

Lesson 6 – Judges 13-14

Text: Judges 13-14

Main Characters: God, Manoah, Manoah's wife, Samson, Samson's wife, Philistines, Israelites

Key Passages:

- Judges 13:4-5 – Manoah and his wife were to have a child who was to be a Nazirite from birth.
- Judges 14:6, 19 – Samson was given supernatural strength by God to overcome his foes.

Main Storyline:

After the previous judge died (Abdon), the Israelites once again fell into idolatry and wickedness. The Lord punished them by allowing the Philistines to have dominion over them for 40 years.

During the Philistine dominion, there was a man named Manoah whose wife was barren and had no children. One day, the Angel of the Lord (God) appeared to his wife and told her that she would have a son who would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. However, that son was to be a Nazirite to God for life. That meant that he was not to partake of grapes in any form, nor was he to touch dead bodies or other unclean things, nor was he to cut his hair (note Numbers 6). Manoah's wife was therefore to abstain from grapes and unclean food during her pregnancy for the sake of her son.

Manoah's wife went and told him all that had happened. Manoah prayed to the Lord, asking Him to send the "man of God" again (not realizing he was God, himself). Later, God appeared again to Manoah's wife, who ran quickly to get Manoah so he could see the "man." After speaking unknowingly with God, Manoah took a young goat and offered it as a burnt offering on a rock. As the flames went up, the Angel of the Lord ascended up to Heaven. Instantly, Manoah and his wife realized that they had been speaking with God. Manoah's wife soon had a son whom they named Samson.

After he'd grown up, Samson went down to Timnah, a Philistine city. There, he saw a Philistine woman whom he found very attractive. He went to his father and mother and instructed them to get her for him to be his wife (as it was the custom for parents to arrange their children's marriages). Manoah and his wife tried to convince Samson to marry an Israelite instead, but Samson insisted on the Philistine. No one knew, but God planned to use this situation to begin saving the Israelites.

Once they arrived at Timnah, Samson went off by himself to the vineyards there where he found himself face to face with a lion. The Spirit of God came upon Samson, instilling him with supernatural strength and allowing him to tear apart the lion easily. He did not tell anyone about it. Later, he revisited the vineyards and found that some bees had nested in the lion. He took some of their honey, ate it, and shared it with his parents (but did not tell them where he had gotten it).

At his wedding banquet (which was a multi-day event), Samson used the event to tell a riddle and make a wager with his Philistine companions. They could not figure it out, so they told Samson's new wife that they would kill her and her family if she did not find out the answer from Samson and tell it to them. She begged Samson to reveal the answer to his riddle (not revealing their threat) until Samson finally gave in. When the companions told Samson the correct answer, he became enraged because he knew they had found out from his wife. He went out and killed 30 Philistines and took their clothes in order to pay off the wager before immediately going home without his wife. The woman's father, figuring Samson did not want her, decided to give her to Samson's "best man" instead.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) God can bring hope even in the most hopeless situations (Ephesians 2:11ff).
- 2.) Godless, impulsive decisions can easily lead to long-term undesirable consequences (Joshua 9).
- 3.) God is the one true source of our strength; without Him, we are nothing (Exodus 15:2).