

Judges 08-07-02a

This is Wednesday, the 2nd of July, 2008. We're meeting a little early due to the 4th of July hitting on Friday this week. We're in the book of Judges, chapter 13, looking at the beginning phases of the story of Samson.

We'll take a moment as we begin to pause and reflect as we go before the Lord in prayer. Father, we are always grateful when we think of the many ways that you bless us and provide for us. We thank you for this portion of your word and the opportunity to study it together.

We pray that this information, though it is many hundreds of years distant from us in its writing and having come down to us through the millennia, will be pertinent, that each of us will find in the scriptures that we study this evening, truth that will motivate us and will encourage us to live the life that you would have us to live. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, this is an interesting way for a judge to begin his career. All of the previous judges have sort of appeared out of nowhere, raised up in a day of trial. Here we have a birth narrative, which typically is a harbinger of great things.

You have the birth narrative of Isaac. You have the birth narrative of Moses. You have the birth narrative of John the Baptist.

You have the birth narrative of the Lord Jesus himself. You have the birth narrative of the prophet Samuel, which will be the next major instance of this kind of thing, chronologically speaking, to come up in the historical record of the Old Testament. So we immediately develop a sense of expectation.

This is out of the ordinary in the book of Judges. If you've been keeping track, we're now up to the 12th judge, and you figure, well, this is probably a significant number for Israel. We immediately, though, begin to see that things are kind of off kilter.

They don't meet the expectation that has been set by previous narratives, such as that of Abraham. And I want to explore that just a little bit before we go forward, because if you think about the setting, when the book of Judges was composed, when it was delivered to Israel as a part of their scriptures, they are steeped in the lore of Genesis. They know these stories backwards and forwards.

Many of the men in Israel have got that entire book memorized. I mean the entire book, genealogies, ages, when they begat, all of it. And so when you tell a story that has similar elements, this is immediately going to hook into, you're going to see eyebrows raised and bells going off in people's heads, so to speak.

Figuratively, of course. And so the first thing we notice is that the children of Israel are doing evil in the sight of the Lord. The Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for 40

years.

And the previous pattern from all the way back in chapter 2, they're not crying out. We noted this last time. They've just accepted the status quo.

Well, life is hard and then you die. We've got Philistines on the one side, we've got the Midianites and people on the other. We've all just got to get along.

Every man is doing what is right in his own eyes. And this ends up being a lot of compromise, a lot of accepting of necessary evils. There's no passion, there's no dedication, there's no real interest in the things of God.

So here's the question. If this is the status, if people are apathetic and indifferent, if they're accepting of their fate and they say, well, okay, we're doing evil, God's put us under judgment and we still really don't care, why is there an intervention by God? Because this is an intervention, isn't it? God interrupts. After 40 years of Philistine oppression, God does something.

And He doesn't do it because someone prayed. He doesn't do it because someone repented. He doesn't do it because there was suddenly a revival.

He doesn't do it because the crisis suddenly got worse. A new set of Philistine kings came in that made the fire seven times hotter. None of that.

God seemingly arbitrarily decides that it is time for something to happen in Israel. And He goes to a place and He goes to a family, to a clan, and to a couple in Israel that reflect no potential whatsoever. In fact, they almost seem to be selected because of their lack of any human qualification.

Now, and we talked about this in some detail just last Friday, and what is the point of that? You say, okay, well, interesting, but so what? If you look around today, you can see, and in recent history, you can see where God has done things. God has made things happen in the history of this country, in the history of other countries. He has brought about the translation of His Word into all kinds of languages.

He has brought missions and missionary efforts all around the world. It is hard to find a place on this planet where the gospel is not available, where the teaching of the Word of God is not available. You have missions like the one we support, Village Ministries International, that are hard at work adding to the theological libraries all over the world.

And it is tempting when you see that God has done a thing to look at the source of it, or look at the cause of it, or look at the means of it, and say, well, there is a legitimate ministry. There is a worthy work. There is something where people must have been doing something right because look at the result.

This story puts a caution on that viewpoint. The standard of evaluating any ministry, the standard of evaluating any church, the standard of evaluating any individual life is not results. Look at this.

Do you think that the birth of Samson, as this divinely enabled deliverer, says anything good about Manoah, or about his wife, or about the tribe of Dan, or the town of Zorah? It doesn't. God does this in spite of all of these things. And we are going to see some things tonight that will underscore and confirm that observation.

It has nothing to do with the people here. God is going to use these people to bring about his will and his result. And at the end of it, nobody is going to be standing there, nobody should be standing there patting themselves on the back and saying, well, you can certainly see why God chose me.

You can certainly see why God blessed this effort because look how faithful. And that is what this contrast sets up. The thing I mentioned at the very beginning, the barrenness of Manoah's wife compared to Sarah, the visitation of the angel of God just as God himself visits Abraham, immediately in an Israelite mind these two things are going to click together.

Somebody gave me, have you seen these little funny looking glass magnetic things? They look like torpedoes or something, and there's two of them, and they're really strongly magnetic, and they're covered in glass or something, and you get them together and they click, and they make this, they just come together and you can hardly get them apart. They're so powerful, it's like a super magnet. And people say, well, they're unbreakable.

Well, mine got broken. So now I've got a bunch of magnetic pieces that stick together in really funny ways. But it just strikes you when you see something that powerful click together, it makes this loud noise.

Well, this is what happened in the mind of an Israelite when they came to this story of the birth of Samson. It immediately clicked in their mind with Abraham and Sarah. You cannot help it.

She's barren. God visits with a message saying, your barren woman here is going to conceive and bear a son, and deliverance is going to come through him just as deliverance is going to come through Isaac. It's inevitable.

It's unavoidable. But as you compare those two stories, there is immediately a contrast. First of all, we know Abraham's wife's name.

We've known it since Genesis chapter 10. And God makes an issue of the names. Starts out being Abram and Sarai, ends up being Abraham and Sarah.

And their names are invested with great meaning. The only name we get in this whole thing is Manoah. And he's not even a central character.

He's sort of a foil. He's the comic relief almost. He's the sidekick.

The two central figures in the story, as we have covered it thus far, are both unnamed. We don't know the lady's name, and we don't know the messenger's name. And even when Manoah asks the messenger's name, he's not given the answer.

God purposely says, look, it's not important. The people involved here, the messenger involved, could this messenger have been Gabriel? Is Gabriel typically the messenger of, hi there lady, you're going to have a baby? I mean, it happens twice in the New Testament. It's Gabriel both times.

Gabriel appears to Zacharias. Gabriel appears to Mary. Gabriel appears to Joseph.

Could this have been Gabriel? It's highly likely. But he purposely doesn't give his name. And that's significant.

Does Abraham immediately know who it is that's visiting him? He does. Well, let's take a look at this. The first thing we see is that the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman.

Everything in this story goes back to Genesis. Even her husband calls her the woman. You wonder, what was her name that everybody calls her the woman? You would think, well, the worst woman's name in the whole Bible is Gomer.

But who knows? This woman had a name, but it's not given. She's just called the woman. The angel of the Lord appeared to the woman.

And when you go back to Genesis, the woman. This is an antithesis. This is a reversal.

This is an upside-down-ism from the first few chapters of Genesis. Because somebody came and spoke to the woman, and the problem resulted. The serpent spoke to Eve when Adam was not around.

The angel of the Lord comes to this woman twice when her husband is not around. You think, well, over in Romans where Paul is talking, he says, Whereas by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin. So the death passed upon all men, for all have sinned.

Whereas by one man, even so, by one man comes the deliverance. Well, here, even as by one woman talking when her husband is not around, now here is a picture of deliverance coming, and the husband is still not around. You think about all of the promises.

Why is Jesus referred to in Genesis as the seed of the woman? I will put enmity, he says to the serpent, between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. Why isn't the human race called his seed, Adam's seed? It's called her seed. Why? Well, it goes back to the Semitic mind.

Remember when they were trying to insult Jesus, and they called him the son of Mary instead of

Bar Yosef? Calling someone the son of their mother was sort of a put down. You don't have the standing in our society. You're a mama's boy, almost literally.

And God says, you are now in a subordinate, subservient kind of position. You get the idea that mankind as the seed of the woman are really all sons of Belial. And so things are not right.

They're not as they should be. They're not according to the divine order and the divine plan. Nothing against women.

Mothers and motherhood and everything, I probably just saved this for Mother's Day and really made a complete issue of myself. But the whole idea here is that there is an expectation. And when God plays against expectation, there's a lesson in it, always.

So he comes to the woman. You would expect a great deliverance, that there would be a man of faith like Abraham. When God came the first time, the first great flash of light in the plight of the human race, post-flood, is God coming to Abraham and saying, get thee up out of thy kindred, out of thy father's house.

Go to the land, I will show you. And he's pitched his tents by the oak trees, and God comes to Abraham. And God tells Abraham that his wife is going to have a son.

And Sarah is the peripheral person on the fringes, creating some static and creating a second dialogue in a subordinate and secondary way, with her laughter and so on. Here, it's just reversed. The angel of the Lord specifically comes to the woman, talks with her, and the husband is the afterthought.

The husband is the second banana. He's the guy that comes in late and doesn't get his questions answered. So, there has been a great devolution.

There has been a great disintegration in the spiritual status that began with Abraham. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now we're down to the most dismal state that Israel has been in. Even in Egypt, when they were in slavery, God made them fruitful and they multiplied.

Here, we're down to the most disrespected tribe in the town of leprosy, with a woman who is barren. And you think, boy, can you find a greater distance from the great faith of Abraham, friend of God, imputed with righteousness, willing to take his son to the mountaintop. Here, we're talking to this woman, who doesn't even have a name.

So, here's this message, and we talked in detail about the specifications. He begins by stating her condition. Now, if you're a woman and you're hoping to have children and you don't, you don't need an angel from heaven to come down and reiterate that fact like you forgot.

Why does the angel of the Lord state this? It is a reflection of the fact that God knows. That God has looked and is fully aware. And this is, in fact, going to be something into which he is going to bring his divine power and he's going to make a change.

So, he comes down and he states something that the woman already knows. It seems like, well, it's superfluous. Why would you come down and tell her that she's barren and has born no children? But when the angel says this to her, this tells her God is fully aware.

God didn't come and send the angel, and the angel says, Whoa, lady, where are your kids? What happened here? How come there's not a bunch of toddlers running around? God knows. God has known. And God has sent this angel into this seemingly hopeless situation.

So hopeless, apparently, the woman hasn't even bothered to pray about it. We have no record that she or her husband sent up any smoke about this, made any appeal. There's no Hannah prayer.

There's no Abraham prayer. Nothing of this nature. God intervenes.

And he states the facts of the current situation and he says, You shall conceive and bear a son. There is no earning or deserving. There is no request.

There is no human element involved in this at all. If you want to talk about the sovereignty of God in its proper context, this is it. God will choose where and when he is going to do certain things, irrespective of people and what they do.

And what this means is, by way of application, again, we need to be careful about looking at places and things where God acts and God produces results and God causes things and his work is manifest and evident and saying, Well, this is a validation and this is an authentication of the means and the way. It's not. There are a lot of wrong-headed, wrong-minded, ill-advised ministries and churches functioning.

People still get saved. People still learn the Word of God. But the fact that people are saved and the fact that people learn doesn't make those ways and means right.

You cannot judge by results. We can have a very happy result in our life. We may make a series of decisions and here's a wonderful blessing.

It doesn't mean our decisions were right. Moses struck the rock and water still came out. It doesn't make striking the rock right.

And Manoah and his wife and the tribe of Dan and the town of Zorah and all the rest of it get no credit for God's sovereign action here. Now, what is the flip side of that coin? And this is an important application. I hope I'm making it clear.

By the same token, you can do everything right. You can dot every I and cross every T. You can observe every yod and every tittle in the Word of God. And the results seem to completely belie any faithfulness on your part.

It looks as though, well, what difference did that make? I don't see any result at all. Don't judge by results. We don't know the results.

Do you think that Manoah or his wife has any concept whatsoever of what Samson is going to be and what Samson is going to do or the larger role that this episode is going to play in the plan and purpose of God? They have not got the first clue. And human observation of circumstantial outcomes is often used, is generally used, to decide whether or not a course of action was correct. Well, did that turn out well? I must have done the right thing.

Did that turn out poorly? I must have done something wrong. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and as people who know the Word of God, we've got to break out of that kind of thinking. John the Baptist fully fulfilled his commission.

He did everything right. He was arrested as a criminal and got his head cut off. That doesn't sound like a really happy outcome to me.

Do not judge by results. Don't judge the lives of others by perceived or observed results. Don't figure, well, you know, they had that coming.

Look at that. Look at that bad outcome. Look at that lack of fruit.

Look at that lack of results. Look at that lack of prosperity. Look at that lack of impact.

Look at that lack of whatever. I knew they were doing something wrong. Look at that.

Danger, danger, warning, warning. The measure with which you measure judgment to others is the measure with which it will be measured to us at the judgment seat of Christ. Don't fall for that satanic kind of thinking.

It is a trap. It is a danger. It leads to torture.

It leads to arrogance. It leads to grudges. It leads to bad blood.

It leads to false conclusions. It leads to injustice. It leads to mental attitude sin.

It leads to resentment. It is one of the worst things that can happen between believers. It is one of Satan's best plays to sow discord among the brethren.

It is one of the seven worst sins. These six things doth the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination to him. Remember that passage? Proud lip, lying tongue, feet that are swift in running to mischief, hands that shed innocent blood, he that sows discord among brethren.

If you look at someone else's life, even if you look at your own life, and decide that things are wrong or things are screwy, and you're basing it on outcomes and you're basing it on fruit that you perceive, watch out. God hates that. It always breeds discord.

And look at this in its positive and in its negative, what it says and what it does not say. God will do things irrespective of us. And God has a plan and a purpose, and the standard of measure is always the promises and the principles and the doctrines of the word of God.

Always, always, always. If you have done your best to make your decisions and live your life in the light of God's word, let the chips fall where they may. Don't second guess outcomes.

Don't go back and say, well, I wonder if I... I mean, we all need to have a healthy review. Do we understand God's word correctly? Are we applying it correctly? This is where fellowship is helpful. This is where spouses talk to each other.

This is where families have times of devotion. This is where couples spend time in prayer and in discussion. This is where wives give their husbands feedback.

We don't have to do this all alone. But, I mean, everybody needs to go back and double check. But don't decide strictly based on how things turn out.

You can't do that. God has a bigger, grander plan at work. Wait until we get to the end of this story of Samson.

And after this great, auspicious beginning, what the ultimate end result is. And we'll see that we will have come full circle with this idea. So the angel comes to her and he says, You're barren, you've born no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

Not according to your faith, let it be done to you or anything else. She is just the means to an end. It says nothing about her husband or anything else.

Now, therefore, please guard yourself. Is what it literally says in Hebrew. This is Shamard.

Keeper to guard. Guard yourself. Not to drink wine or similar drink.

Not to eat anything unclean. This is kind of an overlooked passage. As you know, I don't typically get into a big scriptural debate about abortion.

Whether it's right or whether it's wrong. I think everybody's got to make up their own mind. And the only people that really need to spend a lot of time on that issue are people who are considering having one.

For everybody else, you're looking over the fence at somebody else saying you shouldn't have done that. And the only people who really need to figure out the abortion thing are people who are contemplating it. Those people really need to get things settled in their own mind before they make a decision.

For everybody else, have you got nothing better to think about than worrying about somebody running down to the Ralph Street abortion clinic or something? Go down there with signs. Every year at seminary, they get a big bunch of people down there to go harass everybody going into the family planning clinics. I think, you know, of all of the possible issues, I mean, yes, I understand the murder aspect and everything else.

But let me say this about that. Has anybody ever thought about this passage? The woman is not

a Nazirite. Who's the Nazirite? Say it out loud.

Who's the Nazirite in this passage? Samson. How soon does he have to start abstaining from wine, strong drink, anything that comes from the vine, whether it's the grape or the peel or a raisin or a seed or anything else? Who's abstaining here when the angel tells the woman, don't partake of any of this? Who's the Nazirite? At what point does he become a Nazirite? At what point does he exist to be a Nazirite? It's at the point that he's conceived. Now, I'm just telling you, as soon as he's conceived, he's a Nazirite.

His mother's got to carry the ball on the Nazirite vow until he comes out the womb and until he's old enough to choose his own food and manage his own hairdo. But she is responsible for him being a Nazirite, and it doesn't say, as soon as he's born, don't let him eat any grapes. Don't let him drink any wine.

As far as God's concerned, Samson exists and Samson is a Nazirite at the point that he's conceived. I'm just saying. I'm not on that subject, but I'm just saying.

Think about it. So, you, woman, please be careful. Guard yourself.

Do not drink any wine or similar drink. Do not eat anything unclean. Israelites are not supposed to eat anything unclean anyway, right? Why does he have to tell her this? What is the status of the average Israelite household in this day? Pass the bacon, honey.

Got any clams? Let's have some chowder. They've long since compromised their way, and this tells you something about the household of Manoah. He's no different.

If they were God-fearing, law-abiding Israelites, the angel would never have to say this. Cut out the BLTs. Cut out the seafood here that's unclean.

Do not eat anything unclean. Quit that. Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son.

No razor shall come upon his head. The child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb. From the womb.

In the womb. From the womb. It's all the same in Hebrew.

From the time he's in the womb, he's a Nazirite. When does he arrive in the womb? That's when he's conceived. He's a Nazirite when he appears in the womb.

He is a Nazirite. He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Now, something else I want to take a look at here.

If you look at her reiteration of this message to her husband, first of all, she says, a man of God came to me and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God. If you remember, back in chapter 2 of this book, we were told that the Israelites had forgotten the Lord. And notice she doesn't say the angel of the Lord or a man from the Lord.

She says, of God. Angel of God. Man of God.

Elohim. And it expresses the loss in thinking. They've lost the personal name of God that was given to Moses at the burning bush.

The I Am. Yahweh. Well, he's Elohim.

And this was kind of a common term just as today. The word God can be used for Jupiter or anybody else. That's kind of El and Elohim were used that way in the land of Canaan.

So, she's not even very specific about which God this is. His countenance is like the countenance of the messenger of God or the angel of God. Very awesome.

I did not ask where he was from and he did not tell me his name. He said to me, Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son, drink no wine or similar drink, be anything unclean, the child shall be a Nazarite, to God from the moon to the day of his death. If you lay these two accounts side by side, what the angel actually said and what the woman tells her husband that he said, there are some really important things that come out.

And let me assure you that back in the days when the book of Judges would have been read out loud because people didn't have their own copy, people's minds were very retentive of details. And you would hear a thing and then when you hear this story recounted, the people hearing this would have noticed the things that I'm about to point out. We can see it much easier because we can put the two written accounts side by side.

You can circle or you can put an A and a B and a C next to things. They did this all in their head. But back then, Scripture was in their head.

And verbal, oral communication was so important and people had to remember details accurately because writing was just much less common. So this is not an illegitimate thing to do, to lay these two side by side. That's my point.

It's very legitimate. These additions and omissions would have struck their ear in the same way that the woman saying, we cannot eat of the tree, neither shall we touch it, would have struck their ear hearing the Genesis account. So what's the first thing we notice? He said to me, Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son.

What does she leave out? What was the first statement out of the angel's mouth? You are barren and have born no children. That's the bad news. That's the condition.

That's the hopeless condition into which this good news, in her mind, is coming. She only gives the good news. She doesn't give the bad news.

Is that important? Yes. Why? Think about the gospel as it is preached today. What's the bad news? What's the bad news for which we need the gospel? You are conceived in iniquity and born in sin.

You are in a fallen race. You are condemned. You are without God, without hope in the world, separated from God, destined for hellfire.

That's bad news. That news gets left out in a lot of gospel presentations today, doesn't it? You may be having a good life, but there's a better life. God can bless you even more.

Wouldn't you like to have friends? Wouldn't you like to have a wonderful social life? Come join us. We're happy. We sing.

We'll help you. We've got things that will meet your needs. What happened to hellfire and brimstone, sin and damnation? It's a part of the gospel.

You cannot appreciate the good news if you don't properly acknowledge the bad news. What is the first step in any program that gets you unaddicted? Look in the big book for AA. What's the first thing you have to acknowledge before that program is going to do you any good? I am an alcoholic.

I have a problem and I can't solve it. I need help from someplace outside myself. That is an admission.

It is an acknowledgement. It is an expression of humility. And it is key.

Even in secular programs, you have to bring people to the point of recognizing the problem before they will be able to avail themselves of the solution. The woman, when she goes to her husband, she doesn't talk about the problem. She doesn't reiterate it.

And what does that do? That leaves out God's... Why did the angel mention it? Because that is God's awareness. That is the foundation on which God is building deliverances. Here's a problem.

Why is a deliverer coming to Israel? What was the first verse in this chapter? Israel was doing evil and God was oppressing them by means of the Philistines for 40 years. But the 40 years is up and it is time for deliverance. Have we ever seen 40 years being up and a time for deliverance before? I think so.

We saw it in Exodus. We saw it in the book of Joshua. We saw the beginning of it in Exodus.

We saw the end of it in Joshua. The Pentateuch is the story, primarily, of laying the foundation of the problem and here is God fulfilling His promises in giving His people a land of their own. So, evil in the sight of the Lord.

40 years of deliverance into the hand of the enemy. Into the hand of the unwashed, uncircumcised Philistines. And now it is time for deliverance.

Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saves us. So, it is very significant. It is very emphatic here.

This is why we have the birth narrative. This is why we have the detail. Couldn't you just launch into Samson grabbing a jawbone and slinging Philistines hither and yonder? Why do we have this? Well, it shows us the problem in Israel.

It shows us after these cycles of revival and apathy. Revival and apathy. Revival and apathy.

Now, they're so far down, there is no revival. There's only apathy. And God still delivers.

Because God is God. And He loves us on the basis of who and what He is, not who or what we are. We have no merit.

We have no intrinsic value. It is all of God. It is all of grace.

Our deliverance. Our salvation. You're barren.

You have borne no children. But, you shall conceive and bear a son. She leaves it out.

She leaves out the key element, the first thing out of the angel's mouth. She leaves it out. It's just the good news.

Hey, we're going to have a son. What's the second thing you notice? Now, drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. For the child shall be a Nazarite to God.

So far, so good. But what did she leave out? Being a Nazarite, there are three or four primary elements in being a Nazarite. Touching nothing related to the vine.

And what else? What's the other signal? What's the most obvious signature thing about a Nazarite? How can you immediately spot a Nazarite? Do you have to watch him all day to see if he eats a grape? No, it's the hair. The hair is the sign. The hair is the obvious.

If a man has long hair, it's a shame when men in Israel didn't let their hair grow real long. When you can find them, look at the depictions in Bab relief and in Egyptian paintings and so on. They had that curly hair.

It didn't grow down their backs. They didn't have that long, long, long hair. And a Nazarite was immediately observable because a razor had never touched his head.

From the time he took his vow, his hair grew out. And he looked funny. When the hippies first started coming out in the late 60s, you could spot them right off.

It wasn't hard. You've got your crew cuts and your button-down collars and your high-water pants and the white socks and the loafers and guys all looking like the four freshmen. And then you've got this long-haired hippie-type communist sympathizer walking down.

This tie-dyed love child type of thing. It was immediately obvious. People make statements with their appearance.

Somebody puts on a lot of piercings and a lot of tattoos, they're making a statement. They want to tell you something about themselves. It's not for them.

If it was, they'd stay home and stare in the mirror all day. They put that stuff on and they go out to be seen. They're making a statement.

They want to identify people that wear black and paint their fingernails black and walk around all pale and depressed. They're making a statement. They want to tell you something.

These guys that are... What do they say? Emos. They wear girls' clothes and stretch pants and go to school. They're making an issue of themselves.

They're communicating. They want to tell you something. Anybody that is deviant in their appearance from a range of acceptable, ordinary, commonly encountered standards is trying to tell you something.

They want you to know something. They want their presence to be an issue in your mind. Some of them want to dare you to say anything about it.

You go to a counter somewhere and see these wild, spiky-haired people with colors and things. It's a statement. Well, Nazarite made a statement.

She made a statement. And she leaves this out. Not supposed to drink anything.

Not supposed to eat anything unclean. We've got to clean up the diet aspect of things. But she leaves out the signature piece of the Nazarite vow, and that's the razor on his hair.

And then she adds something in, like I pointed out last time. She says he's going to be a Nazarite from the womb until the day of his death. And when you combine what she leaves out with what she adds, what do you get? Razor touching his head and his death.

And that's what you have at the end. It is the razor touching his head that is going to end his effectiveness, and that's how he's going to die. And the seeds of it are sown before he's ever born.

His mother goofs this up. She doesn't respect his Nazarite identity specifically related to his hair. She's more concerned about, you know, I'm really going to have to change the menu.

I'm going to have to start buying at the Philistine shop and go back to that one little Israelite. I'm going to have to go out to the kibbutz out there and buy the clean food, get the kosher food. Poor me, I'm going to have to completely change the way I cook.

She doesn't even tell her husband that the child is not supposed to have his hair cut. And just like Eve in the garden, she adds this thing about what was the element that Eve added? You shall not eat it, neither shall you touch it, lest ye die. And here this lady says, well, he's going to be a Nazarite from the day of his birth until the day of his death.

It's just like a, let me just embellish, let me add, let me emphasize this, let me put a little color. I don't think the angel really did a good enough job on this message. Let me just put something on it.

And people do this with the Gospel all the time. They want to add in lordship. They want to add in changing your life.

They want to add in spirituality to salvation. People always have to add. We don't just want Scriptures, we want a creed.

We don't just want the simplicity of what the Bible teaches. We want to write our books and add our two cents worth to what God says. Well, this bugs Manoa.

It's just as simple as I can put it. He wasn't there. Didn't get to see the angel.

Didn't get to see the awesome appearance. Didn't get to hear the special message. And it bugs him.

And he's annoyed. And so he goes to the Lord and he says, Oh 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. Has this information not already been given to his wife? Yes, it has.

But this is why he says us twice. Teach us. Tell us.

We need to both be there. And he wants to insert himself back. This is between the angel and the woman.

So much so, and let me just tell you how squirrely people get in terms of Bible interpretation. It just makes you cringe to see the things that people come up with. There are three or four commentators on this passage who have come out in writing and stated that what they think really happened is that the angel made it with Mrs. Minoa and that's why Samson comes into being.

The angel is the child's father. The conception took place at the meeting and Minoa has found this out too late. And this is an old idea.

Josephus preserves a tradition about the jealousy of Minoa, that Minoa was jealous that this man of God had somehow gotten next to his wife. So, of course, it's nothing of the kind. I mean, good grief.

But people who start denying that there is a God and that there is divine power immediately have to start coming up with some sort of alternate explanation for how seemingly supernatural things happen. A barren woman suddenly conceives? Well, it must have been a different guy involved. But Minoa prays to the Lord.

God listens to the voice of Minoa and God sends the angel of God back. Why does God listen to

the voice of Minoa and send him back? Well, once again, it is a demonstration of the very first thing that was noted. As soon as the angel of the Lord speaks, we know that God is aware.

We know that God is paying attention. We know that God has all of the details and all of the facts from the overall situation throughout Israel all the way down to the situation in this one household and that this woman is barren and hasn't conceived. God has known this all along.

He's known it from the beginning. There's nothing that He doesn't know. He knows all.

He sees all. He hears all. And when Minoa prays, God hears it.

And God answers it. God says, Okay, fine. I'll send him back.

Well, when he comes again, we have some additional reinforcement for the things that we've already seen. And we're going to pause here and take our break. We're going to break for 15 minutes.

We're going to come back, actually, a few less than that, because I want to start again right around 8.30 if we can. And we'll see how we get a lot of information that you wouldn't immediately suspect from the second visit of this angel. Let's pause here and take our break.