

Judges 13

December 15, 2011

The cycle of Judges presents itself once again:

Disobedience, Discipline, Despair and Deliverance

Sin, Sentence, Supplication, Salvation

"In chs. 13- 18, the author concentrates on the tribe of Dan, one of the largest and most prominent tribes during the desert march (Nu 2: 25- 31). In the period of the judges, however, Dan seemed helpless against the Amorites (1: 34) and moved northward to find new territory (chs. 17- 18). Contrasted with these failures are the exploits of Samson. Yet his own life was a strange mixture of the strength and weakness that epitomized the tragic conditions within the tribe itself." – Expositor's

"It is a riddle wrapped up in a mystery inside an enigma." In a speech broadcast October 1, 1939, that's how Sir Winston Churchill described the actions of the Russians in his day. But what he said about Russian actions could be applied to Samson, the last of the judges, for his behavior is "a riddle wrapped up in a mystery inside an enigma." Samson was unpredictable and undependable because he was double-minded, and "a double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). It has well been said that "the greatest ability is dependability," and you could depend on Samson to be undependable.

Bold before men, Samson was weak before women and couldn't resist telling them his secrets. Empowered by the Spirit of God, he yielded his body to the appetites of the flesh. Called to declare war on the Philistines, he fraternized with the enemy and even tried to marry a Philistine woman. He fought the Lord's battles by day and disobeyed the Lord's commandments by night. Given the name Samson, which means "sunny," he ended up in the darkness, blinded by the very enemy he was supposed to conquer. Four chapters in the book of judges are devoted to the history of Samson. In judges 13-14, we're introduced to "Sunny" and his parents and we see the light flickering as Samson plays with sin. In judges 15-16, the light goes out and Samson dies a martyr under the ruins of a heathen temple, a sad end to a promising life.'" – Warren W. Wiersbe

As we saw in the case of Jephthah and Gideon, Samson is also mentioned in the "Hall of Faith" - Hebrews 11:32-33 "And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,"

"According to Hebrews 11:32, Samson was a man of faith, but he certainly wasn't a faithful man." – Warren W. Wiersbe

V. 1

As you read the book of Judges, you find that this is the longest sentence the children of Israel experienced...this was the longest period of oppression, this time at the hand of the Philistines.

We see why, there in v. 1, "they did evil in the sight of the LORD" – a phrase we find 7 times in the book of Judges.

Remember the cycle? Disobedience – Discipline – Despair – Deliverance...and God was about to raise up a deliverer in a miraculous way.

V. 2

There was a certain man named Manoah, his name means "rest." He was from the unlikely tribe of Dan, which will be the focus in the book of Judges all the way through chapter 18. We don't know his wife's name, but we do know her heartache...we read right there that she was barren, she had no children.

Most of you know that the culture viewed barrenness as a shame, a sign of Divine disfavor...God must not love me...I don't have any children, they saw it as a reproach.

We read in Genesis 30:23 "And she conceived and bore a son, and (Rachel) said, "God has taken away my reproach.""

We read in Luke 1:25 the words of Elizabeth, ""Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.""

And what we find is that God allows us to go through heartache and hard times so that ultimately He will be glorified through each one of our lives. Everyone would know, the couple that couldn't have kids, has been visited from on high – God has intervened.

It happened with Sarah, and Rebecca, Rachel, Hannah and Elizabeth.

And I think I should say this – every birth is miraculous – and every child has a custom made, destiny to deliver some, someone, somehow.

We just see it a little clearer here...in this family we're focusing on.

V. 3-5

The angel of the LORD appears to the woman - we'll see later that this Being is none other than Jesus. But He tells the woman, I know you've been barren, but I also know you're gonna have a little boy...and he's gonna be special, born to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines...I want him to be a Nazirite to God from the womb.

Now...the Nazirite vow is found in Numbers 6:1-21. The Hebrew word means, consecrated, dedicated, and this vow usually was voluntary and temporary, but for Samson it was to be a mandatory Nazirite vow, for life. One's dedication as a Nazirite was to be symbolized in that they were to completely abstain from the fruit of the vine, such as 'fermented drink' grapes or raisins; Secondly, they could not cut their hair; and thirdly, they could not come near a corpse.

And what we see in Samson is when one is completely called and consecrated and steeply and deeply devoted to God, then that one will receive power from God.

It might also be significant to note that mom was to a part of this vow as well, she was to be careful to hold to the Nazirite vow herself, and raise her son in the same fashion.

Sometimes our kids go the wrong way and we blame it all on them, but a lot of times, they're just doing what they've seen done, they're following in our footsteps after all, we're their greatest influence in the early day...let's consecrate ourselves to Christ...and then our children as well...cause children are beautiful, and they all have the potential to impact the world for Christ.

Warren Wiersbe said, *"Each baby God sends is a gift from God, a new beginning, and carries with it tremendous potential. What a tragedy that we live in a society that sees the unborn baby as a menace instead of a miracle, an intruder instead of an inheritance."*

This woman is so blessed...she finds out that she's going to have a baby!

V. 6-7

She told her husband, Manoah...and I like what Manoah did...a couple of things:

First - He believed her...most of us would probably say, sweetheart, sweetheart, settle down - I think your addiction to fiction is finally getting to you. No, he believed her.

Second - He prayed for wisdom...notice what we read next

V. 8

I've always loved the words of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:27 ""For this child I prayed..."

You parents...have you ever come to that place in your parenting, for whatever reason, it might be your child's disobedience, it might be their destiny, but man you just knew that you needed wisdom from above?

I know I have, and I thank God for his promise, James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

Cause there's the common denominators in parenting all kids, and that's where the word **teach** is rooted in the Scriptures. The Bible being the only authoritative parenting manual, teaching us to **lead** our children, Proverbs 29:15 "...a child left to himself brings shame to his mother." Don't leave em alone, thinking they'll find their way, lead em.

Teaching us to **feed** our children, the Word of God, Deuteronomy 6:6-7 ""And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

Teaching us to **discipline** our children, Proverbs 22:15 "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him."

Teaching us to train our children, Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go."

Making sure we don't frustrate them with injustice or inconsistencies...Ephesians 6:4 "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." Colossians 3:21 "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."

And so much more...but there are those principles of parenting...things that are general, but I also believe there are those things that are unique to every child, things that are more personal...and God will give us wisdom as we pray.

Manoah prayed for information, for confirmation.

V. 9-14

God listened to the voice of Manoah, in that the Angel of the LORD appeared once again, but at this point, He didn't give him many details...He pretty much repeated what He told his wife – no new information at this point – just confirmation.

"Tell your wife to be careful...all that I commanded her let her observe."

And we love our children, and we want the best for them, and we want them to be obedient...but remember, the best thing we can do to bring this to pass, is if we're obedient.

Titus 3:8 "This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men."

We struggle with this sometimes, expecting our children to do as we say, and not as we do...it might be due to the simple fact that we don't realize the origin of the command.

Ahh, it's just a man talking...

Manoah and his wife thought it was just a man of God, so God is going to reveal Himself to this couple;

V. 15-16

Manoah, offers the common courtesy of the culture, the hospitality of a meal for the messenger.

But the Messenger says, "I will not eat your food."

And most commentators say that the Angel of the Lord suggested an offering to the LORD; instead of a meal to feed our flesh, offer up a sacrifice in appreciation for what God is gonna do.

Manoah then said, "that's strange...who are You?"

V. 17-18

His name is **Wonderful**...now where have we heard that before?

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called **Wonderful**, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

The NIV translates this verse, "Why do you ask My Name? It is beyond understanding."

The NET translates this verse, "You should not ask My Name, because you cannot comprehend it."

The same Hebrew word is used in Psalms 139:6 "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.*"

At this point I think they knew there was something different about this being, but they did not know the full extent of it yet...

V. 19-22

When they offered their sacrifice to the LORD, to their absolute amazement the Angel of the LORD to a certain extent, unveils His glory...and I'm not sure if He jumped in the flame...I have feeling He just kind of walked into the flame, unhurt, unscorched glowing with glory...and then just ascends into heaven.

They then knew this was not a man of God.

They then knew this was not **an** angel of the LORD.

They then knew this was **the** Angel of the LORD (capital A)

So does this mean Jesus was an angel; not in the nature of Who He was; He's not a created angel. But He did the same thing some of the angels did in that He was a messenger, He was a helper; this is one of those theophanies seen throughout the OT.

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and went with the children of Israel. He appeared to Joshua, He wrestled with Jacob, we even saw Him appear earlier in the book of Judges to Gideon (chapter 6).

Manoah knew this was God, and he thought he was going to die (v. 22). Manoah knew Exodus 33:20, *"But He said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.'"*

What Manoah didn't know was that God veiled Himself, and did not reveal Himself in His full glory, otherwise he would have died. His wife knew:

V. 23-25

Here we see the **Birth** of Samson and the **Brawn** of Samson.

His name means "Like the sun." He was to be a light, like the sun.

We read in v. 24, that he grew, and the LORD blessed him.

There was something special about Samson.

Warren Wiersbe said, *"While other judges were said to be clothed with God's Spirit (3:10; 6:34; 11:29), only of Samson is it said 'the LORD blessed him' (13:24; see Luke 1:80 and 2:52). The hand of God was on him in a special way."*

We read in v. 25 that the "Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him..."

(Read 14:6, 19: 15:14)

"More than any other judge, Samson was moved by the Spirit of God..." – Expositor's

What was the secret to Samson's strength?

Long hair? No grapes? No dead things?

Not really; those were supposed to be tangible expressions of His complete consecration to God...a consecration that enables people like us to experience God's power.

Unfortunately, and even tragically, Samson's consecration was not complete, He did not remain in that place of absolute surrender...next week, Lord willing, we'll see His weakness:

15:1

Samson was a he-man, with a she-weakness

Women reduced Samson to a crust of bread:

Proverbs 6:26 "For by means of a harlot *A man is reduced* to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life."

Proverbs 7:24 -26 "Now therefore, listen to me, *my children*; Pay attention to the words of my mouth: Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths; For she has cast down many wounded, And all who were slain by her were strong *men*."

This is why we read the word "begin" in v. 5

One last thing:

Samson's name means "like the sun"

And we see similarities in that he's like the Son (a miraculous baby, born to deliver, a Nazarene, upon whom the Spirit moved in a mighty way).

He was like the Son...but he was not the Son.

Our Lord Jesus, God's Son, didn't just begin, isn't it cool...He finished the work!