

'A certain man from Zorah was named Manoah. He was from the tribe of Dan. Manoah had a wife who wasn't able to have children. The angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife. He said, "You are not able to have children. But you are going to become pregnant. You will have a baby boy. Make sure you do not drink any kind of wine. Also make sure you do not eat anything that is 'unclean.' You will become pregnant. You will have a son. The hair on his head must never be cut. That is because the boy will be a Nazirite. He will be set apart to God from the day he is born. He will take the lead in saving Israel from the power of the Philistines." '

Judges 13:2-5 NIRV



'Samson went down to Timnah. There he saw a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he spoke to his father and mother. He said, "I've seen a Philistine woman in Timnah. Get her for me. I want her to be my wife."

Judges 14:1-2 NIRV

"Samson went down to Timnah. His father and mother went with him. They approached the vineyards of Timnah. Suddenly a young lion came roaring toward Samson. Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully on Samson. So he tore the lion apart with his bare hands. He did it as easily as he might have torn a young goat apart. But he didn't tell his father or mother what he had done. Then he went down and talked with the woman. He liked her."

Judges 14:5-7 NIRV

"Some time later, he was going back to marry her. But he turned off the road to look at the lion's dead body. He saw large numbers of bees and some honey in it. He dug out the honey with his hands. He ate it as he walked along. Then he joined his parents again. He gave them some honey. They ate it too. But he didn't tell them he had taken it from the lion's dead body. Samson's father went down to see the woman. Samson had a feast prepared there. He was following the practice of young men when they married their wives. When the people saw Samson, they gave him 30 men to be his companions.

"Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to the companions. "The feast will last for seven days. Give me the answer to the riddle before the feast ends. If you do, I'll give you 30 linen shirts. I'll also give you 30 sets of clothes. But suppose you can't give me the answer. Then you must give me 30 linen shirts. You must also give me 30 sets of clothes." "Tell us your riddle," they said. "Let's hear it." Samson replied, "Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet." For three days they couldn't give him the answer. On the fourth day they spoke to Samson's wife. "Get your husband to explain the riddle for us," they said. "If you don't, we'll burn you to death. We'll burn up everyone in your family. Did you invite us here to steal our property?" Then Samson's wife threw herself on him. She sobbed, "You hate me! You don't really love me. You have 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?" She cried during the whole seven days the feast was going on. So on the seventh day he finally told her the answer to the riddle. That's because she kept on asking him to tell her. Then she explained the riddle to her people."

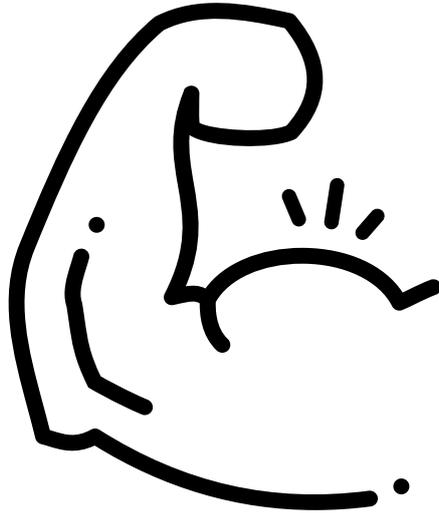
Judges 14:8-17 NIRV

"Before sunset on the seventh day of the feast the men of the town spoke to Samson. They said, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" Samson said to them, "You have plowed with my young cow. If you hadn't, you wouldn't have known the answer to my riddle." Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully on Samson. He went down to Ashkelon. He struck down 30 of their men. He took everything they had with them. And he gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Samson was very angry as he returned to his father's home. Samson's wife was given to someone else. She was given to a companion of Samson. The companion had helped him at the feast."

Judges 14:18-20 NIRV



Questions



1. Who came to Manoah and his wife to say they would have a baby?
2. What did it mean to be a Nazarite?
3. What kind of animal did Samson kill on his way to meet his wife?
4. Who empowered Samson to kill that animal?
5. How is God's promise about Samson saving the Israelites from the Philistines fulfilled at the end of the story?

