

Judges 14

1. Samson's exploits with the Philistines begin when he sees a Philistine woman in Timnah that he wants to marry. Marriages were contracted by the parents so Samson tells his mother and father: "Get her for me as a wife". What is his parents' response in verse 3?
2. Marriage with a non-Israelite was expressly forbidden but they allowed Samson's wishes to prevail. What does verse 4 say that his parents did not know about this decision?
3. What does Samson encounter when he turns aside into the vineyards of Timnah? What does he do under the empowerment of the Spirit of the Lord?
4. When Samson arrives in Timnah, he is able to talk to the woman, perhaps for the first time, and he liked her. Sometime later, when the betrothal period was completed, Samson turns aside once again into the vineyards on his way to his wedding. What does he see in the carcass of the lion?
5. Samson scoops out some honey from the lion carcass. He eats it on the road and then shares some with his parents without informing them of its source. Why would this have violated Samson's Nazirite vow? (Numbers 6:7) What other part of the Nazirite vow did Samson likely violate through his participation in the wedding feast (v. 10)?
6. At the seven-day wedding ceremony, Samson is accompanied by 30 companions. These were typically friends of the groom, but these men were apparently provided by the Philistine family. Samson tells the group a riddle with a wager of 30 linen garments and 30 sets of clothes. What is the riddle?
7. Unable to solve it after 3 days, what do the companions say to Samson's bride?
8. Samson withstood his bride's tears until the 7th day of the feast before he finally gives in and tells her the meaning of the riddle and she then explains it to the 30 Philistines.

They give the solution to the riddle which, like the riddle, they phrase using a poetic parallelism. Samson fires back with a scornful figure of speech by saying that they would not have figured it out if it wasn't for his stubborn "heifer" of a wife. What does Samson do to fulfill his obligation in the wager (v. 19)?
9. God overrules Samson's foolishness by the power of the Spirit of the Lord in order to disrupt the Philistine's dominance of Israel. Samson is still angry so he goes up to his father's house without returning to his wife on the 7th night of the feast to consummate the marriage. What does the bride's father then do?
10. Samson's life is like that of a riddle. He's a hard character to figure out. Was he a hero? A villain? Discuss.