

Judges 14:13-14 (ESV)

“And they said to him, ‘Put your riddle to us, that we may hear it.’
And he said to them,

*‘Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong
came something sweet.’”*

The Origin of the Riddle

This riddle was born out of an extraordinary and divine encounter in the life of Samson. As recorded in Judges 14, Samson was traveling with his parents to Timnah, a Philistine town, to arrange a marriage with a young woman he had seen there.

On the way, Samson was suddenly attacked by a young lion. But the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him, and he tore the lion apart “as one tears a young goat,” though he had no weapon in his hand (Judges 14:6, ESV). This astonishing feat was so casual to Samson that he didn't even mention it to his parents.

The Miracle of Honey in a Lion's Carcass

Some days later, when Samson returned to Timnah, he passed by the same place and saw something incredible. Inside the carcass of the lion, bees had made a hive, and there was honey inside it. He scooped out the honey and ate it, sharing some with his parents without telling them where it came from (Judges 14:8-9).

This was truly a miracle. Bees are among the cleanest insects in creation known to seek out flowers and fragrant places, not death or decay. It is unnatural and unheard of for bees to build a hive in a dead animal's body, let alone produce sweet honey in such a place.

Even more puzzling, we know that bees typically need months to produce a significant amount of edible honey. Yet here, in a very short time, there was already an abundance of honey inside the dead lion.

The Hidden Lesson in the Riddle

This event was not just an oddity; it was a message from God.

Samson perceived a deeper spiritual truth behind it, and from that experience, he composed his riddle:

*“Out of the eater came something to eat,
Out of the strong came something sweet.”* (Judges 14:14,
ESV)

He gave this riddle to the Philistines during his wedding feast, knowing full well that no human wisdom could unravel it. Only God, or Samson himself, could reveal the meaning. The Philistines, desperate to win the challenge, coerced Samson's bride to extract the answer from him. Eventually, under pressure, he revealed the secret.

Their answer?

“What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?”
(Judges 14:18)

Samson was furious, not because they solved it but because they did so through deceit.

Honey from the Lion

The spiritual lesson is profound:

Sometimes, the greatest blessings, sweetness, and provision come from the most fearful, threatening, or dangerous situations.

In modern language, Samson's riddle could be paraphrased this way:

"From what should have devoured me, I received nourishment. From what threatened my life, I found delight."

This points to a deep truth in God's economy:

The Lord brings sweetness out of sorrow, provision out of pressure, and miracles out of messes.

As Romans 8:28 (ESV) declares:

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

This Pattern Repeats in Scripture

1. Elisha and the Siege of Samaria *2 Kings 6-7*

Like Samson, the prophet Elisha demonstrated this same spiritual confidence. When the king of Aram (Syria) surrounded the city to capture him, Elisha's servant panicked. But Elisha said:

“Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than

those who are with them.” (2 Kings 6:16, ESV)

God opened the servant's eyes, and he saw an angelic army surrounding them.

Later, during another siege on Samaria (2 Kings 7), the people were starving. The situation was so dire that donkey heads and dove droppings were being sold for silver. But Elisha declared:

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel.’” (2 Kings 7:1, ESV)

It sounded impossible, but God caused the besieging army to flee leaving behind abundant food and wealth. What the enemy intended for destruction became the very means of deliverance.

Just like Samson's lion, the enemy who threatened them became the source of God's provision.

2. Joseph in Egypt *Genesis 39-41*

Joseph, falsely accused and thrown into prison, waited for years in suffering. But he never cursed God or complained. Instead, he waited, trusting that even in that dark place, God would bring purpose.

And He did. Joseph went from prisoner to prime minister in one day lifted by the very Pharaoh who could have executed him. Out of the “lion” (Pharaoh), came the “honey” (promotion and salvation for his people).

“You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.”
(Genesis 50:20, ESV)

The Message to Believers Today

Dear brother or sister in Christ,

If you've committed to following Jesus at any cost, do not be discouraged by trials, persecutions, or fierce opposition.

Understand this:

The enemy that seems ready to destroy you may become the very channel through which God provides your blessing. Just as bees miraculously made honey in the carcass of a lion, God can create joy, wisdom, provision, and breakthrough in the most unexpected and terrifying places of your life.

As 2 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV) reminds us:

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”

Do not grumble in trials like the Israelites in the wilderness. Many missed their promised land because they failed to see that their suffering was a path to glory.

Samson's riddle is more than poetry. It is a powerful spiritual principle:

"Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet."
(Judges 14:14)

Let this be your confidence:

- From your lions (your enemies, fears, hardships) will come honey.
- From your struggles will come strength and sweetness.
- From your battles will come blessings.

Therefore, be strong in the Lord. Hold your peace. Trust Him in the trial. There is honey in the lion even if you can't see it yet.

Amen.

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