

Walk in God's Path

Key Verse: *"The woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol."*
—Judges 13:24,25

Selected Scripture:
Judges 13:1-8,24,25

and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing."—Judg. 13:3,4

"For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name."—vss. 5,6

After Manoah's wife had reported her encounter with

AS A RESULT OF ISRAEL'S

continued disobedience to God, the Philistines were permitted to enslave them for a period of forty years. While this oppression was going on, the angel of the LORD appeared unto the wife of Manoah, and indicated that, although she had been barren, she would become the mother of a son. "The angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee,

and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing."—Judg. 13:3,4

the angel of the LORD to her husband, Manoah prayed for another visitation by the angel for further instructions as to the manner in which their son, Samson, should be raised. Again, the angel appeared to the woman. She brought her husband to meet this heavenly visitor, who merely reiterated the information given during his first visit.—vss. 8-14

Manoah then desired to prepare a meal for the angel, who proposed that a burnt offering unto the LORD be made instead. Evidently, Manoah thought the angel was merely a man, but after the sacrifice was made and the angel ascended heavenward in the flame of the altar, Manoah and his wife fell on their faces as an act of reverence.—vss. 15-20

The Key Verse of our lesson records the birth of Samson, and indicates that the LORD blessed him as he grew to maturity in preparation for his role in delivering Israel out of the hands of the Philistines.

Despite Samson's ultimate success in carrying out God's will with regard to Israel's deliverance, there were aspects of his life that would not be appropriate for Christians to emulate, including his involvement with a harlot (chap. 16:1), and his well-known liaison with Delilah.—vss. 4-20

Samson was granted superhuman strength and was able to perform mightily in God's service until he fell asleep on Delilah's lap, had his hair shorn, and was blinded because of his failure to maintain his Nazarite vow.

Similarly, as believers we must not forsake our vows of consecration by allowing the attractions of the world to blind us from keeping our covenant of sacrifice. Let us heed this sage spiritual counsel: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."—Eccles. 5:4,5 ■