his Naziritic vow...that is, you can think of it as an indication that he disregarded his Naziritic vow completely by touching something dead. Or you can think of it as an extended metaphor or symbol of Samson's story in dealing with the Pharisees.

Now let me flesh that out a bit. A person under the constraint of a Naziritic vow, and for Samson that extended to the whole of his life, was not supposed to touch anything dead. Now that did not extend to food. That is, a man or woman, under such a vow was allowed to eat a piece of meat or a piece of fish, without defiling themselves. But they were not supposed to touch a carcass or a human dead body...not even if that body was the body of father or mother or child.

It seems to me that the carcass of the lion would have clearly defiled Samson.¹⁴ But the case of the lion's carcass is unusual. Now what is interesting is that Samson turned aside to look at the carcass. It may have been that he simply had an interest in sizing up the animal that had attacked him and one would have expected that the carcass would have been filled with flies and maggots and that it would have been in a state of decomposition. But it was not. It was filled with bees and with honey.

Now I have to tell you that that is unusual. Bees do not typically make their hives in carrion. I take it that the bees did what they did at the Lord's hand. Now when Samson scooped out the honey and ate it from the carcass of the lion...I do not see how he could have helped but violate his Naziritic vow. I think that is clear

from the fact that he gave some of the honey to his parents but did not tell them where it came from. I doubt very much whether they would have eaten the honey from the carcass of the lion and I am almost certain they would have been very concerned that he had done so himself.¹⁵

Now in the historical interpretation of the passage most commentators have looked at the passage like this. Samson got involved with this Philistine woman and the first thing he did after getting involved with her was to forget his vow before the Lord and break his vow to remain holy and separated unto his God. And you can see, I think, how that might follow.

But there is another way to look at the story and this second way tends to be more modern...and a bit more historical and redemptive. Here's what I mean. Some scholars see the story of the lion and the honey as metaphor of Israel in the land of the Canaanites.¹⁶ They say the Canaanites were very much like the dead carcass of a lion and that Israel in their midst was very much like the bees producing honey. Out of the putrefaction and sinful realm of the Canaanites the Israelites produced covenant fidelity and faithfulness.

Now I have to tell you, I don't see that in the book of Judges. The book of judges seems much too grim in assessment of Israel's righteousness to come up with such an interpretation.

But I tell you what might work. The lion's carcass could be a foreshadowing of what would happen to Samson himself. He is the one that will die and fall by the wayside but his death will indeed be the beginning of the deliverance of the children of Israel...out of death will come honey and sweetness.

Now I want you to hold those two thoughts in you mind and let me finish up this morning by reading the conclusion of chapter 14 and then I'll take you questions and give you a chance to make your own observations.

^{NIV} **Judges 14:10**...Now his father went down to see the woman. And Samson made a feast there, as was customary for bridegrooms. ¹¹ When he appeared, he was given thirty companions. ¹² **"Let me tell you a riddle,"** Samson said to them. **"If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes. ¹³ If you can't tell me the answer, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes."** **"Tell us your riddle,"** they said. **"Let's hear it."** ¹⁴ He replied, **"Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet."** For three days they could not give the answer. ¹⁵ On the fourth day, they said to Samson's wife, **"Coax your husband into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father's household to death. Did you invite us here to rob us?"** ¹⁶ Then Samson's wife threw herself on him, sobbing, **"You hate me! You don't really love me. You've given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer."** **"I haven't even explained it to my father or mother,"** he replied, **"so why should I explain it to you?"** ¹⁷ She cried the whole seven days of the feast. So on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people. ¹⁸ Before sunset on the seventh day the men of the town said to him, **"What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?"** Samson said to them, **"If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle."** ¹⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he went up to his father's house. ²⁰ And Samson's wife was given to the friend who had attended him at his wedding.

Are there any questions or comments?

Let's pray.

¹ William J. Dumbrell, "'In Those Days There Was No King in Israel; Every Man Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes.' The Purpose of the Book of Judges Reconsidered." In *Journal for the Study*

of the Old Testament 25 (1983), 25. "The narratives have been arranged geographically by tribes, ranging from Judah in the south (3:9) to Benjamin (3:15), to Ephraim in the centre (4:5), to Manasseh (6:15), to Gilead (and thus Gad?-in 11:1), and to Dan in the north (13:2)"

² That is what the biblical records says...some modern scholars like Martin Noth discount the accuracy of the biblical record. I do not. Cf. J. Alberto Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* Translated by J.S. Bowden. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1981), 226-31.

³ Soggin, 225. "The cycle of Samson traditions is set in territory which, according to the traditional tribal geography of Israel should have been occupied by Dan before its move to the extreme north in Palestine."

⁴ Arthur E. Cundall, and Leon. Morris, *Judges & Ruth*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), 154. They reckon that the Danite exodus to northern Israel took place before the time of Samson.

⁵ D.R.W. Wood and I.H. Marshall, "Philistines" in the *New Bible Dictionary*. (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, 1996). It states, "According to the Table of Nations (Gn. 10:14; 1 Ch. 1:12), the Philistines derived from Casluhim, the son of Mizraim (Egypt) the son of Ham (Gn. 10:14; 1 Ch. 1:12). When they later appeared and confronted the Israelites they came from Caphtor (Am. 9:7)."

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid. See also Constable's notes at <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/judges.pdf>.

⁸ Leon Wood, *The Distressing Days of the Judges*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1975), 306.

⁹ Daniel Finestone, "Is the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament the Lord Jesus Christ? in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 95:379 (Jul 38) p. 372-377. Finestone writes: "When revealing Himself to Moses at the Burning Bush He said, "I am the God of Abraham, The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Later He proclaimed Himself to Moses as "I Am that I Am," which is clearly an assertion of deity. Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, were curious of the identity of the Angel of Jehovah. In reply to their question He answered, "My name is Wonderful (R.V.), which is an appellation of deity (see Isa 9:6). See also: Ralph Rogers Hawthorne, "The Significance of the Name of Christ" in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 103:411 (Jul 46) p. 348-362. He writes, "Perhaps the Angel of Jehovah graciously declined the offer of hospitality because He had food to eat of which they knew nothing (cf. John 4:32). Manoah, however, pressed the Angel, "What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honor?" (v. 17). The Angel of the Lord made reply, "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" (v. 18). The Old Testament term secret occurs in the New Testament with the word mystery (cf. Rom 16:25 ; Col 1:26). A 'mystery' is a divine truth that has been kept secret throughout the Old Testament but only to be revealed in the New. Thus the name of the Angel of Jehovah is manifested in later times in the Person of the incarnate Son of God."

¹⁰ John Marshall Lang, and Thomas Kirk, *Studies in the Book of Judges* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock and Klock Publishers, 1983), 24. He writes, "Manoah then said, verse 17, "What is thy

name, that when thy words come to pass we may do thee honor?" His intention was to honor him by sending him a present at the birth of the child. But the Angel said to him, verse is, "Wherefore askest thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful?"

The word which is translated *secret* in the Authorized Version is better rendered *wonderful*, as in the Revised Version. It is the same word which Isaiah applies to the name of the coming Messiah, and which is rendered Wonderful: he says, "His name shall be called Wonderful" (Isaiah ix. 6.) And it is evident that this is the sense in which we ought to take the word here, inasmuch as we are told in the following verse that "the angel did wondrously." His name was Wonderful; and He justified his claim to the title by acting wondrously."

¹¹ Lang, and Kirk, 26-7. "And while Manoah and his wife looked on, the Angel of the Lord did wondrously. The biographer says, verse 20, "For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar." The wonder-working power of the Angel seems to have been manifested in two ways: (1) in causing a flame to come forth from the rock to consume Manoah's sacrifice, and (2) in ascending to heaven in the flame. The Angel consumed in this way the sacrifice of Gideon. The historian says, "Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened bread" (Judges vi. 21). The consumption of the sacrifice by fire seems to have been intended as a token to Manoah that his sacrifice was accepted by the Lord; and the ascent of the Angel in the flame may suggest that the acceptance of the offering was due to the mediation of the Angel of the Covenant."

¹² See HALOT on "Samson"...—"—b. there are two possible explanations for a secular interpretation of the name: a) שֶׁן is a diminutive ending so that the personal name is an affectionate formation meaning little sun;"

¹³ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Volume 2...Joshua-2 Samuel*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1984), 409. "His parents expressed their astonishment at the choice, and asked him whether there was not a woman among the daughters of his brethren (*i.e.* the members of his own tribe), or among all his people, that he should want to fetch one from the Philistines, the uncircumcised. But Samson repeated his request, because the daughter of the Philistines pleased him. The aversion of his parents to the marriage was well founded, as such a marriage was not in accordance with time law. It is true that the only marriages expressly prohibited in Ex. xxxiv. 16 and Deut. vii. 3, 4, are marriages with Canaanitish women; but the reason assigned for this prohibition was equally applicable to marriages with daughters of the Philistines."

¹⁴ Thomas Constable, *Commentary on Judges*. Dr. Thomas Constable's online notes on Judges chapter 14 and following at <http://www.sonlight.com/constable/notes/pdf/judges.pdf>. "Bees normally do not inhabit cadavers; flies and maggots do. This unusual situation provided a temptation and a test of Samson's character. When he scraped the honey out of the lion's carcass with his hand (v. 9), he broke part of his Nazirite vow. Nazirites were not to touch dead bodies (Num. 6:6). He thought so little of his privileged position as separated to Yahweh that he forfeited some of that separate condition. Perhaps he did not tell his godly parents about the

honey because he knew that he would have disappointed them by breaking his vow. By giving them some of the unclean honey without telling them that it was unclean, Samson callously led them into defilement. His parents had previously sanctified him, but now he desecrated them.”

¹⁵ Keil and F. Delitzsch, 410-411. “—Ver. 8. When some time had elapsed after the betrothal, he came again to fetch her (take her home, marry her), accompanied, as we learn from ver. 9, by his parents. On the way “he turned aside (from the road) to see the carcass of the lion; and behold a swarm of bees was in the body of the lion, also honey.” The word נִפְלֵה which only occurs here, is derived from נָפַל like πτώμα from πίπτω, and is synonymous with נִבְלָה *cadaver*, and signifies not the mere skeleton, as bees would not form their hive in such a place, but the carcass of the lion, which had been thoroughly dried up by the heat of the sun, without passing into a state of putrefaction, “In the desert of Arabia the heat of a sultry season will often dry up all the moisture of men or camels that have fallen dead, within twenty—four hours of their decease, without their passing into a state of decomposition and putrefaction, so that they remain for a long time like mummies, without change and without stench.” In a carcass dried up in this way, a swarm of bees might form their hive, just as well as in the hollow trunks of trees, or clefts in the rock, or where wild bees are accustomed to form them, notwithstanding the fact that bees avoid both dead bodies and carrion.—Ver. 9. Samson took it (the honey) in his hands, ate some of it as he went, and also gave some to his father and mother to eat, but did not tell them that he had got the honey out of the dead body of the lion; for in that case they would not only have refused to eat as being unclean, but would have been aware of the fact...”

¹⁶ Martin Emmrich, “The Symbolism of the Lion and the Bees: Another Ironic Twist in the Samson Cycle,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44:1 (March 2001), 70. Emmrich writes, “We have noted earlier that the lion’s cadaver was an unlikely host for a “community” of bees. But so was Canaan for Israel, for although the promised land was introduced as a “good land” (see above), initially God’s holy nation (cf. Exod 19:6) entered an “unclean” zone. When Israel set foot on their new homeland, they were to destroy all traces of idolatry, on account of which the land was “defiled” (at Lev 18:24—25, 27). Of course, the defilement of the land had to do with the uncleanness of the people who used to live in it, so that the ignominious state of the land could only be lifted by the death of its inhabitants (cf. Num. 35:33). Like bees in a carcass, Israel was to inhabit a country of idolaters, a country that became habitable for God’s community only through the death of God’s enemies.”