

### The Birth of Samson

#### Judges 13

Judges 13 - *"Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.*

<sup>2</sup> *Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. <sup>3</sup> And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. <sup>4</sup> Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. <sup>5</sup> For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."*

<sup>6</sup> *So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name. <sup>7</sup> And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"*

<sup>8</sup> *Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."*

<sup>9</sup> *And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. <sup>10</sup> Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the other day has just now appeared to me!"*

<sup>11</sup> *So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?" And He said, "I am."*

<sup>12</sup> *Manoah said, "Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"*

<sup>13</sup> *So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. <sup>14</sup> She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."*

<sup>15</sup> *Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You."*

<sup>16</sup> *And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD." (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the LORD.)*

<sup>17</sup> *Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?" <sup>18</sup> And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"*

<sup>19</sup> *So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD.*

*And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on. <sup>20</sup> It happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. <sup>21</sup> When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the LORD.*

*<sup>22</sup> And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" <sup>23</sup> But his wife said to him, "If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these at this time."*

*<sup>24</sup> So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. <sup>25</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol."*

## Background Notes

Judges 13 begins the seventh and final sin cycle of the book. Each sin cycle in the book of Judges began when the people of Israel turned away from the Lord: *"Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years" (v1a)*. In the second step of the sin cycle, the Lord would allow one of Israel's' enemies to come in and oppress them. *"...and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years" (v1b)*. The enemy oppression would continue until the people cried out to the Lord, and then the Lord would raise up a judge to deliver His people. In Judges 13, the judge was Samson. The judge would rule the nation until the people, once again, turned away from the Lord and then the sin cycle would repeat itself.

The seven sin cycles in the book of Judges seem to spiral downward. In each progressive cycle the sin of the people became greater, and their response to the Lord was weaker. In fact, in Judges 13-16, the seventh and last cycle, we don't read of **any** response of the people to the Lord. And the Philistines were not completely defeated. Samson only **began** to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. The Philistines were not completely defeated until King David's time.

Furthermore, the people of Israel didn't join in when Samson fought the Philistines. Samson was more like a "one man show." The people were too apathetic to rise up and fight the Philistines. In addition, although he was a judge, Samson himself had problems. Although he judged Israel for twenty years, he couldn't judge himself. In the chapters ahead we'll see that he had very little self-control, and very little self-discipline. He had great potential and great physical strength, but he squandered these blessings.

The "Angel of the Lord" announced Samson's birth to his mother (v3). We believe that this was not "just any angel" – the "Angel of the Lord" was the pre-incarnate Son of God - **the Lord Himself!** Notice that He was willing to accept worship from Manoah and his wife at the end of the chapter.

Samson's mother, who had been barren, was told that she would bear a son and that her son would be a Nazirite. Normally the Nazirite vow of separation was voluntary, and it lasted only for a limited time, but in Samson's case, he was to be a Nazirite from his birth (v5).

From verses 4-5 and from Numbers 6, we learn that there were several restrictions for the Nazirites. The Nazirite was not to drink wine. The Nazirite was not to touch anything unclean, including anything dead. And the Nazirite was not to cut his hair. These requirements emphasize that a Nazirite was to separate himself from the ways of the world, and he was to live a life that was “separated unto the Lord.” The Nazirite vow has some great lessons for the would-be committed Christian today. We are to be separated from the world and separated unto the Lord.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Samson’s mother is a godly model for all wives.

The Bible doesn’t provide Samson’s mother’s name, but she was obviously a godly woman. Why do we say that? First of all, she submitted to the will of God. She was barren; she had no children. This was a severe social stigma in that day, but we don’t read of her complaining or being bitter toward the Lord.

Then the Lord announced that she would have a child, but that he would be a Nazirite from the womb, so she would have to live with Nazirite restrictions during the pregnancy. But Samson’s mother continued to submit to God’s will. She didn’t say, “Wait a minute, Lord! Thanks for the child, but I can’t live with all these restrictions. I want the freedom to choose what to eat and drink, and what this boy should do in life!” No, Samson’s mother accepted God’s will. Her submissive spirit was like Hannah and Mary. She was a godly woman. Mothers -- are you willing to submit to God’s will for your children?

Samson’s mother was also a godly woman because she respected her husband, Manoah. Notice that she shared everything with him (v6-7). She recognized the authority structure that God had set up for the family, and she knew that God would not ask her to do anything that was independent from her husband’s knowledge. In 1 Peter 3:5 we read of “the godly women of old who trusted in God and were submissive to their own husbands.” Sarah is mentioned in that passage, and Samson’s mother would certainly be included in a list of “godly women of old.” Samson’s mother is a godly model for all wives.

### 2. Samson’s father is a godly model for all husbands.

Samson’s father’s name was Manoah, and he was a godly man. How do we know that? He too, submitted to the will of God. When his wife told him of the Lord’s visit, he prayed for confirmation and further instruction, and the Lord gave it. *“Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work?”* (v12). Manoah was a godly man. He submitted to the will of God.

In addition, Manoah was a godly man because he honored his wife. He didn’t belittle his wife by saying something like, “Why would God speak to you first? I’m the boss around here! I’m the captain of this ship. Talk to me later about this so-called ‘angel visit.’” No, Manoah listened to his wife, and he honored his wife by recognizing that God has spoken to

her. Husbands, do we honor our wives? 1 Peter 3:7 says that we are to honor our wives so that our prayers will not be hindered. Husbands, is it possible that your prayers are being hindered because you're not honoring your wife?

Manoah was a godly man because he wanted to follow God's plan for his child's life. Look at his prayer in verse 8: "...*teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born.*" Fathers, do you want God's will for your children? And Manoah was a godly man because he worshiped the Lord. Verse 19 says that he brought offerings to the Lord. So Samson's father was a godly man and a model for us. Samson's father is a godly model for all husbands.

We've seen that Samson's parents were godly parents, but Samson didn't turn out to be as much of a godly man. He had little (if any) self-discipline. He broke all the requirements of his Nazirite vow. He got involved with Philistine prostitutes. He squandered his God-given talents. Was this the fault of his parents? No, it wasn't their fault! And yet they must have cried together on many a night, asking God, "What did we do wrong?" The point is that they didn't do anything wrong. So, godly parents, don't blame yourselves if your children are wandering away from the Lord. There are other factors in the independent decisions your children make.

## Practical Application

### Let's watch for God's wonders!

Manoah asked the Lord, "*What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?*" *"And the Angel of the LORD said to him, 'Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?'"* (v17). This reminds us of Isaiah 9:6 - "*His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor.*" And in verse 19 the Lord did "*a wondrous thing*" while Manoah and his wife looked on.

Why did the Lord perform "a wondrous thing" here? Answer: Because that's the way the Lord does things! He's a wonderful God, and He does wonderful things! So let's watch for God's wonders. Wonderful answers to prayer! Wondrous acts of grace and mercy in our families! Wonderful blessings in our churches and fellowships!

Sometimes we miss out on seeing God's wonders because we're not watching. Maybe the wonder of the Lord's return will take place today! Are you watching? I trust that all of you are eagerly watching for that great and wonderful event! Let's watch for God's wonders!