

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Judges 13

Our text this week is going to bring us to probably the famous of the judges – we are going to look at the life of Samson.

Even as a child, I remember watching a Popeye cartoon where they depicted the story of Samson and Delilah – however, in the cartoon – once he cut his hair off, he regains his strength by eating a can of spinach.

That is not what happened to the real Samson.

Now, when I say the name Samson – usually the first thing that comes into our minds was his long hair and his great strength.

However, as one studies the life of Samson – one of the things that stands out is the wasted potential.

Let's pray...

[Jdg 13:1-25 NKJV] 1 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.

Chapter 13 begins with announcement that the Children of Israel once again continued the cycle of rebellion against the Lord.

They returned to worshipping the pagan gods of the Canaanites.

They didn't learn the lesson from the previous generation –

Because that is exactly what they were doing when God delivered them to the hands of the Ammonites.

So they rebel and God delivers them into the hands of the Philistines –

Now, over the past couple of weeks – we have seen all the oppressors come from the east.

The Ammonites, the Midianites, the Amalekites – east of the Jordan.

The Philistines, they were on the west side.

They were along the Mediterranean coast.

They didn't have the numbers that the other ites had – but they did have one thing that was to their advantage. They had technology.

They were the ones with the iron chariots – they were the ones with the sophisticated weapons.

And the Lord delivered the Children of Israel into their hands.

I had you make a note that it was for forty years – that is longer than any other oppression up to this point.

This oppression will continue into the days of Samuel.

There are going to be many differences between Samson and the previous judges

One of them is that the previous judges delivered Israel from their oppressors – Samson starts it but he doesn't finish it.

Again, that comes later on.

2 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.

So, here we are introduced to Samson's parents. Manoah and his wife (btw – the scriptures never provide her name)

If you are wondering, the name Manoah – means rest

However, it doesn't appear that they were getting much rest as not only were they oppressed by the Philistines – Manoah's wife was barren.

In those days, it was devastating for a woman to be unable to conceive.

A woman's whole sense of identity was ruined by the inability to conceive.

Yet as we study scripture, this seems to be one of God's specialties – allowing women to conceive who had problems doing so.

We see it in the life of Sarah, Hannah (Samuel's mom), Elizabeth (JTB mom)

3 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.

Again, the Angel of The Lord here is Jesus – we saw Him appear to Gideon back in chapter 6.

Jesus makes a promise to Mrs. Manoah – that she is going to conceive and have a son.

4 "Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or [similar] drink, and not to eat anything unclean. 5 "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."

So, not only does Jesus promise Mrs. Manoah that she is going to conceive and bear a son.

Jesus tells her that she must live like a Nazirite until her son is born, because he will be a life-long Nazirite.

The word “Nazarite” comes from a word meaning to separate

So living like a Nazarite means that one would be consecrated; removed from common use & reserved exclusively for a special function.

Number 6 – if you want to read it for homework – speaks about the Nazarite vow.

- The vow usually lasted anywhere from a few months to a year. We saw Apostle Paul in the book of Acts took the vow.
- During this time, they would yield themselves to the Lord to be used by Him in whatever He chose.
- They would spend time meditating in the Word and in prayer,

So Jesus tells Mrs. Manoah – the commitment / the consecration is going to begin with you and then continue to your son.

And that means –

1. no wine – actually it went further than that - they couldn't consume anything that came from the vine. No grapes, no grape juice, no raisins, no grape jelly, no grape jam, no grapeseed oil.

Why?

Because if God would have just said, “no wine” then the people would begin to push the envelope and question what does wine mean? 10% alcohol, 5%, 3%, 1%

Everyone made their own wine – some presses came out stronger than others.

But, if you take grapes out of their diet – then they never have to worry about violating their vow.

So God tells those taking the vow – stay away from the vine.

2. The Nazarite was also to avoid contact with anything unclean, especially dead bodies. “Unclean” referred to things that were not to be a part of the diet or lifestyle of the people of God.

So they had to make sure that they were able to distinguish between clean and unclean – because contact with the unclean rendered those individuals unfit to be used by Him.

Because God is holy, His people must also be holy

The same things applies to the believer today.

Turn with me to 1 John 2

[1Jo 2:15-17 NKJV] 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that [is] in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

James in his epistle writes

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

John and James are saying the same thing - if we are to be the people of God, then we cannot be people of this world. We cannot allow ourselves to be defiled or else our testimonies will become meaningless.

3. The 3rd requirement was that they were not allowed to cut their hair.

Why the hair?

Because it would set them apart.

You see, we have the wrong mentality from movies and TV series that all the men during this time looked like a bunch of hippies.

That is not the case – the men were fighting in hand to hand combat, there was manual labor.

Men had short hair.

The Nazarite prohibition on cutting hair was meant to reinforce the idea that during the length of the vow, the Nazarite was not engaged in normal labor.

He was devoting himself to a special season of availability to the Lord.

And as his hair grew, the other people would notice his hair – he stood out – and people understood that his commitment to the Lord would be manifest in his appearance.

Again, the spiritual application for us is that as we draw closer to God, there ought to be changes in our lifestyle that identify us as belonging to Him. We are to stand out just like those who took the Nazarite vow.

6. 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. 7 "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.' " 8 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."**

Manoah's wife goes to her husband and she tells him what Jesus just told her.

I had you make a note of the phrase "very awesome" because this doesn't mean "awesome, like cool" this means a fearful awe – in fact the same word is used of Adam and Eve after the fall when they hid from God – And Adam says, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

So Manoah listens to what his wife said -

The good thing – is that it appears that Manoah believed his wife.

He wants to meet this Man – He wants to meet Jesus

The bad news – is that they were already given instructions on how to raise Samson.

9 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. 10 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!" 11 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]."**

Manoah was the one who offered up the prayer to the Lord – but notice that the Angel of God – Jesus appears again to the woman.

Why not appear directly to Manoah?

Why not appear directly to Manoah?

I don't know; but one thing it does is demonstrate for us that this couple was likeminded.

She knew he offered up the prayer to talk to this Man – so instead of talking directly to the Man, she runs and tells her husband so that it would be a shared experience.

Notice that Manoah doesn't even address his wife by name – he called her "this woman".

12 Manoah said, "Now let Your words come [to pass]! **What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?**" 13 So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. 14 "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."

Now, one of the things that we know about Manoah was that he had faith in the announcement that the Angel of the Lord had spoken to his wife.

He had faith that God was going to do the impossible and give him a son.

However, notice – his question.

What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?

He wants the big picture – what is my son going to grow up to be?

You see the difference in Samson from all the other judges was that God appointed him judge before he was even conceived.

So Manoah wants to know –

Is he going to require special training – military training – strength training

What can we do to prepare him?

And notice that the Angel doesn't answer his question.

All He does is to remind the couple of what the wife's responsibility is – that she starts by setting the example for the boy.

Manoah wanted big picture – and Jesus says, one step at a time.

Samson was to follow her mother's example.

15 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You." 16 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.)

It appears that Manoah wants to show his hospitality.

Stick around, let's eat, let's talk a little more and just maybe, Manoah would find out a little more clarification about his future son's rule of life and work

However, Jesus told Manoah that instead of spending time preparing the meal and eating the meal - he ought to offer a sacrifice.

"Offer it to the Lord," Jesus said.

Instead of doing something for the Lord by cooking Him a meal, do something that acknowledges what the Lord has done for you.

Remember, a burnt offering indicated complete dedication and consecration to God.

Loved ones, this applies to our lives.

We ought to think more about what the Lord has done for us than what we must do for Him.

Many times, we have it reversed.

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

Manoah asked the same question that Jacob asked Jesus when he wrestled Him and the same question that Moses asked at the Burning Bush

What is Your name –

And notice again, that Jesus doesn't answer Manoah.

You see, Manoah didn't need to know Jesus name.

He had already revealed Himself to them; Manoah had already enough evidence from their conversation to know who He is. Manoah already knew that Jesus was awesome and that was all he needed to know.

19 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—

The burnt offering was usually offered for atonement – it was an acknowledgement of sin and a request for renewed relationship with God.

However, Manoah added the grain offering – and if we read Leviticus 2 – we find that it represented service to God, it represented total worship to Him.

It was to be given out of a person's free will, just as our worship is our free will offering to God today.

20 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.

Manoah and his wife were in the process of worship – and as the burnt offering and the grain offering are consumed, Jesus ascends to heaven in the flame.

This is very similar to what happened to Gideon back in ch 6 –

As soon as the sacrifice was consumed by the flame, the Angel of the Lord disappeared.

21 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. 22 And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" 23 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."

Manoah was a little slow, spiritually speaking.

He prayed and all, but it took him a while to see things.

Maybe that is the reason that the Lord appeared to his wife first.

So, Manoah finally realizes that it was the Lord that was in their midst – and as soon as he realizes it, fear set in.

He thinks he is going to die because of what he saw.

Remember, God told Moses, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." (Exodus 33:20)

However, it is his wife who is the voice of reason –

"Why would God kill us – if He initiated the contact and accepted our worship."

You see church, Nothing Manoah had done could nullify the promises Jesus had made to them. It wasn't a test that they could pass or fail.

And what we should take out of this is that God's promises to us, are true.

We should embrace His promises and not wonder if we somehow nullified His promises to us.

And we tend to usually do this when we encounter trials –

We immediately think we deserved it – for something we either did or failed to do.

Yet Peter tells us in his epistle – (1 Peter 4) specifically, to not think it a strange thing when a trial hits.

So nine months go by between verse 23 and verse 24 -

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

Mrs. Manoah conceives and she has a baby boy – just like Jesus promised her and she named him Samson.

Samson means – sunny, like the sun

Now, it says that that Samson/Sunny grew and the Lord blessed him.

The same thing is said about Samuel in 1 Sam 3:19

This means that his parents raised him up in the Lord – Manoah and his wife followed the instructions that were given to them.

And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him

Have you ever noticed that when we think of Samson – we tend to think of a guy who is built like the Rock with massive biceps? Right

But when we read the scriptures, nowhere does it say that Samson was buff.

In fact – whenever he did anything – it came as a surprise to the people.

Samson was not strong in natural strength

It was the Spirit of the Lord where Samson got his strength – not his muscles.

Samson was set up to do great things for God

He had

Godly parents

Promises from God

He was dedicated / separated to God before he was even conceived.

And when we look at his life – he failed

And we are going to see his failures in ch 14,15,16.

And the reason he failed was because he chose to feed his fleshly appetite.

He started good – but God wanted Samson set apart for his entire life – not just a portion of his life.

In the same way that God desires us to be set apart for Him – and if we feed the flesh, we too will have chapters in our life like Samson did.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

