

## Judges 13:8-25

**Introduction** - As we began the story of Samson, we saw the foreshadowing of Christmas. A savior would be born of a woman in a miraculous way, set apart from birth in consecration to the Lord for holy war. But this chapter also foreshadows Calvary. Bloody offerings, atonement, and the Angel of the Lord Himself, all point to the ultimate Savior who would die for and deliver His people.

**Manoah and His Wife** (vv8-14) - The Lord continues to show His distance with Manoah, even while answering his prayer. This 'savior' will not come in a natural way. In one sense, Manoah has nothing to do with it (although his wife will conceive by Manoah).

**Prayers and Questions** - Manoah wants to know about this boy, what they shall do for him and what his work will be. The Angel of the Lord returns and answers, coming first to the woman, and answering Manoah's questions about the boy (v12) by speaking about the requirements for his mother (v13). God is not going to give Manoah any more details for now. Present obedience will bring future clarity.

**Getting Your Offerings Straight** (vv15-16) - There is a clear contrast in this scene to Gideon in Judges 6. Gideon's offering (a peace offering of sorts) was accepted. But God refuses Manoah's (and thus, Israel's) offer of a meal. Communion, the peace-meal with God, could not occur because in Manoah's day, the people had not cried out to the Lord - there was no peace with God and man (13:1). First, an 'olah' - a whole burnt offering, an ascension offering, must be made. The writer parenthetically tells us that Manoah is not confused regarding the order of offerings (as we might be). Rather, it is only because he did not yet know that this was the Angel of the Lord that he wrongly offers to sit and eat in peace with this Man.

**The Name of God** (vv17-21) - Manoah has another question: What is your name? We do not realize all that we are asking when we ask God for His name, for we do not think of names in these ancient ways. When a person was named, his character was revealed and dominion was claimed over that person. So, we name our children, and Adam named the animals. Dominion could be physical, or, in this case, at least cerebral ("I am able to think of you exhaustively as..."). But the Angel of the Lord says that his name is wonderful (or secret). It is beyond our ability to fully comprehend.

**A Wonderful God Full of Wonders** - The God whose name is "Wonderful" (Is 9:6) did "wondrous things" in the sight of Manoah and his wife. The Angel of the Lord, who is the Lord Himself, ascends in the flame of the offering. Then Manoah knows that he has seen the Lord (v22). What has he seen? A much more revealing picture of what the ascension offering would always point to - the once-for-all sacrifice of the Son of God as an atonement for the sins of His people.

**Fear and Faith in the Wonder of God** (vv22-23) - When God opens eyes to who He is and what He is doing, the result is never simply an ascent to truth. Dull religion (in your heart) betrays your presumptive spirit. Those who realize they have seen God fall on their faces.

**Fear** - Manoah realizes that one cannot be in the presence of God and live. And he is right. And so, every Lord's Day we begin our service confessing our sins and our inability on our own to approach the throne of God.

**Faith** - Manoah's wife, full of faith, responds to her husband. God received our sacrifice. God has shown us His wonders. God has made promises to us. He will not destroy us. We are clean. We can get up and serve Him. And so every Lord's Day we begin our service acknowledging the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the wonders of God, and the promises of our Father in heaven that summon us to worship Him and serve Him with hearts that are rejoicing with trembling.

**One More Similarity in God's Storytelling** (vv24-25) - While so much attention is given to the events surrounding the birth of Samson, after his birth, we learn very little about him until his adult ministry is initiated. We are told that from this point "the Spirit of the Lord began to move upon him..." God's wonders will be displayed not only on behalf of this deliverer, but actually *through* him.

**The Wonders and Secrets of Our Salvation** - The 'wonders' of God are not magic tricks to entertain us. His miraculous wonders are declared each day we hear the gospel again. And those who have ears to hear find themselves full of wonder that -

**God Could Remain Just** - God sent Jesus Christ to be a propitiation by His blood, "*that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*" (Rom 3:26)

**God Remains True to His Word** - His promise to us and for us is from "*before the foundation of the world.*" (Eph 1:4)

**The Serpent Has Fallen and Will be Crushed** - In that work of propitiation, Jesus Christ "*disarmed the principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*" (Col 2:15) Indeed, we are also told that the "*God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.*" (Rom 16:20) In Christ we can stand against the devil.

**The World Will be Saved** - The wonders seen in Judges 13 was not simply a picture of the deliverance of Israel in Manoah's day. For in the end, "*a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues...*" (Rev 7:9-10) will have ascended up with the Angel of the Lord, Jesus our Savior and King.