

Life of Samson
Part 1: Samson's Birth
08-20-16AM

What do you think of when you think of Samson? Physical strength or moral weakness? Typically we regard two aspects of Samson's life above all others: his supernatural strength, and his weakness for women. Yet there is more to this man who is called in Hebrews 11 a man of faith; he is a man raised by God to deliver Israel, and one of the great saviors of that nation.

Samson's birth story is remarkable. It parallels in many aspects the birth of that other Nazarite Judge, Samuel. His parents were visited by an angel who declared that their son would be a Nazarite from birth. When the message came Manoah pleaded with God to send the "Man of God" to teach them how to raise this child. The Messenger returned, and when they met Him they realized He was God (He tells them His name is Wonderful; consider Isaiah 9:6).

There is an important lesson in this passage for parents. When they were told they were going to have a child, Manoah asked God to teach him how to raise him. What a wonderful pleading from a father to God, one which must please God immensely. Today, God still teaches us how to raise our children. He demands that fathers "*not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:4). Manoah's dedication of his son to God ought to be the cry of all fathers and mothers.

Consider what it was that Manoah was told to do by God. "*Let the woman pay attention to all that I said. She should not eat anything that comes from the vine nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; let her observe all that I commanded.*" This demand of abstinence from unclean or intoxication was seen in light of the Nazarite vow of the child. If the child was to be a Nazarite, the parents needed to be part of that vow.

Do you want your children to be Godly? Of course we often see that purpose and desire it, but fail to appreciate all that is required of it. Not all children necessarily become the people we desire, but this passage is saying that if we want to bring our children into a relationship with God, the most important action we do is to bring ourselves into that relationship.

Finally, consider the nature of the Nazarite vow. The Nazarite vow is found in Numbers 6. It was a one year vow where a person particularly sanctified their bodies before God. We see such a vow still carried out by Christians in the New Testament (Acts 21:24). It is considered that there are three men who were Nazarites from birth: Samson, Samuel and John.

The Nazarite vow was one which looked forward to the Christian life. It was one of abstinence from worldly desires. It revealed that men contaminated themselves with sin, and need to remain pure (1 Corinthians 6). A Nazarite was the symbol of the living sacrifice that a Christian is to be (Romans 12:1-2).