

A. Pursuit of the Romance (1-3)

The majority of the Biblical record of Samson's activities revolves around, and is a result of, his infatuation with unholy women.

- *Woman in Timnah
- *Harlot in Gaza
- *Delilah - valley of Sorek

Timnah

- *4 miles southwest of Zorah
- *Belonged to the tribe of Dan (Josh 15:10; 19:43)
- *Inhabited and controlled by the Philistines

1. The Determiner of the Pursuit

- "he saw" (1)
- "I saw" (2)
- "in my eyes" (3)

2. The Disobedience of the Pursuit

- Ex 34:12-16
- Deut 7:1-4
- Judg 3:6
- 2Co 6:14

Esau - Gen 26:34-35; 27:46
Solomon - 1Ki 11:1-4

3. Disrespect in the Pursuit

- "now get her for me as my wife" (2)
- "Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes" (3)

¹ **Samson** went down to **Timnah**, and at **Timnah** *he saw* one of the **daughters** of the **Philistines**.

² Then he came up and told his **father and mother**, "**I saw** one of the daughters of the **Philistines** at **Timnah**. **Now get her for me as my wife.**"

³ But his **father and mother said to him**, "**Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?**" But **Samson** said to his father, "**Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.**"

⁴ His father and mother did not know that **it was from the LORD**, for **he** was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. **At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.**

⁵ Then **Samson** went down with his father and mother to **Timnah**, and they came to the vineyards of **Timnah**...

B. Protest About the Romance (3)

"his father and mother said to him, 'Is there not a woman...?'"

-Wise in Position
*Supported God's law about marriage

-Wise in Reasoning
"among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people"

-Wise in Language
"uncircumcised" - Term of reproach for the sinfulness of the Gentile world
*1 Samuel 14:6, 17:26

C. Plan for the Romance (4-5)

"it was from the Lord"
Which is it?

-Providence of God
Samson perceived it was the will of God that he should take her as a wife, by the impulse of the Spirit of God upon him.

-God seizing an opportunity
God's plan in this situation was to take Samson's disobedience and use it to bring judgment upon the Philistines.

The Pursuit of the Romance

Timnah

TIMNAH (Heb. *timnâh*). **1.** A town on the N boundary of Judah, formerly counted as Danite (Jos. 15:10; 19:43). It changed hands more than once between Israelites and Philistines (Jdg. 14:1; 2 Ch. 28:18). Samson's first wife lived there. This may be the place *Tamnā*, later mentioned in the annals of Sennacherib, c. 701 bc (ii. 83). Tell Batashi, 9 km S of Gezer, is probably the site, though Khirbet Tibneh (4 km SE) has the name; see B. Mazar, *IEJ* 10, 1960, pp. 65–73.

2. S of Hebron (Gn. 38:12; Jos. 15:57); copper was mined here (B. Rothenberg, *Timna*, 1972; N. Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, 1968, p. 36).

J. P. U. Lilley.¹

Joshua 15:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ And the boundary circles west of Baalah to Mount Seir, passes along to the northern shoulder of Mount Jearim (that is, Chesalon), and goes down to Beth-shemesh and passes along by Timnah.

Joshua 19:43 (ESV)

⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron,

Intermarriage with Gentiles

Exodus 34:12–16 (ESV)

¹² Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. ¹³ You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim ¹⁴ (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), ¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, ¹⁶ and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.

Deuteronomy 7:1–4 (ESV)

¹ “When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them

¹ Lilley, J. P. U. (1996). [Timnah](#). In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 1188). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

and show no mercy to them. ³ You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.

Judges 3:6 (ESV)

⁶ And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods.

2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

Esau

Genesis 26:34–35 (ESV)

³⁴ When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, ³⁵ and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

Genesis 27:46 (ESV)

⁴⁶ Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?”

Solomon

1 Kings 11:1–4 (ESV)

¹ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, “You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. ³ He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. ⁴ For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

Protest About the Romance

Uncircumcised

1 Samuel 14:6 (ESV)

⁶ Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.”

1 Samuel 17:26 (ESV)

²⁶ And David said to the men who stood by him, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

Plan for the Romance

“it was from the Lord”

John Butler

God’s plan in this situation was to overrule disobedience and use it to bring judgment upon the Philistines—that is the meaning of our text. God had determined it was time to begin dealing with the Philistines to stop their oppression of the Israelites, and He was going to deal with them regardless of whether Samson cooperated properly or not. God certainly would prefer to use Samson’s obedience to smite the Philistines; but if Samson does not obey and keeps on pursuing romance with the Philistine woman, then God will use those circumstances to accomplish some judgment upon the Philistines. Therefore, “The marriage was of God, as [was] the conquest of [by] Nebuchadnezzar or the treachery of Judas, inasmuch as He permitted it and overruled it for bringing Samson into collision with the Philistines” (Thomas Kirk).

All of this exalts the sovereign power of God. He is the One Who is in control of all events. Man cannot out maneuver God. He may act most contrary to God’s plans and purposes, but God will still accomplish what He so desires. “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain” (Psalm 76:10). With so much theology today portraying God as a weak and helpless entity, we need to focus more on such verses as verse 4 in our text to be reminded that God is all-powerful. He will do what He wants to, where He wants to, when He wants to, and how He wants to—no matter how man acts!²

² Butler, J. G. (1992). [Samson: the weak strong man](#) (Vol. Number Six, pp. 52–53). Clinton, IA: LBC Publications.

Bible Knowledge Commentary

Though Samson's parents objected to his marrying a Philistine, they allowed Samson's wishes to prevail. They **did not know that this was from the Lord, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines.** This does not mean that breaking the Law was desired by God but that Samson's decision was overruled by God for His own purpose and glory.³

Expositor's Bible Commentary

The pleading of Samson's parents did not sway him. His emphatic reply might be paraphrased, "She's the one I want and that's it!" Reluctantly his parents gave in, convinced that he would regret the decision and ruin his life. From the divine perspective, however, Samson's contact with the Philistines gave an opportunity for God to use him (v.4). It seems paradoxical that the Lord would work through Samson's willful decision, but this aspect of God's sovereignty appeared before in Judges (cf. 3:1–2 and Introduction: Theological Values).⁴

Coffman's Commentary

"His father and his mother knew not that it was of Jehovah" - This does not mean that God approved of Samson's sinful marriage, but that God overruled Samson's strong-headed determination to marry a Philistine woman and turned it into an occasion for God to show his displeasure with the Philistines.⁵

Faithlife Study Bible

God will use Samson's lust to initiate judgment on the Philistines for oppressing Israel. The fact that a foreign power is ruling over Israel again situates the narrative in the cycle of oppression seen elsewhere in the book (see 2:11; 3:7; 4:1; 6:1). See note on 2:11–15.⁶

³ 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. 405). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴ Wolf, H. (1992). [Judges](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel* (Vol. 3, p. 466). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

⁵ Coffman, James Burton. "Commentary on Judges 14:4". "Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/judges-14.html>. Abilene Christian University Press, Abilene, Texas, USA. 1983-1999.

⁶ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Jdg 14:4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible

they “knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines” — rather, “*from* the Philistines” —originating on their side. The Lord, by a course of retributive proceedings, was about to destroy the Philistine power, and the means which He meant to employ was not the forces of a numerous army, as in the case of the preceding judges, but the miraculous prowess of the single-handed champion of Israel. In these circumstances, the provocation to hostilities could only spring out of a *private* quarrel, and this marriage scheme was doubtless suggested by the secret influence of the Spirit as the best way of accomplishing the intended result.⁷

Barnes Notes

His father and mother very properly opposed Samson’s marriage with a Pagan woman, the daughter of the oppressors of his race. But they could not prevail, because it was the secret purpose of God by these means to “seek occasion” against the Philistines; i. e. to make the misconduct of the father of Samson’s wife, which He foresaw, the occasion of destruction to the Philistines.⁸

John Gill Exposition

And his father and mother knew not that it was of the Lord,.... That he should marry this uncircumcised Philistine; Samson knew it was, and that his desire of having her in marriage did not arise from carnal affection to her merely, being captivated with her beauty and external form, for she was not so very fair, her younger sister was fairer than she, [Judges 15:2](#) but he perceived it was the mind and will of God that he should take such a person to wife, by the impulse of the Spirit of God upon him, pointing it, unto him, inclining and urging him to it, suggesting the end and design of it, and the opportunity it would give him of quarrelling with the Philistines, and taking vengeance on them; but this his parents were ignorant of, nor did he let them know that this was of God.⁹

⁷ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 167–168). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁸ Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on [Judges 14:4](#)". "Barnes' Notes on the New Testament". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/judges-14.html>. 1870.

⁹ Gill, John. "Commentary on [Judges 14:4](#)". "The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/judges-14.html>. 1999.