

# PREPARING FOR LEADERSHIP Sunday School- August 7, 2011

## Unifying Topic: WALK IN GOD'S PATH

### Lesson Text

- I. Samson's Birth Foretold (Judges 13:1-5)
- II. Manoah's Response (Judges 13:6-8)
- III. From Purpose To Promise (Judges 13:24-25)

**The Main Thought:** And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol. (Judges 13:24-25, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** When poor leadership results in community troubles, new leadership must be prepared. How is someone to be prepared for assuming leadership? God instructed Manoah and his wife how to raise their child to become a wise leader.

**Lesson Aim:** To examine how God prepared Manoah and his wife to give birth to Samson and raise him for God's purpose.

**Life Aim:** To understand that quality leadership requires thoughtful, obedient, and careful preparation.

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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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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:

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.

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.

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

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

### **HISTORY:**

Sorry, I had skipped Abimelech in Chapter 9 as sixth judge because his judgeship was done by treachery and not by God. In Judges Chapter 11, the people of Gilead were determined to crown a king; anyone who saves them from the Ammonite army who was preparing to attack them. Jephthah is his name, a great warrior, a mighty man of valor; was scorned and driven out of town by his half brothers because he was born out of wedlock to a prostitute; They didn't want him getting any of their father's estate. He was the illegitimate son of Gilead. Yet despite his half brother's rejection, God used him to be Israel's ninth Deliverer and judge. About the time the Ammonites began to make war against them they sought after Jephthah to be their king. He finally accepted after having some reluctance. He then learns that the Ammonites believe that Israel had stolen some land from them. And to avoid battle, Jephthah attempts to explain how the Israelites got the land. That didn't satisfy them. Therefore, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon Jephthah and he leads an army against the Ammonites. Jephthah makes a vow that if the Lord gives him victory over the Ammonites, upon returning, he will sacrifice as a burnt offering the first thing that comes out of his house to greet him. Well they completely defeat the Ammonites and to Jephthah's surprise, his only daughter is the first one to come out of the house to greet him. He is in tears, tearing his clothes.

Making a vow before battle was common and it was the customary greeting of women to greet their men with timbrels and dancing when returning victoriously from battle. No doubt she was as horrified as he was when she learned that she was to be the fulfillment of her father's vow. This vow signifies Jephthah's incomplete knowledge of or blatant

insensitivity to the Law of Moses, for God specifically prohibits such- using a human as a burnt offering (Lev.18:21; 20:1-5). Rather than grieving over the tragedy that she would never marry and have children, the supreme fulfillment of Hebrew women, she submitted to the very limited understanding she had of her father's fatal vow. His daughter tells him he must keep his vow and requests to go away for two months with her friends and bewail (lament; grieve) her virginity up in the mountains. So she never married and it was not clear whether he killed her but that he did accordingly to his vow. However, this tragedy becomes a yearly remembrance among the young women of Israel to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

Israel had just won a great battle, but instead of joy, in **Judges Chapter 12** there was pettiness and quarreling. The tribe of Ephraim was angry and jealous that they were not invited to join in the fighting, though Jephthah said he had invited them but they wouldn't come. This was the same thing they had pulled on Gideon (Chp.8:1-3). And now, Ephraim begins to insult the people of Gilead. They were so angry that they threatened to burn down Jephthah's house with him in it. So, Jephthah explained to them that they failed to come, so they went without Ephraim's help, and the Lord gave Jephthah and his army victory! Therefore, the proud Ephraimites who didn't like being left out had nothing really to complain about. In contrast, Gideon pacified Ephraim by reminding them of Ephraim's accomplishment in the capture of two of the greatest princes of Midian, however, Jephthah took a more direct approach by attacking them in retaliation.

Jephthah defeats 42,000 of their soldiers and the men of Ephraim became fugitives (renegades). There was a test to identify the fugitives from Ephraim, Jephthah places a checkpoint at the fords of the Jordan River and forces all that tried to pass by to say the password "*Shibboleth*" which means "*stream*" or "*floods*". If the person could not pronounce the word correctly using the "h" consonant, and instead they say "*Sibboleth*", they would be dragged away and killed. It was a simple test, but it worked. This section ends abruptly with the statement that Jephthah judged Israel six years, died, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

After Jephthah dies, **Ibzan** of Bethlehem becomes judge and judged Israel for seven years. He had 30 sons and 30 daughters who marry outside their clan. Ibzan, the **tenth judge** dies and is buried at Bethlehem.

After Ibzan dies, **Elon** from Zebulun becomes the **eleventh judge** was who judged Israel for ten years. He dies and is buried at Aijalon in Zebulun.

After Elon dies, **Abdon** (son of Hillel) from Pirathon becomes the **twelveth judge** for eight years. He has 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on seventy donkeys. He dies and was buried in Pirathon, in Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

## LESSON:

### Judges 13:1-5 Samson's Birth Foretold

The Lord delivered the children of Israel into the hand of the Philistines for forty years because they did evil again in His sight. He allowed them to be conquered. This suffering was not caused by God, but resulted from, the fact that the people ignored God as their true judge and ruler. This was the longest servitude that Israel had experienced during the time of the judges.

1. To Bablyon 8yrs (3:7-8).
2. To Moab 18yrs (3:12-14).
3. To Philistia—time unknown (3:31).
4. To Canaanites 20yrs (4:1-3).
5. To Midian 7yrs (6:1).
6. To Philistines and Ammonites 18yrs (10:6-18).
7. To Philistines 40yrs (13:1).

The Philistines were able to penetrate the Israelite territory all the way to Shiloh, where they destroyed the tabernacle. How could this happen again? If we continue to harden our hearts against God, we can expect the same fate as Israel. Well, the judge died and it's repetition all over again. The revelation of God's intention to rescue and deliver Israel happens when the Angel of the Lord appears not to the Deliver this time, but to the wife of Manoah of the tribe of Dan  
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in the city of Zorah, who is without child; barren. Although her name was not given or mentioned, she was deemed important of an appearance of an Angel of the Lord. He is none other than God Himself (Jesus Christ in angelic form), as He appeared to Abraham and Sarah (*Gen.17:19*); Hannah (*1Sam.1:17*); Elizabeth (*Lk.1:13*); and Mary (*Lk.1:37*), He is appearing again to an unnamed woman.

The tribe of Dan was originally assigned the land adjacent to Judah and Benjamin, extending to the Mediterranean Sea (*Josh.19:40-48*). Zorah is about fifteen miles from Jerusalem in the foothill country near the border of Philistra. When God wants to do something really great in His world, He doesn't send an army; He comes Himself or sends His presence in an Angel. His prediction of Immanuel (God with us) given as a sign in *Is.7:14* and as the Prince of Peace in *Is.9:6*, was told to the shepherds in *Matt.1:23*; fulfilled in a virgin in *Lk.1:37* "For with God nothing shall be impossible" *Lk.1:37*. And "He uses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty" (*1Corth.1:26-28*). Samson is the child, in this story who has not yet been born, but for the mother to hear of this, is overwhelming. The three Predictions to Manoah's wife from the Angel of the Lord:

1. You shall conceive and bear a son (V3).
2. He shall be a Nazarite unto God from his mother's womb (V5).
3. He shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines (V5).

The three Restrictions to Manoah's wife from the Angel of the Lord:

1. You shall drink no wine nor strong drink (V4).
2. You shall eat no unclean thing (dead body) (V4).
3. No razor shall come upon his (your son's) head (V5).

The term "Nazarite" comes from the Hebrew word "nazi" meaning "consecrated" or "separated" and doing all the above things. A Nazarite vow was usually entered voluntarily for a temporary period, but for this case, it was neither voluntary nor temporary, but for his entire life. The laws governing the Nazarite vow are given in numbers 6. In this instance the parents will make the vow for the son (Samson). This was her firstborn and she had to be careful as to what she ate and drank because her diet would influence her unborn Nazarite son and could defile him. There was such an obligation on these parents and also an honor for them and the baby to be born.

## Judges 13:6-8 Manoah's Response

With this great news, you can't help but run and tell someone else. She told her husband: **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:** She refers to the Angel as a man of God with countenance like that of an Angel of God, very terrible. She really didn't know who he was. Everything the Angel had said to her, she repeated back to Manoah. His response was: to pray. He prayed that the Angel would return and give more instructions about what they are to do in raising their child. His response was better than Zacharias (*Lk.1:18*). Zacharias doubted the Angel's Word, but Manoah prayed to get more instructions about the child He had predicted and they were to receive.

### NOT APART OF THE LESSON

### Judges 13:9-23

The Lord answered Manoah's prayer. The Angel of the Lord appears again to Manoah's wife while she is in the field and she runs to tell her husband to come. He sees the Angel of the Lord, but obviously, Manoah does not know who this is either. He does not fall down on the ground in fear; he does not worship Him. The Angel repeats His instructions to raise the child as a Nazarite. He also says, "*do not eat anything that comes of the vine* (including grapes and raisins); *strong drink; no unclean thing; all that I have commanded her let her observe.*" It was no "ifs", "ands", or "buts" about it; this was a command! Manoah and his wife desire to honor the Angel by suggesting that the Angel of the Lord stay until they could prepare a meal for Him. What Manoah is offering is simply common, mid-eastern hospitality. He doesn't realize who this stranger is. The Angel related that He would not eat, but what would be appropriate would be to offer a burnt offering to God. Manoah still didn't know He was the Angel of the Lord.

He also wanted to know the Angel's name so they could honor Him when the prophecy came to pass. It was customary to give gifts to prophets and seers. However, the Angel says it's a secret! While Manoah offers a young goat (kid) as

burnt offering, the Angel does something so wondrously by ascending into the fire blazing from the altar toward heaven, proving that He Himself was a Spirit being from heaven and Immortal; God Himself. They finally realized that He was the Angel of the Lord, and they both became very frightened and fell on their faces to the ground. They thought they would die because they had seen God. However, Manoah's wife chooses to believe that if God wanted to kill them:

- He wouldn't have accepted burnt offering from someone that He is going to execute.
- He wouldn't have shown His ascension into heaven.
- He wouldn't have told them in advance that they were to bear a son and telling them all those things to do.

The calm reasoning and intelligence of his wife causes us to realize why God chose to principally appear to her. He appeared to her to prepare her to commitment which began with an offering to the Lord.

## Judges 13:24-25 From Purpose To Promise

For this purpose, all that Manoah and his wife went through, Samson is born—the promise. For this purpose of being a Nazirite, the promise has arrived. If they had not fulfilled all the Angel of the Lord had told them to do, the promise would not have come. There was a purpose in doing all for they knew the purpose of the outcome of their son—*"he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines"* (V5). Now, from bareness to the promise fulfilled!

This is the first of hearing and knowing Manoah and his wife's baby's name in Judges 13. His name means "*sunlight*" or "*brightness*", like the nation of Israel who had been chosen to be holy to God. He grew and experience the blessings and anointing of the Spirit of the Lord at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol. As I said, Zorah is about fifteen miles from Jerusalem in the foothill country near the border of Philistia; and Eshtaol is a town in Judah. Samson's tribe, Dan, continued to wander in their inherited land (Jdgs.18:1) which was yet unconquered (Josh.19:47, 48). Samson was prepared from the womb. He was set apart and consecrated in the womb, as his mother did all the Angel of the Lord had told her to do. Samson was still a young man when he was still being groomed for leadership. The Spirit of the Lord began to stir him and give him a sense of God's mission, and he began to display his amazing ability. Samson's power was a weapon to fight. He was what Israel needed at this time.

### SUMMARY:

<sup>1</sup>Only two elements in the recurrent pattern remain in the Samson story: apostasy and oppression (13:1). We look in vain for a cry for help or deliverance from the Philistines. Instead, during the forty-year period of Philistine oppression, an Angel of the Lord appeared to the barren wife of an Israelite named Manoah with the announcement that she would miraculously bear a son. He was to be a Nazirite, "dedicated" to the Lord at the time of his birth. A Nazirite was forbidden to touch the carcass of dead bodies, to drink alcoholic beverages, or to cut their hair. The special purpose for which Samson was dedicated was the beginning of the deliverance of Israel from the hand of the Philistines (13:5). When the boy was born he was called Samson ("Sunshine"), and as he grew the Lord blessed him (13:24).

### APPLICATION:

We were born with a purpose. Everything we do is preparation for the purpose. Leadership comes before occupation. That's why preparation comes before leadership. Preparation involves going through some tests. You can't occupy before preparing. And all of it relies on being under God's leadership first. Our walk in God's path is important because we're being set-up for the purpose!

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.enterthebible.org/resourcelink.aspx?rid=660>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>