

Sunday Night Message

October 28, 2018

Judges 13 – *The Birth of Samson*

Series – *Judges*

Text – Judges 13

Introduction (v. 1)

Chapters 13 – 16 in the Book of Judges deal with Samson.

In Judges thirteen, we fast forward forty years from the time of Jephthah through the times of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon who corporately judged Israel for twenty-five years. In verse 1, we find Israel in trouble again, repeating the familiar Judges pattern, doing evil in the sight of the Lord, and receiving the consequences of their actions.

Practical Point – If God’s people stayed right with Him, they would not have had to deal with these perilous times of enemy oppression. I fear America is heading into a time of enemy oppression. Perhaps not from an invading army, but an increasingly anti-God ideology.

This time it is the Philistines that are giving them trouble. The Philistines hailed from the southeastern border of Israel. There are five cities associated with the country of the Philistines, which you will see as you study the Bible from time to time in the Old Testament. They are Gath, Ekron, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza. (See map)

According to Wiersbe, “the Philistines were among the “sea people” who, in the twelfth century B.C., migrated from an area of Greece to the coastal plain of Canaan.”¹ Israel failed to drive them out of the land in the time of Joshua:

“Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri,” (Joshua 13:1-2)

Dr. Leon Wood dates the beginning of the Philistine oppression about 1095 B.C. and the end in 1055 B.C. with Israel’s victory at Mizpeh (1 Sam. 7). About the middle of this period occurred the battle of Aphek when Israel was ignominiously defeated by the Philistines and lost the ark and three priests (1 Sam. 4). Dr. Wood suggests that Samson’s judgeship started about the time of the tragedy at Aphek and that his main job was to harass the Philistines and keep them from successfully overrunning the land and menacing the people.²

Two things are significantly unique regarding the judgeship of Samson:

1. There is no evidence that the Philistines cried unto the Lord for deliverance. It appears that Israel just wanted to maintain the status quo, and not rock the boat.
2. Samson does not completely drive out the Philistines.

Chapter 13 introduces us to the parents of Samson, and show us his miraculous birth. Samson’s dad’s name was Manoah, but his mother is not specifically named. The Jewish Talmud states that Samson’s mother was the Hazalelponi, the Zorathite, mentioned in 1 Chronicles 4:3.

I The Angel of the Lord Appears to Manoah’s Wife (vs. 2 – 5)

Manoah and his wife were from the tribe of Dan and lived in the town of Zorah, which was near to the border of the Philistines in the Shephela (or low country) - the land between the hill country and the coastal plain.

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1994). *Be Available* (p. 104). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² *ibid.*

Because of their close proximity to the enemy, the people in the border towns would naturally receive the brunt of the Philistine oppression. (See Map)

Manoah's wife was barren, which means that she could not have children. In Bible days, being barren was seen as being a judgement from God, and an embarrassment in the eyes of people. God was about to do something miraculous with Manoah's wife as He did with Sarah (Genesis 21), and as He will do later in the Bible with Hannah (1 Samuel 1:19), and Elizabeth (Luke 1:24 – 25).

"For with God nothing shall be impossible." (Luke 1:37)

In verse 3, the Angel of the Lord appears to Manoah's wife. (the following notes on the Angel of the Lord are from our study of Judges 2)

The Angel of the Lord is believed by many to be a theophany (an appearance of God), or perhaps, a Christophany (a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ). At the very least, this Angel is a spokesman for God – God is speaking through him. We saw "the Captain of the Lord's host" in our study of Joshua (Joshua 5:13 – 15), and in that passage we talked about some of the other pre-incarnate appearances of Christ. We also studied "the Angel of the Lord" recently in our series of messages from Zechariah. The Angel of the Lord appears throughout the Old Testament and even in the New Testament.

Notes concerning the Angel of the Lord from Bible Doctrines Notes:

Many commentators would claim that the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is known as a Christophany or a Theophany:

- 1.) Appearance to Hagar: Proclamation (Genesis 16:7-14)
- 2.) Appearance to Abraham: Proclamation (Genesis 18:1; 22:11-13)
- 3.) Appearance to Jacob: Proclamation (Genesis 28:13; 32:24-32; 48:16)
- 4.) Appearance to Moses: Proclamation (Exodus 3:2-6; 23:20; 33:18-23)
- 5.) Appearance as Pillar of Cloud/ Fire: Protection (Exodus 14:19-21)
- 6.) Appearance to Joshua: Proclamation (Joshua 5:13-15)
- 7.) Appearance to Balaam: Punishment (Numbers 22:22-35)
- 8.) Appearance to Gideon: Proclamation (Judges 6:11-24)
- 9.) Appearance to Manoah: Proclamation (Judges 13:2-23)
- 10.) Appearance to David: Punishment (I Chronicles 21:15-18)
- 11.) Appearance to Elijah: Proclamation (I Kings 19:5-8)
- 12.) Appearance to the Assyrian Army: Power (II Kings 19:35)
- 13.) Appearance to Isaiah: Proclamation (Isaiah 6:1-13)
- 14.) Appearance to the Three Hebrew Children: Protection (Daniel 3:25)
- 15.) Appearance to Daniel: Protection (Daniel 6:22; 7:9-14)
- 16.) Appearance to Zechariah: Protection (Zechariah 1:8-13; 2:8-11; 3:10)

The problem with this theory is that the Angel of the Lord also appears in the New Testament:

"But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 1:20)

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." (Matthew 2:13)

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid." (Luke 2:9)

See Also Acts 5:19; 8:26; 12:7; 12:23

There are two other appearances of this angel in Judges (2:1; 13:3 – 23 in connection with Samson)

The angel tells Manoah's wife that she will bear a son.

In verses 4 and 5, the angel gives Manoah's wife strict instructions regarding the fact that Samson would be a Nazarite from the womb. Typically, people would become Nazarites through a vow that they would make, and it was usually for a temporary period of time. (See Numbers 6)

A person taking the vow of a Nazarite was declaring that he would be separating himself from sin and unto the Lord.

According to Manners and Customs of the Bible:

This institution was a symbol of a life devoted to God and separated from all sin—a holy life (Numbers 6:2–21). The vow of a Nazarite involved these three things.

1. Abstinance from wine and strong drink.
2. Refraining from cutting their hair during the whole period of the continuance of the vow.
3. Avoidance of contact with the dead.

When the period of the continuance of the vow came to an end, the Nazarite had to present himself at the door of the sanctuary with three things.

1. A male lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering.
2. A ewe lamb of the first year for a sin-offering.
3. A ram for a peace-offering.

After these sacrifices were offered by the priest, the Nazarite cut off his hair at the door and threw it into the fire under the peace-offering.

As to the duration of a Nazarite's vow, everyone was left at liberty to fix his own time. There is mention made in the Scriptures of only three who were Nazarites for life, Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist (Judges 13:4, 5; 1 Samuel 1:11, Luke 1:15). In its ordinary form, however, the Nazarite's vow lasted only thirty and, at most, one hundred, days.³

II The Lord Answers Manoah's Prayer (vs. 6 – 10)

Manoah tells her husband about the angel, and relayed to him the message from the angel, but Manoah wants to hear it for himself, and prays to the Lord for the "man of God" to come back. It is important to note that Manoah seems to have believed the word of his wife. Though neither she nor he understood who their mysterious visitor was, they both believed that he was from God. The Lord answers Manoah's prayer because a couple of days later the angel once again appears to Manoah's wife, and she runs to get her husband.

III Manoah Asks the Angel Questions (vs. 11 – 18)

- A. Are you the man that appeared to my wife?
- B. How shall we order the child and how shall we do unto him?

³ Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). *Manners & Customs of the Bible* (pp. 533–535). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God." (Psalm 50:23)

Here the angel repeats what he said to Manoah's wife, and reemphasizes that they need to follow his instructions regarding being a Nazarite.

C. What is thy name?

The angel refuses to answer the question because his name is secret or wonderful.

Manoah offers to make the angel some food, but the angel refuses. He tells Manoah to offer a burnt offering to the Lord.

IV The Angel Ascends into the Fire (vs. 19 – 21)

When Manoah offers the burnt offering, the angel ascends into the flame. At this point there is no doubt that this visitor is a spiritual being. Verse 21 states that they knew that he was "an angel of the Lord." The fact that they bowed down before the angel as he ascended into the flame, along with the statement made in v. 22, is used by some as proof that this angel is a Christophany (or Theophany). However, it could be that this angel, as the messenger of God, not only speaks on behalf of God, but also receives worship as a conduit to God.

V The Arrival of Samson (vs. 22 – 25)

Manoah thought they would both die because they believed that they had seen God:

"And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." (Exodus 33:20)

Manoah's wife assures Manoah that God had received their offering, and had told them about their child, and would surely not kill them.

Note - It seems that Manoah's wife was more in tune with God. It was her that the angel appeared to initially, and even the second time.

Practical Point – Though the men are supposed to be the spiritual leaders of the home, it is often the wife that is more surrendered to the Lord.

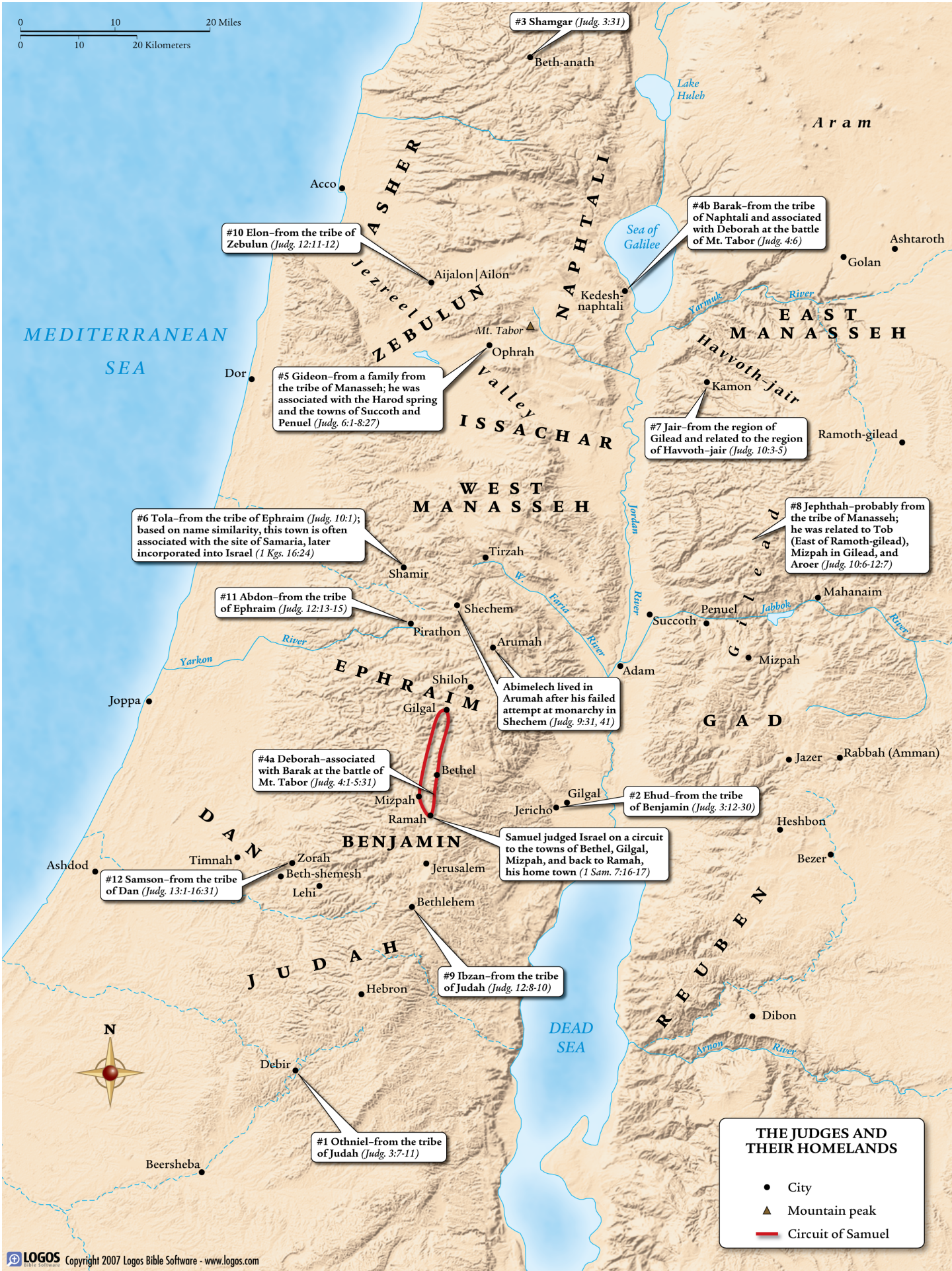
Verses 24 and 25 tell us that Samson was born and the Spirit of God began to move him at times in the area around Dan. The name, "Samson" means "like the sun."

Conclusion

If all we knew about Samson was from chapter 13, the story would end well. There was arguably no other man in the Scriptures that had the potential that Samson had. What a beginning. Unfortunately, he will go from being a hero to a zero. We will see in the coming chapters that although Samson had his moments of strength and greatness, he was often controlled by his flesh. Regrettably, though he was moved by the Spirit at times, he walked most of his life in the flesh. Notice that the Spirit of God "began to move him at times," not all of the time. Samson started out well – he began well, but he finished poorly.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:16-25)





0 10 20 Miles
0 10 20 Kilometers

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

#3 Shamgar (Judg. 3:31)

Beth-anath

Lake Huleh

Aram

#10 Elon—from the tribe of Zebulun (Judg. 12:11-12)

Acco

ASHER

Aijalon|Ailon

NAPHTALI

#4b Barak—from the tribe of Naphtali and associated with Deborah at the battle of Mt. Tabor (Judg. 4:6)

Ashtaroth

Golan

JEZREELUN

Mt. Tabor

Ophrah

#5 Gideon—from a family from the tribe of Manasseh; he was associated with the Harod spring and the towns of Succoth and Penuel (Judg. 6:1-8:27)

ISSACHAR

#7 Jair—from the region of Gilead and related to the region of Havvoth-jair (Judg. 10:3-5)

Havvoth-jair

Ramoth-gilead

WEST MANASSEH

#6 Tola—from the tribe of Ephraim (Judg. 10:1); based on name similarity, this town is often associated with the site of Samaria, later incorporated into Israel (1 Kgs. 16:24)

Shamir

Tirzah

#8 Jephthah—probably from the tribe of Manasseh; he was related to Tob (East of Ramoth-gilead), Mizpah in Gilead, and Aroer (Judg. 10:6-12:7)

#11 Abdon—from the tribe of Ephraim (Judg. 12:13-15)

Shechem

Pirathon

#7 Jair—from the region of Gilead and related to the region of Havvoth-jair (Judg. 10:3-5)

Penuel

Succoth

Mahanaim

Yarkon River

EPHRAIM

Shiloh

Gilgal

Abimelech lived in Arumah after his failed attempt at monarchy in Shechem (Judg. 9:31, 41)

Arumah

Adam

Mizpah

GAD

Joppa

#4a Deborah—associated with Barak at the battle of Mt. Tabor (Judg. 4:1-5:31)

Bethel

#2 Ehud—from the tribe of Benjamin (Judg. 3:12-30)

Jericho

Gilgal

Samuel judged Israel on a circuit to the towns of Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and back to Ramah, his home town (1 Sam. 7:16-17)

Ramah

Jazer

Rabbah (Amman)

DAN

BENJAMIN

Ashdod

Timnah

Zorah

Beth-shemesh

Lehi

Jerusalem

Heshbon

Bezer

#12 Samson—from the tribe of Dan (Judg. 13:1-16:31)

Beth-shemesh

Lehi

Bethlehem

JUDAH

#9 Ibzan—from the tribe of Judah (Judg. 12:8-10)

Hebron

REUBEN

Dibon



Beersheba

#1 Othniel—from the tribe of Judah (Judg. 3:7-11)

Debir

DEAD SEA

THE JUDGES AND THEIR HOMELANDS

- City
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Circuit of Samuel