

## Old Testament Stories

### "Samson" (Part 1)

Judges 13

☞ What would you like to praise God for today?

☞ Pray for God's guidance as you study

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

<sup>2</sup> A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. <sup>3</sup> The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. <sup>4</sup> Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. <sup>5</sup> You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

<sup>6</sup> Then the woman went to her husband and told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name. <sup>7</sup> But he said to me, 'You will become pregnant and have a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from the womb until the day of his death.'"

<sup>8</sup> Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "Pardon your servant, Lord. I beg you to let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."

<sup>9</sup> God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her. <sup>10</sup> The woman hurried to tell her husband, "He's here! The man who appeared to me the other day!"

<sup>11</sup> Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, "Are you the man who talked to my wife?"

"I am," he said.

<sup>12</sup> So Manoah asked him, "When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs the boy's life and work?"

<sup>13</sup> The angel of the LORD answered, "Your wife must do all that I have told her. <sup>14</sup> She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her."

<sup>15</sup> Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you."

<sup>16</sup> The angel of the LORD replied, "Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD." (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the LORD.)

<sup>17</sup> Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?"

<sup>18</sup> He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>19</sup> Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: <sup>20</sup> As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. <sup>21</sup> When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD.

<sup>22</sup> "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!"

<sup>23</sup> But his wife answered, "If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this."

<sup>24</sup> The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him, <sup>25</sup> and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

1. Fill in the blanks: "I was born in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) to \_\_\_\_\_ (mom) and \_\_\_\_\_ (dad). My favorite childhood game to play was \_\_\_\_\_. One thing that sets me apart from other people is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Manoah and his wife were childless. God appears to them with the news that they would become parents. Why might God have given this childless couple a special child?

- A. To deliver Israel from the Philistines
- B. Because God felt sorry for them
- C. Because God loved them
- D. Because of their faith in Him
- E. Because He thought they would be good parents
- F. All of the above

Have you had a time when you felt God intervened in your life in a supernatural way? Share.

3. What parallels do you see between Samson's birth and that of Isaac, Samuel, John the Baptist and Jesus?

**Isaac** Gen.18:9-15;21:1-7

**Samson** Judges 13:1-24

Similarities:

Similarities:

Differences:

Differences:

**Samuel** 1 Samuel 1:1--28

**John the Baptist** Luke 1:5--25

Similarities:

Similarities:

Differences:

Differences:

**Jesus** Luke 1:26—38; 2:1-40

Similarities:

Differences:

4. What three vows does the Nazirite make in Numbers 6:1-21? (Samson will break all three)

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the purpose of this separation and abstinence? Is it to be temporary or life long?

6. How do you attempt to separate yourself from the world and set yourself apart to God? John 17:13-19

**Prayer:** For one another

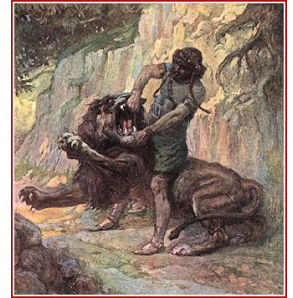
## LIFE GROUPS

*A safe place to build friendships and grow spiritually.*

- L ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
- I ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
- F ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
- E ♦ Evangelism..... reaching others with the hope of Christ

## DID YOU KNOW?

There are few heartaches deeper than that of a wayward child. Often the degree of separation and hurt can seem unbridgeable. No doubt Samson's parents experienced all this and more as they watched their God-given, God-dedicated son go astray.



The Bible offers several such stories; others written between the lines. Consider Adam and Eve who lost two sons in one day – Abel, murdered by his brother; and Cain the murderer who forevermore wandered from home. No wonder they considered Seth a “gift from God”. But it doesn't mean they didn't grieve over their other two sons.

In 2 Samuel 15-18 we read of the rocky relationship King David had with his son Absalom. To be fair, David made some parenting mistakes. But how could he have foreseen Absalom's attempt to displace his father? Events are set in motion. In 2 Sam. 18:33 we can almost *feel* David's grief as he cries out, “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I could have died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son.”

Of course there is the better ending to Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-31). If you don't recall, Jesus told of a father with two sons. The responsible one was content to stay at home and work beside his father. The other son asked for his inheritance early and went off to a far country. There he lived in selfish rebellion until broken by his circumstances. In desperation, he returned home. This is the part of the story that we all enjoy – the passionate reunion between the father and the wayward son. It is the reunion we secretly hope for in our estranged relationships.

Some parents have claimed Proverbs 22:6 as God's guarantee that all wayward children will eventually straighten up and fly right. However, the story of Samson, Cain, and Absalom all ended without that hoped for reunion. Grief is the risky part of loving. And love means giving those we care about the freedom to disappoint.

What the story of the Prodigal Son shows that God understands. He is not called “our Father” flippantly. Probably no other relationship teaches us more about God than the parent-child relationship. He knows what it is like to love the wayward.

Secondly, God's Spirit can touch the heart beyond my reach. Psalm 139:7-12 reminds us that we (nor our children) can *EVER* outdistance ourselves from God. He created us. He has a plan for us. He is ever working to bring us into compliance with His perfect will for our individual lives.

As a Father, God knows what is best for us and our children. He is unconditional love. He is all power and wisdom restrained by grace. As a parent, this-- God's mighty grace -- is my perfect resting place.