

## Episode #537 - Judges 15 Part 1 – Samson 4: A Cycle of Revenge

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God's works and ways.

II. Israel again fell into idolatry, and this time were enslaved to the Philistines forty years! At last Yahweh raised a new deliverer for them Samson. Yet this self-centered young man was attracted to bad girl Philistines and chose to marry one! Yet an attempt to enrich himself through a riddle to his Philistine groomsmen goes sour when his wife wheedles the secret out of him and gives it to them, and so he leaves for home in a huff and his father-in-law gives her to his best man.

Jehovah planned all this to start a quarrel between them and Samson.

III. Revenge and Counter Revenge.

- A. Judges 15:1. Samson's anger cools after a time. Wheat harvest was a festive time and he feels good and forgiving. So he comes back to his wife with a present.
- B. Verse 2. Her father informs him she has been given to another. He tries to talk Samson into her younger sister instead.
- C. Verse 3. Samson considers himself justified in getting revenge. Was he really?
- D. Verse 4. This must have been quite a job to catch all these foxes! These may have been jackals, a pack animal, whereas foxes are loners. Very clever plot too.
- E. Verse 5. Imagine the chaos they would have caused! Their best crops are ruined, a great financial disaster for them, their livelihood lost. But with the fire being caused by the jackals there was no way to trace it back to Samson and stop him, as if he had been lighting the crops on fire himself.
- F. Verse 6. The Philistines get their own revenge on the nearest target. The same violent reprisal Samson's "companions" threatened.
- G. Verse 7. Samson wants counter revenge. He claims this will be the last time. Right!
- H. Verse 8. He slaughters the Philistines singlehandedly. Again, the Spirit was still empowering him. Etam = "Lair of Wild Creatures," in Judah.

IV. Samson's Single-Handed Victory.

- A. Judges 15:9. The Philistines bring their army into Judah. Apparently they get information on where he has gone, since he was from Dan. Lehi = Jaw.
- B. Verse 10. Judah, enslaved by the Philistines, are upset by this action. The Philistines want to get revenge on Samson. Notice the cycle continues!
- C. Verse 11. Three thousand (!) Judahites go to Samson. Reminds us of the Lord's arrest when a huge crowd came to arrest him. They point out that he has angered those who have ruled them for 40 years! He feels justified by his cycle of revenge.
- D. Verse 12. They are going to arrest him to give him up. He says he will surrender if they will swear not to kill him themselves. Note his supreme confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to get him out of this!
- E. Verse 13. They do swear, although they pledge to bind him fast, not loosely so he can escape. He is bound with new cords, the best they had.
- F. Verse 14. The Philistines are excited to see him coming. Yet new cords are no problem for the Spirit of Yahweh! They become like a burnt wick.

VI. Samson's unwise actions resulted in total disaster for his marriage, yet he blames the woman's father rather than himself. Samson's attempt at revenge results in counter revenge by the Philistines, which results in counter revenge by Samson, which results in counter revenge by

Samson. This was a cycle of revenge that is all too easy for people to get into. Yet this was the Lord's will to deliver Israel from the Philistine oppression. Thus the Lord protected them by this self-centered but faithful man.