



**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

Recently, as a result of studying atheism and atheists who are focused on Science and nothing else, I wanted some definition of Science. I didn't want to go to the dictionary. I wanted something that seemed logical to me. The closest I have come so far is, "Science is the pursuit of verifiable truth." I say pursuit because it is not just the search for but the application of truth as well. Science is about things that can be duplicated. Those things that Science finds are verifiable. If I perform an experiment and get results, I should be able to tell you how I did it and you should be able to do the same things and get the same results. That is what atheists focus on: I see, I measure, I do, I get results. Science is about things you can see and measure.

This limits what Science can pursue. God is not visible. He is not measurable. Science cannot "discover" God.

Yet, someone may wake up one morning and know there is a God. This is called God consciousness. There is what is called General Revelation. A person can see the wonders of the universe. God touches are lives if we let him. Sometimes, like Jon Voight, our lives seem to be in the toilet. We have been humbled. We are now in a position where God can "communicate" to us through what we see in the universe. At some point, if we are serious about wanting to know God, He will send someone with the gospel. Or that person will pick up a gospel tract. Or read a passage from the Bible. For those of us who have believed, we each have our story or "testimony."

There are many people who experience something which convinces them of the existence of God. They need then to hear the gospel. If you meet one of these people, don't be shy about giving the gospel. The continued existence of the United States of America may depend on on it.

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

## **Review**

Last week, we studied Samson's riddle. We saw that it consisted of three sentences or three interconnected riddles. We also saw that there are three different perspectives: Philistine perspective, Samson's perspective and God's perspective. There is a fourth perspective that I didn't mention last week: Samson's parents. They actually met the pre-incarnate Christ face-to-face. They are used by God to prepare Samson for his God appointed task. As a result of that preparation, Samson had to know that God had a purpose for his life: to start the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines.

**The Philistines** are the enemy occupying force. They are not friends. Their culture is corrupting the sons of Israel. They are actually influencing the sons of Israel to abandon their own God, Yahweh. But as we will see in chapter 15, the sons of Israel were "comfortable" living under them similar to the Jews living under the Romans during Jesus' time. But, comfortable meant assimilation into the Philistine culture and abandoning their own culture and abandoning their own God. The Philistines are the instrument of God's discipline. But Israel got used to the discipline. As a result, God is going to have to stir things up.

**Samson's parents** are visited by God Himself in the form of the Angel of the Lord, a physical manifestation of the pre-Incarnate Christ. He gave them instructions for their son, Samson. He is the deliverer who becomes a judge. Following God's instructions, they impose a Nazirite restrictions upon him.

**Samson** was appointed a Nazirite from birth, a judge and a deliverer in an environment that was hostile to his mission. Israel at one point captures him and allows the Philistines to attempt to detain and imprison him with the ultimate goal of killing him. He was dedicated to God from birth. Hence the Nazirite restrictions. He never took a "vow" to be a

## Judges Chapter 14 Part 4 Judges 14:12-20

Nazirite. For him it was imposed upon him apart from his free will; it was permanent and not temporary. He had no army to lead into battle. In the end (chapter 16) he dies as a faith hero. Since he is in the list of faith heroes in Hebrews chapter 11, we need to learn what it was that earned him that place. Perhaps that will inform us to live a better Christian life. Hint: Faith dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Since Samson's parents imposed the Nazirite life on Samson in compliance with God's instructions, it is logical to conclude that Samson was aware of his life task as deliverer. He is said to have judged Israel 20 years (Judges 15:20; 16:31). So, he was aware, even if he didn't follow the rules and lead a vast army of Israelites, that he was dedicated to God's task of starting to free Israel from the Philistines. He may even have been revolting against God's mission. "Why me God?"

**The narrator**, who is not identified in the text, provides God's perspective. The Bible, including the book of Judges, is written for us. It is not just a dry history book with dates and events. It is not a chronology but it is filled with narratives from which we can learn valuable spiritual lessons. It contains information to be used to edify the current body of believers. In our case, that body of believers is the Church. As such, it contain lessons. But these lessons are both concealed and revealed. Only the Holy Spirit, who is mentioned in this narrative, can reveal to us the true meaning of these narratives. It is meant to give us an appreciation of God's loving kindness, His grace provision and His control of history. As we know, history is different than a chronology. History has a purpose. It is going somewhere. It has a goal. If the culmination of human history is the Millennium, then the goal of history is the glorification of Jesus Christ. A chronology is just a series of events.

The narrator gives us some specific information to give us background. He tells us that God gave the sons of Israel into the hands of the Philistines as a result of their unfaithfulness to God who is the king

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

(Judges 13:1). But God had a plan to start the deliverance of Israel through Samson. His parents did not understand how God was working through Samson to overthrow the Philistines because the actions were not conventional, outside of the Torah and seemingly illogical. It is almost something Captain James T. Kirk of the star ship Enterprise might do. Unconventional, outside the regs and seemingly illogical. Yet, willingly or not, Samson's actions are used by God to further His purpose to history.

**Judges 14:4 However, his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord, for He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.**

Let me summarize some of what we know from last week:

1. From the Philistine perspective, Samson gave them a riddle that was impossible for them to solve. He cheated.
2. From Samson's perspective, he cheated by crafting his riddle from an event in his life that only he knew about.
3. Samson gave his wife an answer to the riddle which the Philistines gave back to Samson after coercing his wife to tell them. The answer from the Philistine perspective was "What is stronger than a lion and sweeter than honey" because that is what his wife said. From Samson's perspective, he was stronger than a lion.
4. From the narrator's perspective, the Holy Spirit was stronger than Samson and gave him his power to make him stronger than a lion.
5. There appears to be a pattern of "threes" being embedded in the narrative. There are three women. There are three episodes of the

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

Holy Spirit which result in three killing sprees. There are 30 (3 x 10) “companions” for whom he killed 30 Philistines to get their clothes. Eventually 3,000 (3 x 1000) Israelites will bind him. It is like God signing His name using a watermark.

What about these “killing” sprees. After the Holy Spirit rushes or falls upon him, he killed a lion. He is about to kill 30 Philistines for their clothes. Later in the next chapter, he will kill 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. Can we anticipate any pattern? Perhaps. Follow the vocabulary.

1. Prior to engaging in the three “killing sprees,” the Holy Spirit rushes or falls upon Samson. He did not ask for it, in the text. Remember, from what we have seen in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is not involved in spirituality like it is in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit empowers various people to perform specific acts or build temple utensils for God’s purpose. Shortly, we will get into the meaning of the Hebrew word translated “came upon.” **The link among these three episodes is the phrase, “The Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him.”**
2. In each case, Samson kills something or people. The first time he kills a lion. The second time he kills 30 Philistines. The third time he kills 1,000 Philistines. The text does not say he murdered anyone. We will get into the specific words shortly. Although the lion is not said to be “killed” or “slain” the last two episodes use the same word for kill. For the lion episode it is implied. **The link among these episodes is the word to kill.**
3. In two of the three cases, what Samson uses to kill (i.e. the weapon) is specified. He killed the lion with his empty hands (remember, “karate”). When he killed the 30 Philistines, the method of killing is not specified. We might assume that he used his bare hands. When

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

he killed the 1,000 Philistines, he used the jaw of an ass. **The link among these episodes is the use of a weapon, either specified or implied.**

4. The item recovered from the dead object or person was given to someone. For the honey, he gave (Hebrew *natan*) to his parents. For the clothes removed from the 30 dead Philistines, (Hebrew *natan*) he gave to them 30 live Philistines to whom he owed a debt. In the third episode where Samson kills 1,000 Philistines, the giving (Hebrew *natan*) shifts. There Samson acknowledges that God gave (Hebrew *natan*) him (Samson) “a great deliverance.” **The link among the episodes is the Hebrew word “to give” (*natan*).**
5. In each case, we can infer a purpose. God’s grace was manifest when God provided honey from the dead lion. The text does not specifically say that God provided the honey, but from the context and what we know of God, it was from God’s grace, something sweet). Samson did not ask for it, God just provided it. Samson killed the 30 Philistines in order to pay a debt incurred from a bet in which his cheat was trumped by the Philistine cheat. In the case of the 1,000 Philistines, Samson had to “deliver” his life. From a military perspective, some commentators think “1,000” can refer to a military unit more than the number 1,000. In other words, we have to suppose that this was the beginning of his beginning to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines. In each case, there is an outcome. From the dead lion, Samson received honey, a grace gift from God. From the 30 dead Philistines Samson took 30 sets of clothing. From the 1,000 dead Philistines, his life was delivered. This only takes us to the end of chapter 15 which states that he judges Israel for 20 years. Chapter 16 is obviously at the end of that 20 years. He dies at the end of chapter 16.

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

<b>#</b>	<b>Primary Link</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Weapon</b>	<b>“Gave” (<i>natan</i>)</b>	<b>Key Concept</b>
1	Holy Spirit	Kill (Implied)	Empty Hand	Honey	Grace
2	Holy Spirit	Kill	Empty Hand (Implied)	Clothes	Debt
3	Holy Spirit	Kill	Jawbone of an Ass	God gave deliverance	Deliverance (Life)

Ok, it has taken me this long to get to the last two verses of chapter 14.

**Judges 14:19 Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of them and took their spoil and gave the changes of clothes to those who told the riddle. And his anger burned, and he went up to his father’s house.**

**The Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily.** This is the same phrase that is used when Samson killed the lion (14:6). It is an event that furthered the Lord’s agenda: deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines. The repetition of this phrase causes us to compare the previous event to this one. Obviously, the narrator is linking these two events. How are they similar? How are they different? I partly covered this in the table above.

Let me take a minute and look at the word for “came upon.” From the TDOT the meaning of this word developed:



**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

“force in, penetrate→ split→ permeate,” and  
“get beyond a person→ succeed.”

In the Torah, it is often translated as “succeed” or “prosper.” However, when used of the Holy Spirit, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit has an overwhelming influence. This is not an indwelling or filling like the New Testament. We see in 1 Samuel 18:10 that an evil spirit comes upon Saul.

**1 Samuel 18:10 Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual; and a spear was in Saul’s hand.**

**1 Samuel 18:11 Saul hurled the spear for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” But David escaped from his presence twice.**

I am not going to delve into why the evil spirit is “from God.” I just want to show that this phrase can be used of both the Holy Spirit and an evil spirit.

**Killed.** Means to slay, to kill. It is not the word for murder used in Exodus 20:13. Murder is mentioned later on in the book of Judges (chapter 20) but not here. So those commentators that suggest that Samson murdered Philistines cannot use this word in their defense. God the Holy Spirit enabled Samson to slay as in battle, enemy combatants even if they didn’t realize that fact. The text does not expand on how Samson killed the Philistines. Did he ambush them one at a time? That would make sense. The text does not indicate the passage of time. But any way he did this, one at a time or all at once, it would take considerable time. Did he strangle them to keep the clothes free of

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

blood? Or did he use a knife causing blood to stain the clothes? In one case, they would be wearable. In the other, they would not.

Just to show how the author of the book of Judges uses this word, let me quote a couple of verses that show it is often used in a military context.

It is used throughout the first chapter of Judges when Israel is attacking Canaanites:

**Judges 1:4 Judah went up, and the Lord gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hands, and they defeated (NASB note says “smote.” Really? How many times have you used to word “smote” in the past year? It means they killed them) **ten thousand men at Bezek.****

It is used seven times in the first chapter with this meaning.

**Judges 3:31 After him came Shamgar the son of Anath, who struck down (again, this means they killed them) **six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad; and he also saved Israel.****

It is used three times in the third chapter. Like Samson, he used an unconventional weapon. The purpose is clear. It was for the deliverance of Israel.

It is also used in chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 with similar meanings in a military context.

So here, it should be understood in the context of Samson’s deliverance of Israel as a military operation. This would be the author’s perspective, not the Philistine perspective. Samson’s focus is on obtaining clothes to pay a debt.

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

**Spoil.** This word means what is stripped off of someone. Hence, it can mean spoil. It leads one to understand that Samson stripped the corpses naked. What came off would be clothes plus other stuff that might have included money, swords, knives, etc. Stuff. From the Philistine perspective, he murdered them and then robbed them. From his perspective and from the narrator's perspective, he was killing the enemy and taking the "spoil" as any soldier of the time might do. Remember, his killing the Philistines comes as a result of the Holy Spirit rushing upon him. Two different perspectives. Two different cultures.

Is there a parallel to the riddle embedded in this part of the narrative. When Samson killed the lion, eventually bees built a hive in the lion's corpse. Samson took some of the honey and gave it to his parents.

Here Samson kills 30 men after being empowered by the Holy Spirit and takes the clothes off their bodies and gives it to 30 other men. Is the author of Judges taking true facts and weaving into the story another part of the riddle? Is he playing with our minds? When you get it, all you can do is smile back at God. What a wonder is Your Word!

And again, I covered some of this in the previous table.

**His anger burned.** Remember, in the Old Testament often people don't "become angry." Instead, their "noses burned." So here. Samson's nose burned. I don't think this is normal anger. This is red in the face (nose burning) I'm going to take action anger. I'm seeing red.

**He went up to his father's house.** No one seems to take note of the fact that in his anger, he went to his father's house WITHOUT his wife. Did he abandon her at the altar? There is no indication that the marriage had been consummated, even if they were officially married. Her father was probably both angry and embarrassed. He had made a financial deal with Samson's father. And now, Samson just walked away. That plays heavily

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

into the next verse. Some would interpret this as abandonment. But it is obvious that for Samson, things were on hold to be continued at a later date. The status was he was married to this woman.

**Judges 14:20 But Samson's wife was given to his companion who had been his friend.**

**Was given.** The word “to give” (Hebrew *natan*) is not in the Hebrew text of chapter 14. Instead it is the word for “to become.” Certainly, the gist is that Samson's wife was given as a wife to “his friend.” There is no rationale given for this here. We have to wait until chapter 15 to get clarification. This verse is a comment to the reader. At this point, Samson does not know this fact.

Here is that dynamic among the different perspectives. Samson continues to think he is married. The woman's father decided that Samson would never return, so he gave her to another. The author let's us see what happened. Samson is going to feel that he has been cheated. Again. Keep in mind what just happened when Samson thought he had been cheated. And that was just clothes. This is now his wife.

When Samson left in verse 19, he considered himself as still married to the woman. As far as he was concerned all requirements for the marriage had been met, except perhaps the consummation of the marriage.

**Judges 15:1 But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat, and said, “I will go in to my wife in her room.” But her father did not let him enter.**

Here Samson is going to consummate the wedding. After all it is his wife. Or so he thought.

**Judges Chapter 14 Part 4**  
**Judges 14:12-20**

Her father did not let him enter. Could be translated would not permit (as the Young's Literal translation). But this word is our friend, *natan*, to give. It can also mean to permit. Maybe I'll have to go back and look at all the uses of this word in this narrative. By my count it is used once in chapter 13, four times in chapter 14, six times in chapter 15 and three times in chapter 16.

**Judges 15:2 Her father said, "I really thought that you hated her intensely; so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please let her be yours instead."**

The Philistine father interpreted Samson's actions as tantamount to abandonment. The text suggests that Samson has not consummated the marriage. For those who don't know what that means here is a definition from the American Heritage dictionary. "To complete (a marriage) with the first act of sexual intercourse after the ceremony."

Samson walked away in anger having been tricked by his wife. From his perspective she had been unfaithful. From her father's perspective, Samson had been unfaithful. He should have taken his wife back to his house. Except he didn't seem to have a house, only his father's house. Now Samson thinks he has been cheated. Again!

Bad things will happen again. When Samson has been cheated, he destroys things.