

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
4-3-24

Judges 13

Life In Israel At The Time Of Samson's Birth – Verse 1

¹ Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

13:1 The Philistines lived on the west side of Canaan, along the Mediterranean seacoast. From Samson's day until the time of David they were the major enemy force in the land and a constant threat to Israel. The Philistines were fierce warriors; they had the advantage over Israel in numbers, tactical expertise, and technology. They knew the secret of making weapons out of iron (1 Samuel 13: 19-22). At that point in history, the Israelites were using bronze weapons. But none of that mattered when God was fighting for Israel.

13:1 Once again the cycle of sin, judgment, and repentance began (3:8-9,14-15; 4:1-4; 6:1-14; 10: 6–11:11). The Israelites would not turn to God unless they had been stunned by suffering, oppression, and death. This suffering was not caused by God, but resulted from the fact that the people ignored God, their Judge and Ruler. What will it take for you to follow God? The warnings in God's Word are clear: If we continue to harden our hearts against God, we can expect the same fate as Israel.

The Angel Of The LORD Appears To Manoah's Wife – Verses 2-3

² A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. ³The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. ⁴Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. ⁵You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

13:2 A certain man from Zorah: The town of **Zorah** is about 14 miles [22.5 kilometers] west of Jerusalem. It was in the land of the tribe of Dan. **And the Angel of the LORD appeared:** From the rest of the chapter, we see that we should regard this **Angel** as no mere angel. **You are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son:** This promise came as a great blessing to this woman burdened by childlessness.

13:5 Samson was to be a Nazirite— a person who took a vow to be set apart for God's service. Samson's parents made the vow for him. A Nazirite vow was sometimes temporary, but in Samson's case, it was for life. As a Nazirite, Samson could not cut his hair, touch a dead body, or drink anything containing alcohol. Although Samson often used poor judgment and sinned terribly, he accomplished much when he determined to be set apart for God. In this way he was like the nation Israel. As long as the Israelites remained set apart for God, the nation thrived. But they fell into terrible sin when they ignored God.

Manoah's Wife Reports The Appearance Of The Angel Of The LORD To Her Husband – Verses 6-7

⁶ Then the woman went to her husband and told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his

name. ⁷ But he said to me, ‘You will become pregnant and have a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from the womb until the day of his death.’”

13:6-7 A Man of God came to me: This indicates that the *Angel of the LORD* appearing to Manoah’s wife generally appeared to be a **Man**; yet **His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God**. **I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name:** This shows the profound impact the appearance of the **Man of God** had upon Manoah’s wife. He was very awesome; so much so that she did not ask questions about where He was from or what His name was.

The Angel Of The LORD Reconfirms The Words Spoken Before – Verses 8-14

⁸ Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: “Pardon your servant, Lord. I beg you to let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born.” ⁹ God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her. ¹⁰ The woman hurried to tell her husband, “He’s here! The man who appeared to me the other day!” ¹¹ Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, “Are you the man who talked to my wife?” “I am,” he said. ¹² So Manoah asked him, “When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs the boy’s life and work?” ¹³ The angel of the LORD answered, “Your wife must do all that I have told her. ¹⁴ She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her.”

13:8-10 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: Manoah already knew what God wanted him to do because the Angel of the LORD already told him. Here he asked for confirmation of the word previously spoken.

13:11-14 What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work: God honored Manoah’s request for confirmation; but He did not answer this request to know the future. He simply called Manoah and his wife to obey what God already told them to do.

Manoah Offers The Angel Of The LORD A Meal; The Angel Of The LORD Will Only Accept An Offering – Verses 15-18

¹⁵ Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you.” ¹⁶ The angel of the LORD replied, “Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD.” (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the LORD.) ¹⁷ Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, “What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?” ¹⁸ He replied, “Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding.”

13:15-16 I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD: Here, the Angel of the LORD showed Himself to be God, in the sense that He did not need a meal but would accept a sacrificial offering made unto the LORD.

13:18 Why did the angel keep his name a secret? In those days people believed that if they knew someone’s name, they knew his character and how to control him. By not giving his name, the angel was not allowing himself to be controlled by Manoah. He was also saying that his name was a mystery beyond understanding and too wonderful to imagine. Manoah asked the angel for an answer that he wouldn’t have understood. Sometimes we ask God questions and then receive no answer. This may not be because God is saying no. We may have asked for knowledge beyond our ability to understand or accept.

The Angel Of The Lord Displays His Authority To Manoah And His Wife – Verses 19-21

19 Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: **20** As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. **21** When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD.

13:19 Manoah sacrificed a grain offering to the Lord. A grain offering consisted of crushed grain (or flour) and olive oil shaped into a cake and burned on the altar, along with the burnt offering (the young goat). The grain offering, described in Leviticus 2, was offered to God as a sign of honor, respect, and worship. It was an acknowledgment that because the Israelites' food came from God, they owed their lives to him. With the grain offering, Manoah showed his desire to serve God and demonstrated his respect.

The Reaction Of Manoah And His Wife – Verses 22-23

22 **“We are doomed to die!”** he said to his wife. **“We have seen God!”** **23** **But his wife answered, “If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this.”**

13:22 We shall surely die, because we have seen God: Manoah perhaps knew what God said to Moses in Exodus 33:20. You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live. Manoah feared that because they had just seen the LORD, they would shortly die.

13:23 If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering: This was a perceptive response from Manoah's wife. She understood that God had not done so much for them to abandon them now. God's past work in our life is a promise of His future care and blessing for us. Manoah's wife was an invaluable source of encouragement for his faith. She didn't criticize Manoah. She didn't say, "What a silly man you are. What a stupid man you must be to be so frightened." We can never strengthen someone's faith by criticizing. We must do as Manoah's wife did - encourage them and build faith up.

Samson Born, And The Holy Spirit Comes Upon Him – Verses 24-25

24 **The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him,** **25** **and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.**

13:25 Samson's tribe, Dan, continued to wander in their inherited land (18:1), which was yet unconquered (Joshua 19: 47-48). Samson must have grown up with his warlike tribe's yearnings for a permanent and settled territory. Thus, his visits to the tribal army camp stirred his heart, and God's Spirit began preparing him for his role as judge and leader against the Philistines.

13:25 Perhaps there are things that stir your heart. These may indicate areas where God wants to use you. God uses a variety of means to develop and prepare us: hereditary traits, environmental influences, and personal experiences. As with Samson, this preparation often begins long before adulthood. Work at being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and the tasks God has prepared for you. Your past may be more useful to you than you imagine.