The Birth of Samson

Judges 13:1-25
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Text:

Judges 13:1-25,

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.
2. A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless.
3. The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son.
4. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean,
5. because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines."
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 conceive and give birth to 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 birth until the day of his death.' "
8. Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "O LORD, I beg you, 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 one 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 for 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."
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."
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.
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."
24. The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him, (NIV)
25. and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Introduction:

I. Keil & Delitzsch, in their commentary, gave a 5½ page summary analysis of the story of Samson. It is somewhat of a sad story. In the early portion of their summary, they said this: “And whilst the small results that followed from the acts of this hero of God do not answer the expectations that might naturally be formed from the miraculous announcement of his birth, the nature of the acts which he performed appears still less to be such as we should expect from a hero impelled by the Spirit of God. His actions not only bear the stamp of adventure, foolhardiness, and [willfulness], when looked at outwardly, but they are almost all associated with love affairs; so that it looks as if Samson had [dishonored] and fooled away the gift entrusted to him, by making it subservient to his sensual lusts, and thus had prepared the way for his own ruin, without bringing any essential help to his people” (Keil & Delitzsch, E-Sword).

The Announcement and Birth of Samson

Judges 13:1, 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. (NIV)

I. The people of Israel were again in oppressive bondage for 40 years on account of their sin. 13:1

A. The cycle continues.

1. Compare with 10:7 and we see that, perhaps, Israel to the east was being oppressed by the Ammonites and to the west, the Philistines.
2. Judges 10:7, he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, (NIV)

B. Of the opponents to Israel, the Philistines are better known than all but, perhaps, the Egyptians.

C. It is interesting to note that in previous occasions when Israel was oppressed, they cried out.

1. However, perhaps in contrast, they do not cry out to the Lord here – at least it is not recorded.

Judges 13:2-7, A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless. The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines." 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. But he said to me, 'You will conceive and give birth to 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 birth until the day of his death.'" (NIV)

II. God begins to deliver Israel with the announcement of the birth of a son to a barren mother. 13:2-7

A. Of the tribe of Dan, Manoah was the father of the announced child.
B. The angel of the Lord.


   a. Judges 2:1, 4, The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, When the angel of the LORD had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud," (NIV)

   b. Judges 5:23, 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the LORD. 'Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the LORD, to help the LORD against the mighty.'(NIV)

   c. Judges 6:11, 12, 21, 22, The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" (NIV)
d. Judges 13:3, 13, 15-18, 20, 21, The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. The angel of the LORD answered, "Your wife must do all that I have told her. Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you." 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.) Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?" He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding. "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. 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. (NIV)

2. Some things said about the angel of the Lord in Judges:

a. The personal pronoun (singular) is used of his activities (2:1-3).

i. Judges 2:1-3, The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their
altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you." (NIV)

ii. However, in continuing with the story, it becomes clear that the angel of the Lord is more significant (6:14-24).

iii. Judges 6:14-24, The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together." Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return." Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming
the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. (NIV)

b. The song of Deborah has the angel of the Lord cursing Meroz (5:23).

i. Judges 5:23, 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the LORD. 'Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the LORD, to help the LORD against the mighty.'(NIV)

c. In the events surrounding Gideon, one might not think anything special about the angel of the Lord from the wording of 6:11-13.

i. Judges 6:11-13, The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out
of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." (NIV)

d. There is nothing unique about the angel of the Lord speaking with Manoah’s wife (13:2-7).

i. Judges 13:2-7, A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless. The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines." 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. But he said to me, 'You will conceive and give birth to 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 birth until the day of his death.'"(NIV)

ii. In 13:9, it is not the angel of the Lord, but the angel of God (cf. 13:13).
iii. Judges 13:9, 13, 14, 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. The angel of the LORD answered, "Your wife must do all that I have told her. 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." (NIV)

iv. Note the singular, personal pronoun in 13:14, "I commanded her…"

v. When an offering was proffered, the angel of the Lord did not refuse, but did not make it explicitly clear that he would receive it.

vi However, as the event unfolds, it appears the angel of the Lord is the Lord God for the offering is received.

e. Add to this Manoah’s expression to his wife (13:22), and it appears that it is easier to say The Angel of the Lord is God (Jesus before He became flesh).

i. Judges 13:22, "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!" (NIV)

C. Manoah’s wife was barren.

1. This was not unique for this occurred both to Sarai (Genesis 15:3) and Hannah (1 Samuel 1:2).
a. Genesis 15:3, And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." (NIV)

b. 1 Samuel 1:2, He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none. (NIV)

3. Announcement of a birth is also something not unusual.

a. This occurred with Abraham (Genesis 15:4; 17:16) and Isaac (Genesis 25:23).

i. Genesis 15:4, Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." (NIV)

ii. Genesis 17:16, I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." (NIV)

iii. Genesis 25:23, The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." (NIV)

D. The child that was to be born was to be a Nazarite (Numbers 6).

1. Numbers 6:1-22, The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the LORD
as a Nazirite, he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. As long as he is a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins. "'During the entire period of his vow of separation no razor may be used on his head. He must be holy until the period of his separation to the LORD is over; he must let the hair of his head grow long. Throughout the period of his separation to the LORD he must not go near a dead body. Even if his own father or mother or brother or sister dies, he must not make himself ceremonially unclean on account of them, because the symbol of his separation to God is on his head. Throughout the period of his separation he is consecrated to the LORD. "'If someone dies suddenly in his presence, thus defiling the hair he has dedicated, he must shave his head on the day of his cleansing—the seventh day. Then on the eighth day he must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The priest is to offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to make atonement for him because he sinned by being in the presence of the dead body. That same day he is to consecrate his head. He must dedicate himself to the LORD for the period of his separation and must bring a year-old male lamb as a guilt offering. The previous days do not count, because he became defiled during his separation. "'Now this is the law for the Nazirite when the period of his separation is over. He is to be brought to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. There he is to present his offerings to the LORD: a year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a year-old ewe lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a fellowship offering, together with their grain offerings
and drink offerings, and a basket of bread made without yeast—cakes made of fine flour mixed with oil, and wafers spread with oil. "'The priest is to present them before the LORD and make the sin offering and the burnt offering. He is to present the basket of unleavened bread and is to sacrifice the ram as a fellowship offering to the LORD, together with its grain offering and drink offering. "'Then at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the Nazirite must shave off the hair that he dedicated. He is to take the hair and put it in the fire that is under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering. "'After the Nazirite has shaved off the hair of his dedication, the priest is to place in his hands a boiled shoulder of the ram, and a cake and a wafer from the basket, both made without yeast. The priest shall then wave them before the LORD as a wave offering; they are holy and belong to the priest, together with the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. After that, the Nazirite may drink wine. "'This is the law of the Nazirite who vows his offering to the LORD in accordance with his separation, in addition to whatever else he can afford. He must fulfill the vow he has made, according to the law of the Nazirite.'" The LORD said to Moses, (NIV)

2. The Nazarite was simply one separated for a period of time to the Lord.

3. Three people in Scripture had been separated to the Lord by the Lord: Samson, Samuel, and John, the Baptist.

4. He was to:

b. Eat nothing unclean.

c. His hair shall not be cut.

d. He shall not come in contact with a dead body (not mentioned in Judges, but it is in Numbers 6:9-12).

E. She ran and told her husband about these extraordinary events.

1. She described the angel of the Lord as a man of God – generally a term for great men like Moses, Samuel, and David.

2. The angel of the Lord’s appearance was beyond description.

3. She then related the Nazarite vow He placed upon them (as parents) and upon the son.

Judges 13:8-14, Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "O LORD, I beg you, 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." 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. The woman hurried to tell her husband, "He's here! The man who appeared to me the other day!" Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, "Are you the one who talked to my wife?" "I am," he said. So Manoah asked him, "When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule for the boy's life and work?" The angel of the LORD answered, "Your wife must do all that I have told her. 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." (NIV)
I. Manoah prayed to the Lord for a confirmation of the announcement given to his wife. 13:8-14

A. After Manoah heard from his wife, he asked the Lord for a confirmation of the message He had sent to her.

B. It is easy to think that Manoah should have trusted the veracity of his wife’s word, but it appears he did not.

1. Let us not be too hard on Manoah (contrary to Younger – his words on this are just plain disappointing!).

C. In that time, the word of the husband was final. It was not that Manoah appeared to doubt the word of his wife – otherwise why go to the Lord and say to God what he did in 13:8.

D. It appears, on the other hand, that he did trust the veracity of his wife’s word.

Judges 13:15-20, Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you." 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.) Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?" He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding." 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: 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. (NIV)

IV. A. burnt offering to the Lord was made. 13:15-20
A. Manoah, having now been given the word of confirmation by the man of God, asked that he stay and eat with them.

1. The man of God refused the dinner invitation, but countered with a suggested burnt offering to the Lord.

B. Manoah then asked his name and the man of God replied, not with his name, but with the character of his name (Keil & Delitzsch, p. 407).

1. The word “wonderful” (ESV) is rendered “beyond understanding” in the NIV.

2. The food (hospitality) that Manoah proffered was now offered as a burnt offering.

C. As the flame went up, the man of God went up with it – no created angel does this – and it was at this point that Manoah came to realize (both of them) that this was no “ordinary” angel, but the Angel of the Lord (13:21-22).

1. Judges 13:21, 22, 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. "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!" (NIV)

2. The offering was to God.

3. That meant the flame and the smoke were also to God.

4. What angel would presume to “ride” upon that which went to God?
D. Do not let the word “angel” be misunderstood; it simply means “messenger.”

Judges 13:21-25, 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. "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!" 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." The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson.

He grew and the LORD blessed him, and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. (NIV)

I. Samson is born unto Manoah and his wife (who is not named). 13:21-25

A. Manoah realizing whom he had just seen is overcome with concern (fear?). Genesis 32:30; Exodus 33:20; Deuteronomy 5:26; and Isaiah 6:5

1. Genesis 32:30, So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." (NIV)

2. Exodus 33:20, But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." (NIV)

3. Deuteronomy 5:26, For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? (NIV)

4. Isaiah 6:5, "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of
unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." (NIV)

B. His wife, on the other hand, is more at ease because they were most fortunate to stand in His presence.

1. I think it is easier to understand her frame of mine than his.

2. This was her second experience, his first. She watched her husband interact, while she just listened (There is no indication she spoke to the Angel of the Lord on His first visit.).

3. It is even possible that she had a different disposition than he did and this contributed to their respective replies.

C. In contrast to Jephthah, note these advantages Samson had (as suggested by Wolf):

1. His birth was predicted by the Angel of the Lord.

2. He had godly parents who loved him greatly.

3. He was uniquely dedicated to God as a Nazarite.

4. He experienced the power of God’s Spirit.

D. “Despite all these favorable factors, Samson’s life as it unfolds in the next three chapters is marked by tragedy” (Wolf, EBC, p. 465).
Questions

Judges 13:1-25

(Questions based on NIV text.)

1. What did Samson, a person whose birth was foretold by an angel of God, accomplish in life? ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

2. The __________________ of __________________ again lapsed into _______________ and were in _______________ to the _______________ and _______________ for _______________ years.

3. What does the book of Judges say about angels? _______________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

4. Name barren women in the Old Testament who were divinely informed they would bear children. _____________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

5. What was a Nazarite? Name as many Nazarites as you can. _______
6. Samson’s father was __________________________. He was from ______________. He was a member of the tribe of __________________. His mother’s name was _______________________. His duty was to “________________ the ______________ of __________________ from the __________________ of the __________________.”

7. What did Manoah’s wife tell her husband the angel had said? ______

8. Why did Manoah pray for God to send the angel back again? Didn’t he believe what his wife had told him? __________________________

9. Do parents ask God as often as we should for divine guidance in rearing our children? Give examples to support your answer. ________
10. What did the angel tell Manoah’s wife in verse 13? Is this timely advice for today’s parents? ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________

11. What was the angel’s name? ____________________________________
How did the angel make his departure? ______________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________

12. What was Manoah’s and his wife’s response to all this? Include their conversation in your answer. ______________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________

13. How does this compare with the responses of others who had seen angels? ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________
                                                                 ____________________________________

14. “The ___________________ gave ___________________ to a
____________________ and named him ___________________.
He ___________________ and the ___________________ of the
began to ____________ him while he was in ___________, between _______________ and _________________.”


__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

16. Extra credit question: Compare/ contrast Jephthah’s and Samson’s beginnings and accomplishments. ________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________