

Leaving in Flames

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by

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In our reading last week, we read of the angel of the Lord meeting with a woman, and again a second time, with both the woman and her husband.

He told her that she would bare a son who would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. Her husband Manoah, desired to know what the angel of the Lord would have the boys' training to be like, but he received no instruction that was recorded in our text –

only a reiteration of his instructions for Manoah's wife about ritual fasting observances related to the child being born, devoted as a Nazarite – from birth until the day of his death. (vs. 7)

We enter our reading this morning in **Judges 13:15...**

Judges 13:15-25

¹⁵Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, “*We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you.*”

¹⁶The 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.)

¹⁷Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the Lord, “*What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?*”

¹⁸He replied, “*Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding.*” ¹⁹Then 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: ²⁰As 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. ²¹When

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.

²² *“We are doomed to die!”* he said to his wife. *“We have seen God!”*

²³ 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.”*

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

We see the middle eastern hospitality in Manoah's offer of a meal for this man that he likely supposed to be a prophet of God, on order to express his respect to him.

This angel of the Lord would not accept the customary offer of a meal, but instead encouraged Manoah to offer a burnt offering to the Lord – not something that you would typically find a person who was not a priest, doing.

Manoah had only offered a repast; it was the angel of the Lord that mentioned a sacrifice. Manoah would not have presumed to *perform the offices of the priesthood in the presence of a person whom he took for an extraordinary prophet, commissioned from God.*¹

So, we can assume that it was the angel of the Lord himself who was ministering as priest for Manoah.

We are told in **vs. 19** “¹⁹*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: ²⁰As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame.”*

I want us to think for a minute – we have a familiar scene here in front of us.

It is easy at first glance to say that **the amazing thing the Lord did** was that, “*As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame.*”

And I’m not saying THAT wouldn’t have been amazing!

BUT, what if the amazing thing ‘initially’ was the same thing that happened with Gideon back in **Judges Chapter 6**? Do you remember that?

²⁰The angel of God said to him,
“*Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth.*” And Gideon did so. ²¹Then the angel of the

Lord touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. **Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the Lord disappeared.**

This scene is SO familiar now, isn't it?

Both Gideon and Manoah have the same reaction – **THEY THINK THEY ARE GOING TO DIE – THEY JUST SAW GOD!!!**

Was Manoah's wife smarter than him, or was she just SO excited with news that she

would get to bear a son, that she was able to realize that:

- a. **If God wanted us dead**, it would have already happened.
- b. **God would not have shown us all these things** (riding the flames of a fire into heaven is pretty amazing).
- c. **God would not have told us** about THE BEST NEWS she could imagine.

So, we've had two looks at the story of Samson, and we haven't really given him much press yet. That'll change tomorrow. But for now – Samson is born (always a

good place to start); Manoah's wife has done what she was supposed to do to retain the spiritual integrity of the Nazarite son within her womb; and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him.

I'm telling you, "If you're enjoying the story so far; then, enjoy it now. It's only going to get messy from here on out.

PRAYER

1. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/benson/judges/13.htm>