

Judges 13:1 ¶ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

After 31 years of peace encompassing the time of service of the last four judges, the people of Israel once again turned to evil (turning away from the LORD is understood). This time the LORD made them subject to the Philistines for 40 years.

Although there is no record of repentance or that the people sought God's deliverance, this chapter reveals that the LORD was going to provide a deliverer according to His own purposes at the time of His choosing.

Judges 13:2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren, and bare not.

Judges 13:3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

Judges 13:4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean *thing*:

Judges 13:5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

"Zorah" – JFB describes this town as near the Philistine border on the boundary of the tribes of Judah and Dan. The NIV Commentary notes that it was about 15 miles west of Jerusalem.

We are introduced to a man of the tribe of Dan that lived in Zorah whose name is Manoah. His wife was barren. The "angel of the LORD" appeared to Manoah's wife and told her that she was going to give birth to a son. He directed her not to drink wine or strong drink or to eat anything that God had declared to be unclean. She was never to cut the child's hair because her son was to be a Nazarite, dedicated to God from the womb. She was told that God was going to use her son to "begin" to deliver Israel from the Philistines. In other words, he would not be wholly successful.

The "angel of the LORD" will be identified later in the chapter as God (v22), the preincarnate Jesus.

It is important to note that the LORD declared the purpose of this child's life before he was even conceived. Every child born into this world is born in accordance with the LORD's sovereignty. It is He that opens and/or closes wombs and intricately determines the formation of each child within the womb.

Genesis 20:18 "For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife."

Genesis 30:22 "And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her

womb.”

Psalms 139:13 “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.” (I liked the wording of the ESV)

Isaiah 44:2 “Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb....”

Jeremiah 1:4–5 “Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee....”

Note that the verse in Jeremiah declares that every child is recognized as a person from the moment of conception; in fact, that child is known by God before conception.

Judges 13:6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance *was* like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he *was*, neither told he me his name:

Judges 13:7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing*: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

Manoah’s wife told her husband that a man of God that looked like an angel of God had come and talked to her. She admitted that she was too in awe of the man to ask him where he was from or what his name was. She then proceeded to tell Manoah what the angel had told her. She emphasized that the child was to be a Nazarite to God throughout his whole life, dedicated to the service of God for life.

According to Easton’s Dictionary, the vow of a Nazarite involved three things:

- Abstaining from wine and strong drink
- Refraining from cutting the hair off the head during the whole period of the vow
- Avoiding contact with the dead.

Thinking...Technically, once we become followers of the LORD through the experience of the new birth, we are to be modern day Nazarites, dedicated to the service of the LORD for life. We live in the age of grace and are not bound by the stipulations of the law pertaining to a Nazarite, but we should live as bound by another spiritual truth.

Romans 12:1–2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Judges 13:8 ¶ Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we

shall do unto the child that shall be born.

Judges 13:9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her.

Judges 13:10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the *other* day.

Naturally, Manoah wanted confirmation from the LORD of what his wife had told him; so he prayed and asked God to send the man back so that he could teach them both what to do with the child. God answered Manoah's prayer. When the "angel of God" appeared to the woman again, she was alone out in the field. She quickly ran to tell her husband that the man was back.

I guess she just assumed that the man would wait for her to return in light of Manoah's prayer.

Judges 13:11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, *Art* thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, *I am*.

Judges 13:12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and *how* shall we do unto him?

Judges 13:13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

Judges 13:14 She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let her observe.

Manoah got up and followed his wife to meet the man. He asked him to confirm that he was the same man that had met his wife previously, and he did. Manoah immediately asked him how they were to treat the child. The angel warned them to obey all the instructions that he had given the woman previously. She was to be careful not to eat anything grown on the vine or drink wine or strong drink; neither was she to eat anything that the law declared to be unclean.

Judges 13:15 ¶ And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

Judges 13:16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

Manoah asked the man to allow them to prepare him a meal. The "angel of the LORD" declared that he would not eat with them. However, if they wanted to give thanks, they should offer a sacrifice to the LORD. It is noted that Manoah did not realize that the man was God appearing to him in the flesh.

Judges 13:17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?

Judges 13:18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?

Judges 13:19 So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered *it* upon a rock unto the LORD: and *the angel* did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

Judges 13:20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and fell on their faces to the ground.

Manoah asked the man his name because they wanted to be able to honor him after the baby was born. The angel told him that his name was “secret” — wonderful, hidden, miraculous according to the Hebrew. This brings to mind the words of Isaiah.

Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: **and his name shall be called Wonderful,**”

So Manoah took a kid goat and offered it on a rock unto the LORD. When he did, the angel caused a flame to rise up to heaven from the sacrifice; then he ascended and disappeared in that flame.

At that point Manoah and his wife fell on their faces to the ground; they finally realized the identity of the angel.

Judges 13:21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

Judges 13:22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.

Judges 13:23 But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these *things*, nor would as at this time have told us *such things* as these.

The angel did not appear to Manoah or his wife again. Manoah was afraid that they were going to die because they had seen God. He was evidently aware of the record of Moses.

Exodus 33:17–20 “And the LORD said unto Moses....*Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*”

His wife was more logical in her outlook. She reasoned that if the LORD wanted to kill them, He would not have received the sacrifice they had offered. More importantly, He would never have appeared to them to make a promise He didn't intend to fulfill.

Deuteronomy 7:9 “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, **the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments....**”

Judges 13:24 ¶ And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

Judges 13:25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

It came to pass that the woman gave birth to a son, just as the LORD had told them; and they named him Samson—from the Hebrew meaning “his sun, his service.” They hoped that Samson would be a light unto the LORD as he served Him.

As the child grew, the LORD blessed him; and God’s Holy Spirit began to prompt him to action at times—though we aren’t told how this was evidenced. In future chapters we will learn that he gained the reputation of a man of unequalled and awe inspiring strength.

He lived in the area of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.