

## Judges Chapter 13 Part 2

Before proceeding, I need to go back and connect this lesson to a previous chapter. When we dealt with the Jephthah narrative, we noted that he defeated the Ammonites. But, what was the introduction to that narrative?

**Judges 10:6** Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; thus they forsook (abandoned) the Lord and did not serve Him.

**Judges 10:7** The anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the sons of Ammon.

**Judges 8:8** They afflicted and crushed the sons of Israel that year; for eighteen years they afflicted all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in Gilead in the land of the Amorites.

The logic of this last verse is that those on the other side of the Jordan, on the east side of the Jordan, were afflicted. That would be the area where the sons of Ammon were active. But the Philistines were not in that area. Jephthah took care of the sons of Ammon. But, there is no mention of defeat of the Philistines in the Jephthah narrative. Ammon was to the east

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of Israel. The Philistines were on the west coast of Israel. What about them? God mentions them in Judges 10:7. Is He going to leave it just hanging out there without telling us how the sons of Israel dealt with them?

That is where Samson comes in. Per Robby Dean, the Jephthah narrative and the Samson narrative overlap in time, but are separated in geography.

**Judges 13:1 Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, so that the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years.**

Last week we met Manoah and his wife and the Angel of the Lord. One added note this week. Watch for ambiguity that is woven into the fabric of this narrative. John in his gospel used ambiguity to showcase irony. The reader is clued in to some fact that a character in the narrative is unaware of.

**Judges 13:2 There was a certain (literally “one”) man (Hebrew Ish) of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife (Hebrew Ishah) was barren and had borne no children.**

There is some ambiguity to “a certain man.” On the one hand, this is a specific man. But the “certain” is the Hebrew word for one. In this context it could have more than one meaning. Most translations use “certain man.” Some just use “a man.” The thrust of the meaning is that this is a specific man, and gives his name. But there is some ambiguity here if one ponders the meaning of this word in Hebrew. It could mean a “unique man.” And certainly he appears to be unique. Is any other person

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in the book of Judges shown to have such a personal relationship with God? Let us follow this thought through this chapter.

**Hand of the Philistines.** We see in this narrative that the people neither call on God for relief from the Philistines nor attempt to fight against them. So this situation was apparently not one of onerous slavery. It was something that the sons of Israel were willing to live under. But in doing so, they continued to reject the God of the Covenant and to live like the Philistines. They were being assimilated into the Philistine culture.

**Judges 13:3 Then the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive (literally, “you are pregnant”) and give birth to a son.**

We see very quickly that the woman did not know it was the Angel of the Lord. So immediately there is ambiguity. We in the reading audience know it is the angel of the Lord because the author has clued us in. But the woman is unaware.

**Judges 13:4 Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing.**

Some would say that the woman is now under a Nazirite vow. Additional ambiguity. From today’s perspective, this prohibition makes sense. Pregnant women today are often instructed to avoid alcoholic beverages and certain kinds of food. And there is an added emphasis here in light of the Mosaic Law and Nazirite vow, that she not introduce these kinds of elements into her system which will be picked up through her blood and passed on to the fetus.

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**Judges 13:5 For behold, you shall conceive (literally, “you, pregnant”) and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb (“from” as in “out from” so the LXX, ek); and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”**

We covered the Nazirite vow to some extent last week. A review:

1. It was a voluntary vow.  
It was based upon free will. It was based upon an understanding of who the person was in relation to God.
2. It was a temporary vow.  
It was for a specified, limited time only.
3. It was a visual vow.  
The visible long hair was to show that the man was in subjection to God. As Thieme said, the long hair of the woman was to indicate the woman was in subjection to the man. Here in the Nazirite vow, the man was saying he was in subjection to God. Here is the explanation from the Nazirite vow in the book of Numbers:

**Numbers 6:5 ‘All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the Lord; he shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long.**

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**Numbers 6:6 'All the days of his separation to the Lord he shall not go near to a dead person.**

**Numbers 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head (i.e. his long hair).**

**Numbers 6:8 All the days of his separation he is holy (separated) to the Lord.**

4. It was a dietary vow.  
The dietary restrictions (no association with grapes in any manner) indicate that joy comes from God.
5. It was a life style vow.  
The separation from death and dead things was to emphasize subjection to God's will, i.e. to stay in fellowship with God and set apart from sin. As the quote from Numbers 6:8 says, "he is holy/separated to the Lord.

Samson was under the Nazirite (vow) per the Angel of the Lord. There is some ambiguity here since the Angel of the Lord does not specify for Samson all the specifics of Numbers 6. So some think that Samson did not break the Nazirite vow. The condition of not being near a dead person does not specify animals. But when Samson killed Philistines, they were people. After he killed them, they were dead people.

1. It was imposed upon him from birth. It was not voluntary. It was unique.

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2. It was, according to his mother (in an upcoming verse) until he dies (his whole life). It was not temporary. It was unique.
3. He obeyed the visual part of the vow. He did not cut his hair. But a key in the story is that someone else cuts his hair. That may have been unique.
4. Samson was not apparently concerned with joy from God. But he apparently did enjoy women. And, at one point, he goes to a vineyard. This could be seen as a violation of not associating with grapes. What did he do at the vineyard? Perhaps eat a grape or two?
5. Samson did not stay away from dead things. In fact, as we will see, he was very much involved with killing an animal (lion) and people, enforcing death. And then the status as a Nazirite ends when he dies. That is unique.

So there is a sense that Samson was a Nazirite in name only. Since, he did not actually deliver the sons of Israel from the Philistines, there is a sense that Samson was a “deliverer” in name only. But his actions stirred up history laying the ground word for king Saul and king David. God worked through Samson, whether he wanted to cooperate or not. As a Nazirite he was dedicated to God. So was the nation Israel. And they turned their backs on God. Yet, God worked through them in spite of their abandonment of Him.

**Judges 13:6 Then the woman (Hebrew Ishah) came and told (the usual word for saying) her husband (Hebrew Ish), saying (the usual word for saying), “A man (Ish) of God came (same verb as when woman came to her husband) to me and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very**

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**awesome. And I did not ask him where he came from, nor did he tell (a different word from the word translated “told” earlier in this verse) me his name (i.e. I do not know who he is).**

The more I read this verse in the Hebrew, the more excited I became. There are two important perspectives we must keep in mind as we read this verse: choice of vocabulary and repetition.

**Woman.** The Hebrew word is the same word used of Eve in the garden, “ishah.”

**Told/Saying.** Here is the Hebrew 1-2 punch of verbs. The woman told (imperfect); saying (infinitive). These are derived from the same root. Repetition.

**husband.** The Hebrew word is not the same word used of Adam in the Garden. Instead it is from the same root as the word for woman, “ish.”

**Man.** Man in “man of God” is again “ish.” A repetition. This word occurs eleven times in this chapter. Again and again “man” is used to describe the Angel of the Lord. This establishes a pattern: man, man...man. Until one of the “man” is replaced with “angel.” This prepares the reader to watch the emotion of the Manoah and his wife as they understand they just had an encounter with God and survived; not only that but they were blessed by Him.

Do you have children or even watched young children on Christmas morning opening their presents. If the parents know their children and got them exactly what they really, really want, there is a tremendous expression of emotion. That is a present for the parents that is priceless.

So here, the reader waits until this couple explode with reverent emotion toward God.

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**Man of God.** Literally, “man of the God.” She does not use the word for the God of the Covenant, “Yahweh.” But she understands He is the one and only God. And this is a “man” of God. This is stringing us along with this couple, waiting for the moment of discovery.

**the man (ish)→ the woman (ishah) → Man (ish) of God**

**Appearance/appearance.** Both are the same noun from the word “to see.” This is fascinating. She sees a man. He appears to be like the Angel of God. He is not just an ordinary man. Jesus was a man, but also God. Because the Jews saw a man, they did not realize He was also God. Yet, here in the Book of Judges, we have something like that. Listen to Nicodemus in the New Testament:

**John 3:1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;**

**John 3:2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi (i.e. Nicodemus recognizes Jesus as a man), we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”**

**Awesome.** The Hebrew word is derived from the word for “fear.” It might be translated as “fearsome.” Have you ever met someone who commanded your attention? Someone who you instinctively “feared” or instantly respected, not because he was a bad person, but because he had a presence that caused you to fear, to have a sense of awe. Now, in the Hebrew, the adverb “very” is added. Not only was this person fearsome, but He was Very Fearsome. His presence alone grabbed your attention, caused your humility to kick in.



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**I did not ask Him.** Because of his countenance, the woman listened and did little talking. She was awe struck.

**Nor did He tell me.** Introductions were not made. The “man’s” countenance was such that it caused the woman to listen. “Tell” is not the usual word for “say.” The author has been using the normal word for “say/saying” up to this point. Now, he springs a new word on us that means something more than just “to say.” It is a word that in the previous usages in the book of Judges provides information on which to make a decision. In this case, the Angel of the Lord did not give Manoah’s wife His name. If He had, she would have acted on who He was and not on the information He gave her. In a couple of verses, she will use this verb to communicate information to her husband on which he will act.

As an illustration of this word, the following quote is where it is used in the Barak narrative.

**Judges 4:12 Then they told (this is our word) Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.**

Someone told Sisera the location of Barak.

**Judges 4:13 Sisera called together all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon.**

As a result of that knowledge, Sisera acted to confront Barak in battle.

**Judges 13:7 But he said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and now you shall not drink wine or strong drink nor eat any unclean thing, for the boy shall be**

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**a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.”**

Manoah's wife recounts the actionable information that the Angel of the Lord gave her.

**Behold, you shall conceive.** NO! This is not a verb. According to my interlinear, it is an adjective with no verb. In other cases where there is no verb, a verb in the present tense may be supplied. So here it would be “You are pregnant.” We dealt with that last week when the Angel of the Lord told her this. In addition, “behold” calls attention to something. In this case, it calls attention that she is pregnant. It is even conceivable (pun intended) that she has missed her period and hasn't yet informed her husband yet. Literally, “He said to me, “Look, pregnant!”” Commentators argue on this point. Some say she was already pregnant. Some say she doesn't get pregnant until later, “shall conceive.” Some even suggest that the Angel of the Lord got her pregnant on the spot! Shades of a virgin pregnancy. Perhaps there is more ambiguity in this statement than meets the eye at first glance. I'll stick with she was already pregnant.

The instructions the Angel of the Lord gave the woman might be something a doctor today would tell a pregnant woman. But this also dovetails into the fact that her son will be a Nazirite from the womb. From the way I read the Hebrew and the LXX (Greek translation), he will be a Nazirite from birth. Again, some commentators say he was a Nazirite in the womb. This led Robby Dean to give an extended lesson on when a person acquires a soul. I don't want to delve into an hour or more on Creationism and Traducianism and if a fetus acquires a soul and if so, when. Obviously there is some ambiguity in some passages.

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But that brings us to the first “violation” of the Nazirite vow. This is being imposed on Samson apart from his volition. Take note of Hannah in 1 Samuel chapter 1.

**1 Samuel 1:28 So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord.” And he worshiped the Lord there.**

I suspect there is an intended comparison between Samson and Samuel. I don't have time here to pursue that comparison. It would be an interesting one.

**To the day of his death.** This means he will be under the Nazirite vow his entire life. This is not a temporary vow. This brings us to the second “violation” of the Nazirite vow. Now, take note that it does not say “vow.” His life style is to be the life style of someone under the Nazirite vow. I already covered those particulars earlier this morning.

But there are some differences between what the Angel of the Lord communicated to the woman and what she communicates to her husband. “To the day of his death,” was not in the written account of what the Angel of the Lord told the woman. Here is an interesting comment by Robert Chisholm:

“When reporting the visitor’s message, she focused on the angel’s instructions about the food and drink she should avoid. She omitted the prohibition about cutting the child’s hair (perhaps this was assumed on the basis of his identification as a Nazirite; cf. v.7b) (Boling 1975 221) and, more importantly, failed to say anything about his future military role. The latter omission is of great significance. Samson’s mother failed to communicate what was most important—her son’s divinely appointed destiny. Her response to the angel’s message foreshadows Israel’s failure

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to recognize Samson as their God-given deliverer and Samson's own confusion about his role in life."

There were also some differences in the wording.

In a footnote, he again reiterates, "These variations may seem insignificant, but her lack of care in relating the angel's words caused Manoah to be confused and resulted in Samson not fully understanding the purpose of his calling."

**Judges 13:8 Then Manoah entreated the Lord and said, "O Lord, please let the man of God whom You have sent come to us again that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born."**

**Entreated.** This is a prayer to God. Other places this word is translated "supplication" as we see from the Exodus plagues. When Moses entreated the Lord, He answered.

This is the only time this word is used in the book of Judges. This word is used twice in Exodus chapter 10 when God brought locusts on the Land of Egypt.

**Exodus 10:16 Then Pharaoh hurriedly called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you.**

**Exodus 10:17 Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication (this is our word) to the Lord your God, that He would only remove this death from me."**

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**Exodus 10:18 He went out from Pharaoh and made supplication (this is our word) to the Lord.**

**Exodus 10:19 So the Lord shifted the wind to a very strong west wind which took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not one locust was left in all the territory of Egypt.**

The “supplication” prayer is prayed by Moses. God listened to Moses and granted his request.

**Lord.** This is “Yahweh” the God of the covenant. He apparently has a conscious relationship with God. Where are the priests? No where to be found. No need of the Tabernacle. This man knows he can go direct to God. I think I would like to meet this man in heaven. I don’t think commentators give this man sufficient credit.

**To teach us.** Wow! There is so much this word tells us about Manoah. He not only has a personal relationship with God, but he understands that God can give him instructional revelation about the task put before his wife. And he asks for that instruction.

For a minute, let us revisit a phrase from Judges 13:2, “a certain man.” The word for “certain” is the Hebrew word for “one.” Obviously, it can be translated a “certain” man or “one” man. But given what we now know about Manoah and the depraved culture in which he lives, it might be possible to translate it as “a unique man.” He was knowledgeable about Bible Doctrine and had a personal relationship with God such that he could address Him directly.

And Manoah’s action indicate he understood that “the man of God” was not just any ordinary man. He did not need to verify what his wife had said but acted on the information his wife gave him. Not like Gideon or

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Jephthah. This man was not just “of” God but was “sent from” God on a mission. This is wording similar to what Jesus understood of Himself. There are many passages in the Gospel of John in which Jesus says, “The Father sent me...”

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

**God listened.** More and more, I think that Manoah was a believer with Bible Doctrine in his soul. I know that others think otherwise.

**Judges 13:10 So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, “Behold, the man who came the other day has appeared to me.”**

**Told her husband.** Told is the word introduced above in which the Angel of the Lord did not tell the woman his name. This word demands action.

**Judges 13:11 Then Manoah arose and followed his wife, and when he came to the man he said to him, “Are you the man who spoke to the woman?” And he said, “I am.”**

**I am.** When asked who he is, he simply says, “I am.” Except, that is not what is in the Hebrew. It is literally, “I,” without a verb. The “am” is assumed by translators. But here there is again ambiguity which if resolved would cause us to draw some conclusions. The Angel of the Lord is not currently a flesh and blood man. He only appears as a man. He cannot say truthfully that he is a man. He is currently the manifest person of the Trinity. So he cannot truthfully say, I am (a man). He could

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have said I “will be,” indicating he will become flesh and blood. But that would have confused them because He is standing in front of them appearing as a man. He is the person who spoke to the woman. So he just says “I.” They, like translators, supply “am.”

**Judges 13:12 Manoah said, “Now when your words come to pass, what shall be the boy’s mode of life and his vocation?”**

Manoah asks a question that has already been answered. The woman in her haste to tell her husband what her duties were from the “man of God” didn’t provide all the details.

**Judges 13:13 So the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “Let the woman pay attention to all that I said.**

The Angel of the Lord essentially says, I already gave that information to the woman. Previously, the word translated here as “woman” has been translated as wife. Same word.

**Judges 13:14 She should not eat anything that comes from the vine nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; let her observe all that I commanded.”**

This is what the woman/wife told Manoah. She can tell him the rest of the story. Commentators tend to think that she didn’t tell him anything else even though she had additional information.

**Judges 13:15 Then Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, “Please let us detain you so that we may prepare a young goat for you.”**

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This is a normal response to someone who has blessed you, like in the Gideon narrative. They are still treating the Angel of the Lord as a man of God.

**Judges 13:16 The angel of the Lord said to Manoah, “Though you detain me, I will not eat your food, but if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to the Lord.” For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of the Lord.**

For Manoah did not know. Bingo. He didn't know.

**Judges 13:17 Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, “What is your name, so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you?”**

**What is your name.** Even this isn't exactly right according to Robert Chiholm. “Manoah's response in verse 17 begins in an awkward fashion, reading literally, “Who your name?” One expects him to say, “What is your name?” but he uses the wrong pronouns. Perhaps he started to say, “Who are you?”

It is obvious, Manoah is trying to find out who this “man” of God is. Perhaps this would make sense if we punctuated it differently: “Who?” “Name” with the verbs being assumed. Just like the Angel of the Lord responded with “I” when asked if He was the man that visited the woman previously. No verb. So here, perhaps. “Who (are you)?” “(What is) your name?”

**Judges 13:18 But the angel of the Lord said to him, “Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?”**



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Wonderful. This is a possible translation. But here is another ambiguity. It can mean wonderful, awesome. But some commentators are quick to say it is “incomprehensible.” You wouldn’t understand. If we understand His name from the Torah, then it is “Yahweh.” But this is so awesome that Manoah might have had a heart attack. Instead, he allows them to figure this out on their own. Their reaction is dramatic as it is, but they didn’t die.

In two weeks, I’ll go back and start with verse 16. I need to review what a burnt offering is and what it represents. It is not mentioned merely as window dressing.