

Samson Part 1

Prior to the period of the Judges, Israel was led by first Moses and then Joshua. After them a new generation grew up and went off the rails. God used the surrounding nations to invade and overrun Israel and they came back into line, then God raised up a judge hero to rescue them.

Judges 13 to 16. But first read Hebrews 11:12. Read the story of Samson and you think he's a Bible loser, a prototype suicide bomber but just maybe he's more than that.

Genesis 26:8 1st mention of Philistines. Isaac meets Abimelech.

Exodus 13:17 Israel skirts around the Philistines to avoid war.

Judges 3:1-3 Lands left to test Israel. Verse 31 Shamgar.

Start of story Judges 13:1 - That first verse is important. God had used the Philistines to wreak punishment upon a nation that had clearly failed His test. Our story starts 20 years into that occupation.

Manoah and his wife. Same as Sarah, Rachel, Hannah and Elizabeth; the wife's infertile but the couple craved a child.

Angel appears with a message from God.

Look at the Nazirite vow. Numbers 6:1-10. Nazirite vow is not normally what a parent would implement, it was for the individual to take to consecrate him or herself to God and it could be time limited. Yet in the Bible there's one person who took that vow and just three who were appointed by parents or God to live that life. Who were the others? Acts 18:18, 1 Samuel 1:11 & Luke 1:15.

Wife gets a visit from a man with a 'lovely complexion' and gives her a promise and an instruction. She can barely take it in, she relates some of it to Manoah but he wants to hear it for himself and prays for a second visit and receives it. This time Manoah gets more detail. He invites his guest to stay for tea, he declines and instructs Manoah to offer a sacrifice. Note, Manoah was from the tribe of Dan not a Levite. Question: is God bound by His own law?

Guest jumps onto the sacrifice and disappeared in a puff of smoke.

Manoah fears instant death but realises that's not going to happen. Why did he think that? Other similar examples eg: shepherds at Jesus's birth.

Look carefully at verses 24 - 25. Samson was blessed and God's Spirit 'moved upon him'. We're told where but not when or what age Samson was when God's Spirit moved on him.

Lessons so far -

Manoah's wife's infertility. What does that tell us about asking and having to wait? Luke 18:1-8, parable of the unjust judge, but subject to the warning in James 4:2-3.

This is a guy with promise, clearly loved by his parents, brought up well to know and love

God and blessed by God. Manoah was a righteous man in an unrighteous age. Great potential but does Samson fulfil his potential?