

Judges 13:1-14–The Church Needed A Strong Leader

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: No one should doubt that we live at a time of weak leadership in the kingdom – in the home, church, and state. So we need strong leadership. But our situation is not unique. This was what it was like during much of the time of the judges. Today you will learn why and how Israel got strong leaders.

Our headings are:

Israel's Great Need for a Savior

God's Sovereign Provision of the Savior

Man's Responsibility toward the Savior

Our goals are: **That you will see the need to gain and develop strong leaders for God's covenant people, leaders who will lead and protect God's covenant people from their complacency and self-indulgence.**

Israel's Great Need for a Savior

1 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

1. Israel had about 30 years of peace while the last 4 judges ruled. Prior to that, they had suffered for 18 years under the Ammonites.

You would think they would have learned their lesson and not become complacent 自满 again. But instead of learning from their mistakes, as wise believers would, they suffered spiritual amnesia and chose to use their freedom as an excuse to sin. So God led them do what they wanted. But he **also let the Philistines do what they wanted**: capture and control Israel. God graciously did not let the Philistines take over all at once. (They started attacking Israel during the last of the 4 judges. But instead of seeing the coming danger, Israel stayed like the foolish frog in the water 像水中的青蛙愚蠢, even as the temperature is turned up. Israel soon started to boil in the heat of God's anger!

2. Their period of suffering under the Philistines was excruciating 难以忍受 -40 years. Secular history 世俗历史

records this. These were one of the worst enemies of Israel and they posed 构成 a greater threat as they were nearby.

3. What a shame this was for Israel. God had previously warned them against going through the Philistine territory 领土

± when Israel left Egypt to go to Canaan. He made them take the much longer way to avoid these war-loving, idol worshiping, and neighbor terrorizing nation. But now he left Israel exposed to these wicked elements so they would realize their great need for the comforting 欣慰的 care of their God.

4. Lessons:

a. It is easy to fall into sin when there is a life of ease. Compromise kills. Consider how Christians care less about worship today so they change it to fit the desires of the youths. Consider how Christians routinely kill their children by abortion or by exposing them to gross wickedness in movies, schools, internet, and foolish friends. Consider how Christians have compromised in politics and vote for the one who will give them more. Will God bless you for long?

b. See how God sometimes leaves us to suffer so we could come to our senses. See why God has allowed the attacks that have come upon the church in recent times. See how now the US government wants to use church to advance teaching about global warming. They have pushed the churches from tolerance, to acceptance, to pushing for support for their ideas. The church should be the prophet to the state, not the other way around.

c. Do you see why we need strong leaders to confront sin in the home, church and state? We sell ourselves into slavery. Today we are slave to creature comforts and we abandon kingdom work.

God's Sovereign Provision of the Savior

2 Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was **Manoah**; and his wife was barren and had no children.

1. God chose Manoah, a man from the tribe of Dan, the most northern tribe, to provide a savior of Israel. (By choosing leaders from all over Israel, God was showing Israel that there was no man from any part of Israel who was able to give them lasting peace.) Manoah means "rest." It was an ironic name, as Israel was in the state of unrest 动荡. Then **God chose Manoah's wife, a barren woman to provide a Deliverer for Israel.**

In doing this, God was teaching them that he was the means by which life and deliverance would come. Human strength was gone. They needed help and only God could provide it. This was the case with Abram and Sarah also. New life came from God alone. Their help was in God alone.

3 And the **Angel of the LORD** appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

2. Then God sent a Messenger to Manoah's wife and told her of God' provision of a Savior for Israel; she would have a son. But before he said anything to her, he reminded her that she was barren. He wanted to make sure that she, her husband, and **her son would give God the credit** when he would deliver Israel.

3. But who was this Angel of the Lord who spoke to her? The Lord Jesus. Jesus can rightly be called an angel because he was sent by his Father to bring this news. (Angel simply means "messenger," so they could be created beings, or an uncreated being like Jesus.) Look at verse 18 for a clue 线索.

Judges 13:18 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is **wonderful?**"

"Wonderful" was Jesus' name.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. **And His name will be called Wonderful**, Counselor, Mighty God...

Later, Manoah later **prayed to the Angel**, asking him to make his words come true. We only pray to God.

4 "Now therefore, please be careful **not to drink wine or similar drink**, and **not to eat anything unclean**. 5 "For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And **no razor shall come upon his head**, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and **he shall begin to deliver Israel** out of the hand of the Philistines."

5. Jesus gave direction of how she was to raise this son who would begin to deliverer 拯救 of Israel from the Philistines.

This work of deliverance would be completed through Eli, Samuel, Saul, and ultimately, David.

a. Manoah's wife was not to drink any wine or eat anything unclean. The reason for this is that the child would be a Nazirite and would not be permitted to drink alcohol or to eat anything unclean.

Numbers 6:3 `he shall separate himself from wine and *similar* drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from *similar* drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. 4 `All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.

God did not want even the hint of alcohol (or unclean foods) to go to the baby in the uterus 子宫 or through the mother's milk when he was born. This was done to picture how pure the baby had to be.

b. He was not to be shaved or have his hair clipped 修剪. Long hair was a picture of authority. This is why when a woman's husband died in war and she was captured, her head was shaved to show her husband's authority was gone.

c. While Nazirites were only Nazirites for a time, this baby would be a Nazirite for life. He would be wholly committed to serve as deliverer of his people, even to death.

6. Lessons.

a. This baby pictured Jesus Christ, the Savior of his people, though he would save them from a far greater enemy.

Isaiah 63:5 I looked, **but there was no one to help**, And I wondered That *there was* no one to uphold; Therefore **My own arm brought salvation for Me**; And My own fury, it sustained Me.

Matthew 1:21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will **save His people from their sins.**"

And **just as Samson was a picture of physical cleanness of body until he died, Christ was perfectly pure from all in his body and spirit** until he died. He never sinned!

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, **yet without sin.**

b. While you were like Manoah and his wife and had no ground for deliverance (you were spiritually barren and had no rest), **yet Jesus, your Redeemer, fought your enemies**, won, and credited you his success.

c. Pray that God will raise up more godly leaders who would help preserve what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

6 So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "**A Man of God** came to me, and His countenance 面容 was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; **but I did not ask Him** where He was from, and **He did not tell me His name.** 7 "And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"

7. The woman then went to her husband and told him of her meeting with this unnamed man and what he had said.

Man's Responsibility to the Savior

8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, "O my Lord, please let the **Man of God** whom You sent **come to us again and teach us** what we shall do for the child who will be born."

1. Manoah heard that the messenger looked like "the" Angel of the Lord, and his faith came alive. He did not doubt that

he was Jesus. Even though it was a bleak time 黯淡的时间 in Israel with hardly any preaching, **he knew God personally**. So he asked God to send back the Messenger to **teach them** how to raise this child who would deliver Israel. He knew that the child had to be raised and trained. He knew that he had a part to play. Take warning!

Isaiah 30:1 "Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD, "**Who take counsel, but not of Me,** And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin;

Further, you will notice that there is not a hint of jealousy from Manoah that he was bypassed for his wife. The work of the kingdom was at hand. **There was no room for fighting in detached parties**. They had to work together.

9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the **Angel of God** came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. 10 Then the woman ran in haste 匆匆 and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the other day has just now appeared to me!" 11 So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?" And He said, "I am." 12 Manoah said, "Now **let Your words come to pass!** What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"

2. God graciously sent back Jesus Christ, but he went back to the woman first. And the woman raced over to get her husband. And he came. This was an honor that Manoah's wife received to meet with Jesus a 2nd time.

Psalms 66:20 Blessed be God, **Who has not turned away my prayer**, Nor His mercy from me! She must have been a remarkably godly woman to have been honored more than her husband. And isn't it true that the angel first appeared to Mary before he appeared to Joseph? A man may be the head, but it doesn't mean he is holy! And to whom did Jesus first appear when deliverance was completed after his resurrection? Women!

3. Manoah the prayed that the Lord's words would come true. And make not mistake about this, it **was a prayer**. This was confirmation that this was the Lord Jesus.

13 So the **Angel of the LORD** said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful.

14 "She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

4. And the Lord repeated what he had said to Manoah's wife and insisted that they do what he said. (Responsibility)

5. Lessons:

a. What a treasure to have a godly wife, one who knows the voice of the Savior and one who listens to the voice of the Savior and passes on that message to her family! So when it is time to get a wife, get a godly wife.

b. Notice how Manoah and his wife were not too big to ask for help. A godly man learns to accept help! Ask of help from the elders or pastor.

c. Look at the care these parents took to make sure that their son would be well prepared to face the challenges ahead! They wanted no doubt about what they were going to do. Do you make the same effort to make sure that your children are ready for the hard times ahead? We have a government in England that charged a preacher for hurting the feelings of a homosexual by quoting Leviticus. We have a city government in the US that tried to pass a law that would force pastors to perform homosexual marriages or lose their tax status. The truth is, careless parents are guilty of parricide 弑父. How can the kingdom be strong if parents and pastors feed their children milk all their lives? How will they get the spiritual muscle to fight against these ever-increasing threats?

d. Be careful that your children are not enamored with the comforts of life and forget the duty to be soldiers for Christ.

Conclusion:

Israel fell into complacency and ended up in slavery. But God, out of love for his covenant people and to keep his promise of sending Messiah, provided by his sovereign will, a Deliverer. Alongside God's provision was the responsibility he placed upon Manoah and his wife to raise up, with his help, the Deliverer of God's people.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: We need leaders, strong leaders who would see the sins around and confront 面对 them. They would need to see that the world is not a playground but a battleground. . . that the world doesn't want to co-exist with Christians but to conquer you. And then train your sons to be strong leaders. Train young men to be elders to lead in the church. Urge them to preach faithfully. So when men go out into the world to conquer it they will have backbones 骨干 for Jesus Christ, not be spineless wimps 无骨气胆小鬼.

Finally, God saves his people even when they fall into sin because they are his people. Are you? If you are not God's child, call upon him today and ask him to become your child. As his child you will have a peace that only he can give. But as his enemy you have a punishment on your head that only he can give!