

## THE BOOK OF JUDGES

### "Samson--Son of Manoah"

Judges 13:1-23

#### Introduction

1. Samson is the 6th major judge and the final one of the 12 involved in this period of Israelite history. He stands along with Gideon as one of the most outstanding. All know about him from childhood. He cannot escape the youngest Sunday School child.
2. Samson served 24 years as a judge in the nation (15:20). This was probably between the two great battles Israel fought with Philistia (Aphek in 1 Sam. 4:1-11 and Mizpeh in 1 Sam. 7:7-13). Since the Philistine pressure was on for 40 years, it is likely that Samson came on the scene in the middle of this 40 year period.
3. The coming of Samson to Israelite life was a token of concern by the Lord. He was somewhat of a counter balance to the oppression of the enemy. The Philistines were descendants of Ham (Gen. 10:4) and had grown to a sizeable nation in the coastal plain of the south (Josh. 13:3). They had penetrated as far north as Shiloh in Israel and held a virtual monopoly on smelting iron (1 Sam. 13:19-22). They were prosperous, strong, and in control. Now the Lord intervenes for Israel and raises up Samson to counter the situation. This is what He had promised to do (2:16-19).
4. Here are four outstanding features of Samson's early life. Together they indicate his preparation by God for a ministry unique to himself. This is true of each person. God has His special purpose for our lives. Study:

#### 1. HIS BIRTH--announced vv. 1-7.

Samson joins others in the Bible who had an announcement of their birth. There was Isaac (Gen. 18:9-15) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-20) beside the testimony concerning our Lord (Matt. 1:18-25). But the word came to an unnamed mother, the wife of Manoah, a Danite. His birth, therefore, rises from a helpless and unknown situation. God takes such and makes His own Name glorious! The announcement included directions to Samson's mother concerning her own diet. This was not hygienic, but a matter of spiritual concern. It was separation all the way from conception for Samson.

#### 2. HIS LIFE--separated v. 5.

The whole gamut of Nazarite vow is brought to the lime-light here (cf. Num. 6:1-8). Samson was to be that sort of person. It is a prediction prior to his actual conception.

Two items are included in this: separation from strong drink and no cutting of hair. From the time of his birth this was to be his lot. It may well be that both Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:5) were Nazarites for their entire lives. So important is this feature of his life that it marked the very presence of God with him (16:20). Hence, the outward was merely an indication of inner dedication of life to the Lord. This is the way all outward conformity must be. It is the same type of appeal which God gives in the New Testament (Rom. 12:1, 2). Samson's call to the Nazarite vow was with a view to a special purpose: to begin to deliver Israel. It was not that God would use him alone for the project, but to begin what God would do ultimately at Mizpeh.

3. HIS FATHER--inquired vv. 8, 11, 12, 15, 17.

Manoah was not involved when the original announcement of Samson's birth was made (v. 6). So, he requested a special return of the angel. God granted this request. Amazingly, although Manoah inquired about additional information relating to the child, only the information previously provided to his wife was given. The questions Manoah raised were not answered. He was told his wife must observe all that had been indicated (v. 14). Samson's father, like many among believers, wanted to know more than what God had revealed at the time. For him and for us it is always one step at a time. God works with steps and stops.

4. HIS GOD--concerned vv. 3, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20.

God was concerned about Israel's plight. This is obvious from His intervention to provide Samson. All through the account, God is working. The Angel of the Lord is quite obviously the preincarnate Christ of God. He is named "God" (v. 22). His "name" is from a Hebrew word which means "wonderful" (cf. v. 18, "secret" and Isa. 9:6). Even the manner in which the Angel disappeared shows that He is the Lord Jesus ("wondrously" in v. 19 is the same root as the word "secret" in v. 18). The sacrifice was made "to the Lord" (v. 16). So, sufficient support is given to show that this was no ordinary angel from God. He is the Lord our God pre-incarnately.

Conclusion What does all this mean to a child of God? It serves notice that the Lord is mindful when His own are overrun by Philistines. He does provide help in the time of need (Heb. 4:16). It is inner strength which is more important than outer. Indeed, the latter depends upon the former!