

# Samson's Call

**Key Verse:** *"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."*  
—Judges 13:5

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Judges 13:1-25*

**FOR ANY CHILDLESS COUPLE**, the news that they were to have a son would be cause for great rejoicing. Imagine the added excitement to hear that the son would be a deliverer of your nation. Such is the joy expressed in our Key Verse, that the son of Manoah and his wife would grow up to help deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. Thus, God's calling had arranged Samson's destiny before he was conceived.

The oft backslidings of Israel had occasioned another period of oppression. "The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." (Judg. 13:1) Hence, there arose the need for a righteous judge in Israel to deliver them.

God's angel visited the wife of Manoah, and after telling her that she was to soon bear a son, he instructed her in proper prenatal care. "Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son." (vss. 3-5) Our Key Verse continues with the angel saying that her son would be a Nazarite, especially dedicated to God from birth.

The news that she would no longer be barren was thrilling, and she ran to tell Manoah. Upon hearing it, he intreated the Lord, requesting that he might also meet with the messenger. Manoah's prayer was soon answered. The angel returned and confirmed all that his wife had reported. At first, however, Manoah did not understand that he was speaking with God's messenger. He asked him to stay while he prepared a sacrifice to commemorate the joyous occasion.—vss. 6-19

As the sacrifice was consumed, flames ascended to the heavens. Manoah and his wife were startled to see their visitor go into the flame and rise to the heavens as well. (vss. 20,21) Realizing that they had indeed seen an angel sent directly from God, Manoah supposed that they would die as a result. "But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these."—vss. 22,23

The Nazarite vow is outlined in Numbers 6:1-21. It signified a separation unto the work of God, to last for a specific length of time. Samson was called to be a Nazarite for life—from before birth until his death. Although set apart for life to do God's work of deliverance on behalf of Israel, Samson had recognizable faults, as detailed in Judges chapters 14-16. However, the flaws in Samson's character were offset by his strong faith. Despite his human weaknesses, he was used by God in divine service. We are thankful that the Bible provides such an honest portrayal of Samson. By it we are assured that, despite our flaws, God's grace enables us to live a life separated unto him—for here unto were we called. We concur with Paul, who thanked God that, although he served the law of sin with the flesh, "With the mind I . . . serve the law of God."—Rom. 7:25 ■