

**Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**  
**Bible Study Notes**  
**4-17-24**

**Judges 15**

**Samson's Rage At Discovering That His Wife Is Given To Another – Verses 1-3**

<sup>1</sup> Later on, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He said, "I'm going to my wife's room." But her father would not let him go in. <sup>2</sup> "I was so sure you hated her," he said, "that I gave her to your companion. Isn't her younger sister more attractive? Take her instead." <sup>3</sup> Samson said to them, "This time I have a right to get even with the Philistines; I will really harm them."

**15:1-2** I really thought that you thoroughly hated her: It's hard to know why Samson's father-in-law thought that Samson hated his wife. Perhaps this was just an excuse to explain why he did what he did; or perhaps Samson's Philistine wife poisoned her father's opinion of Samson (Judges 14:16).

**15:3** Samson said to them: Even though Samson was angry with his wife's father, the real root of the problem was the bad choices Samson made in love. He had no business allowing himself to fall in love with an ungodly, pagan woman. No wonder Proverbs 4:23 tells us: Keep (literally, guard or protect) your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Failure to guard our heart can result in great trouble.

**15:3** This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them: God used Samson's ungodly anger for His purposes. As Psalm 76:10 says, Surely the wrath of man shall praise You. This doesn't justify Samson's anger, but it shows the glory and power of God to use all things to His purposes.

**Samson Strikes Out Against The Philistines By Burning Their Crops – Verses 4-5**

<sup>4</sup> So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, <sup>5</sup> lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves.

**15:4-5** Samson went and caught three hundred foxes: Samson seemed to act like a juvenile delinquent. Yet God used it all for His purpose of fighting against the Philistines.

**The Philistines Retaliate By Killing Samson's Wife And Family – Verses 6-8**

<sup>6</sup> When the Philistines asked, "Who did this?" they were told, "Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, because his wife was given to his companion." So the Philistines went up and burned her and her father to death. <sup>7</sup> Samson said to them, "Since you've acted like this, I swear that I won't stop until I get my revenge on you." <sup>8</sup> He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them. Then he went down and stayed in a cave in the rock of Etam.

**15:7** So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire: God used all this to advance His plan for Israel and redemption. Yet because of Samson's disobedience, it all happened at great

personal cost to Samson. It is fair to suppose that if Samson were obedient, God would have furthered His plan in a way that blessed Samson.

**15:7** I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease: We have here the bitter story of retaliation - of trying to avenge wrongs done to us. Retaliation is a never-ending story, and one that never wins in the end. Those who trust in God must be able to say, "Retaliation belongs to God. I'll let Him settle the score."

### **Judah surrenders Samson to the Philistines – Verses 9-13**

**<sup>9</sup>The Philistines went up and camped in Judah, spreading out near Lehi. <sup>10</sup>The people of Judah asked, "Why have you come to fight us?" "We have come to take Samson prisoner," they answered, "to do to him as he did to us." <sup>11</sup>Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?" He answered, "I merely did to them what they did to me." <sup>12</sup>They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines." Samson said, "Swear to me that you won't kill me yourselves." <sup>13</sup>"Agreed," they answered. "We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We will not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock.**

**15:9-10** We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us: The fact that soldiers from the tribe of Judah gave up Samson to the Philistines shows just how much they were under the oppression of the Philistines. They would rather please their oppressors than support their deliverer. This is a strangely common phenomenon. Often, when someone stands up to evil, people are angrier at the one who stood up to the evil than they are angry at the evil itself.

**15:13** They bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock: It seems that Samson submitted to this. Assuming this was true; it showed great faith on Samson's part. He was willing to put himself in a difficult position and to trust God to take care of him.

### **Samson Uses The Jawbone Of A Donkey To Kill A Thousand Philistines – Verses 14-17**

**<sup>14</sup>As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. <sup>15</sup>Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men. <sup>16</sup>Then Samson said, "With a donkey's jawbone I have made donkeys of them. With a donkey's jawbone I have killed a thousand men." <sup>17</sup>When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone; and the place was called Ramath Lehi.**

**15:14-15** Samson was unique among the judges because he was a "one-man army" against the Philistines. Other Judges of Israel led armies against their enemies, but Samson fought alone. With this remarkable victory, "We are conscious of what he might have done had he been wholly yielded to that 'Spirit of Lord who came mightily upon him, instead of being so largely governed by the fires of his own passion."

**15:14-17** The Lord's strength came upon Samson, but he was proud and boasted only of his own strength. "With a donkey's jawbone...I have killed a thousand men," he said, and later asked God to refresh him because of his accomplishments (15:16–18). Pride can cause us to take credit for work we've done only because of God's strength.

**15:17** And called that place Ramath Lehi: This name essentially means “Jawbone Hill.” It was an obviously appropriate name for this place of Samson’s great victory.

### **God Provides For Samson Miraculously – Verses 18-20**

**18** Because he was very thirsty, he cried out to the LORD, “You have given your servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?” **19** Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called En Hakkore, and it is still there in Lehi. **20** Samson led Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

**15:18** Samson was physically and emotionally exhausted. After a great personal victory, his attitude declined quickly into self-pity “Must I now die of thirst?” Emotionally, we are most vulnerable after a great effort or when faced with real physical needs. Severe depression often follows great achievements, so don’t be surprised if you feel drained after a personal victory. During these times of vulnerability, avoid the temptation to think that God owes you for your efforts. It was his strength that gave you victory. Concentrate on keeping your attitudes, actions, and words focused on God instead of yourself.