

**A. Cause of the Retaliation (1-2)**

"at the time of wheat harvest..."  
-April or May (Dry Season)

**1. Expectation of the Reception**

"I will go in to my wife in the chamber" (1)

"Visit" - Samson's marriage was possibly a "visit" type in which the bride remained with her parents and was visited periodically by her husband (Judges 8:31)

-Samson's present was possibly not for reconciliation, but the expected gift on a husband's periodic visit.

**2. Experience of the Reception**

**Exclusion of Samson**

"father would not allow him to go in." (1)

**Explaining to Samson**

"I really thought...you utterly hated her, so I gave her to your companion" (2, 14:20; Deut 24:3)

**Exchange for Samson**

"Is not her younger sister..." (2)

-Attractiveness of the offer

"more beautiful than she?" (2)

-Earnestness of the offer

"Please take her..."

\*Why? Perhaps...

a. Because he had already accepted the dowry

b. He was afraid

<sup>1</sup>After some days, *at the time of wheat harvest*, **Samson** went to visit his wife with a *young goat*. And he said, "*I will go in to my wife in the chamber.*" But her father would not allow him to go in.

<sup>2</sup>And her father said, "*I really thought that you utterly hated her, so I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister more beautiful than she? Please take her instead.*"

<sup>3</sup>And **Samson** said to them, "*This time I shall be innocent in regard to the Philistines*, when I do them harm."

<sup>4</sup>So **Samson** went and *caught 300 foxes* and took torches. And he *turned them tail to tail and put a torch between each pair of tails*.

<sup>5</sup>And when he had set fire to the torches, *he let the foxes go* into the standing grain of the Philistines and *set fire to the stacked grain* and the *standing grain*, as well as the *olive orchards*.

<sup>6</sup>Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they said, "**Samson**, *the son-in-law of the Timnite*, because *he has taken his wife and given her to his companion*." And the Philistines came up and *burned her and her father with fire*.

<sup>7</sup>And **Samson** said to them, "If this is what you do, I swear *I will be avenged on you*, and after that I will quit."

<sup>8</sup>And he *struck them hip and thigh with a great blow*, and he went down and stayed in the cleft of the rock of Etam. <- May have been a town in southern Judah (1Chron 4:32), though a city by that name was located near Bethlehem and Tekoa (2Chron 11:6)

**C. Continuation of the Retaliation (6-8)**

**1. Continuation by the Philistines**

"burned her and her father with fire" (6, 14:15)

**2. Continuation by Samson**

"I will be avenged" (7) "struck them hip and thigh" (8)

-A proverbial expression for a cruel, unsparing slaughter

**B. Character of the Retaliation (3-5)**

**1. Defending the Retaliation**

"This time I shall be innocent in regard to the Philistines..." (3)

-The Philistines saw him as "son-in-law of the Timnite" (6)

-David did not hesitate to take back his wife Michal forcibly, though Saul had given her to another man (1Sa 25:44; 2 Sa 3:13-15)

**2. Details of the Retaliation**

"caught 300 foxes...turned them tail to tail and put a torch between each pair of tails" (4)

**Employment of foxes**

שׁוּעָל, *shu'al* - this term can refer both to the fox and the jackal

-Song 2:15; Lam 5:18; Ezek 13:4

**Entrapping of foxes**

-Could have used traps rather than supernatural means.

**Equipping of foxes**

-He used some sort of rope to tie the tails together and then fastened the torch to the tails with the rope.

**3. Destruction from the Retaliation**

"set fire to the stacked grain...standing grain...olive orchards" (5)

## Cause of the Retaliation (1-2)

### Visit

#### Expositor's Bible Commentary

**1–2** Samson's anger eventually subsided, and he decided to reclaim his wife (v.1). The wheat harvest occurred in early June and was a time of festivity. Because the word "visit" is used, many scholars feel that Samson's marriage was of the *beena* (an Akkadian word) or "visit" type, in which the wife would stay in her father's house and be visited periodically by her husband (cf. 8:31 and de Vaux, *Als*, pp. 28–29). By this arrangement the Philistine bride would avoid the in-law problems her presence in an Israelite household would cause.

If this was a "visit" marriage, the young goat was considered an acceptable present for the enjoyment of marital relations (Gen 38:17). Samson also wanted to atone for apparently deserting his wife. When he announced his intention of going to her room and consummating the marriage, her father told him that she was no longer his wife (v.2). Knowing that Samson had legally purchased his bride, the father offered him his more beautiful younger daughter. Unlike Jacob, Samson was not impressed with the "Rachel" of this family and flatly rejected the offer.<sup>1</sup>

#### Bible Knowledge Commentary

15:1–5. **Samson** later (in the wheat harvest, i.e., May) returned to Timnah with a present of a **young goat** (cf. 13:15, 19) for **his wife**. Samson's marriage was apparently the *ṣadīqa* type in which the bride remained with her parents and was visited periodically by her husband (cf. 8:31). Thus Samson's present was probably not a reconciliation gift for his previous behavior, but merely the expected gift on a husband's periodic visit. However, **Samson** soon discovered that his bride had been given to another by **her father** who thought Samson **hated her** (the word is used in a divorce context in Deut. 24:3).<sup>2</sup>

#### Judges 8:31 (ESV)

<sup>31</sup> And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he called his name Abimelech.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wolf, H. (1992). [Judges](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel* (Vol. 3, p. 470). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

<sup>2</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Judges](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 406). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

## Explaining to Samson

### Judges 14:20 (ESV)

<sup>20</sup> And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.

### Deuteronomy 24:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife,

## Character of the Retaliation (3-5)

### David / Michal

#### 1 Samuel 25:44 (ESV)

<sup>44</sup> Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.

#### 2 Samuel 3:13–15 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> And he said, "Good; I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you; that is, you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." <sup>14</sup> Then David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, for whom I paid the bridal price of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines." <sup>15</sup> And Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband Paltiel the son of Laish.

## Foxes

**Fox** (שׁוּאַל, *shu'al*; ἀλώπηξ, *alōpēx*). In the Old Testament, this term can refer both to the fox (genus *vulpes*) and the jackal (genus *canis*; see Judg 15:4; Song 2:15; Lam 5:18; Ezek 13:4). The two animals closely resemble each other. In the New Testament, Jesus negatively refers to Herod as a fox (Luke 13:32) and uses foxes in a brief parable (Matt 8:20; Luke 9:58).<sup>3</sup>

### Song of Solomon 2:15 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> Catch the foxes for us,  
the little foxes  
that spoil the vineyards,  
for our vineyards are in blossom."

---

<sup>3</sup> Major Contributors and Editors. (2016). [Fox](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

**Lamentations 5:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> for Mount Zion which lies desolate;  
jackals prowl over it.

**Ezekiel 13:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Your prophets have been like jackals among ruins, O Israel.

**Continuation of the Retaliation (6-8)**

**Judges 14:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us here to impoverish us?"

**Etam**

**1 Chronicles 4:32 (ESV)**

<sup>32</sup> And their villages were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan, five cities,

**2 Chronicles 11:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> He built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,