

Judges 13:1-7

Introduction – Over a thousand years before the birth of Jesus, another Angel appeared to another woman. He told her that she would conceive in a miraculous way and give birth to a son. He said that her son would be set apart for the Lord from his birth on, and that he would start to save his people from their enemies. We have learned from our study in Judges, these are not simply coincidences. The background of the birth of Samson is deliberately given to us because it is good news.

The Hand of the Philistines (v1) – The oppression of the Philistines was mentioned in 10:7, but it is in the story of Samson (along with Samuel, and later, David), that we hear of the conflict. Samson is born and raised during these years of oppression.

Something Missing – The Danites lived in great compromise (1:34-36, ch's 17-18). This time, there is no narrative of the people crying out for deliverance. Instead, they are a people seemingly so used to bondage that they do not even call out for relief (15:11). But here is the grace of God. He doesn't wait for us to make the first move. His grace is greater than all of our stupidity and sin. He takes the initiative, even if it requires a miracle.

The Seed of the Woman – The promise to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15) is the promise of salvation from our enemy by the miraculous working of God.

Barren Women – Sara, Rebekah, and Rachel, the three wives of the patriarchs, were all barren. God had to open their wombs. The mothers of the three life-long Nazirites were each barren (Manoah's wife, Hannah, and Elizabeth). We see in these stories, the impossibility of mankind to provide a Savior outside of the miraculous hand of God. We also see the picture of the perfect Nazirite, the Lord Jesus Christ, being born of a 'virtual' barren womb, the womb of a virgin.

The Nazirite (vv 2-7, Numbers 6:1-8) – "nazar" generally means to be separated, consecrated, and can be used as a crown of sorts, signifying the one set apart. Nazirites were like priests, set apart for a particular service for the Lord, either for a particular time, or as we see in some cases, for their entire lives.

The Fruit of the Vine (Num 6:1-4) – The Nazirite was separated from all the produce of the vine, because he has been set apart from a time of rest in order to accomplish some form of holy war. There is no argument to be made from this text about real-committed Christians refraining from alcohol. Wine is for joy (Judges 9:13, Psalm 104:15), and marks fellowship, celebration, and rest. So Jesus instituted the cup as part of our communion sacrament. The Nazirite does not partake of any of the vine – wine, juice, or grapes – for he is representing Israel and is not in a time of rest, until he has finished his vow (Num 6:20).

His Hair (Num 6:5) – The Nazirite's holiness is connected to his long hair. Verse 7 states that "his separation to God is on his head." A man or a woman who takes a Nazirite vow represents the whole nation to God as a bride, one set apart and devoted to her Husband. 'Her' long hair is her glory or crown, and at the end of the time of the vow, he cuts his long hair and offers it up as a sacrifice to God, much as we will take our crowns and cast them before the Lord in heaven (Rev 4:10).

Separated From Death (Num 6:6-8) – Death is the sign of the curse. Under Adam, we are all under this curse, but the Nazirite is to ceremonially separate himself from this sign of uncleanness. He is to be a sign of life and holiness, for God is the God of the living and not of the dead.

Back to 'Our Story' – Manoah's wife is to keep the Nazirite vow herself, until the child is born, for her son has been consecrated to the Lord from the womb. Here is more proof from the scriptures that an unborn child is a living person, a person who can even be in relationship with his mother and with God.

The Promise – "he shall begin to deliver Israel." (v5). By his life and by his death, Samson will begin a process of deliverance. But it will take Samuel and finally David before the Philistines would be completely crushed.

Conclusions and Rejoicings – Some things to consider.

The Incarnation was not 'Plan B' – Some try to argue that God changed His mind when He realized that the old way wasn't working, so He sent His Son and established a New Covenant. Stories like these show how wrong such thinking was. Samson's conception is a wonderful shadow pointing toward a fulfillment, not a change in plans.

Christ the Nazirite – Jesus came to be the perfect Nazirite, representing His people, saving them, leading them to life fully consecrated to God.

But God – Manoah and his wife could do nothing to alleviate their condition, let alone the condition of their people. But God takes a situation of death and brings life, makes possible the impossible, and uses the simplest of circumstances to bring glory to His name and to His children.

A People of Life – We live in a culture that hates God and reeks of death (Prov 8:32) with our abortions, homosexuality, and a pop-industry that glorifies death. The people of God, however have been marked with the sign of life. We have the gospel of the Nazirite vow – the Lord liberates His people from death and sets us free to live forever with Him.