

• *History repeated*

Once again Israel follow the wretched pattern of sin and defeat ¹. The judge God sends them eventually is Samson.

¹ 13:1

• *The angel of the Lord appears to Manoah's wife*

A Danite couple cannot have children ¹. One day 'the angel of the Lord appears' to the wife ². It is an appearance of God Himself, although Manoah's wife is not seeing the 'stuff' – the innermost essence – of God. She is seeing a **representation** of God. No one can see God and live ³ but God can use angels to make something visible that represents Him. Manoah's wife is to have a child who will be a Nazirite all his life and even before he is born! Manoah's wife is to avoid wine and ceremonially 'unclean' food (that is, declared unclean by the Mosaic law) so that the boy is a Nazirite even in the womb ⁴! When the son is born his uniqueness and sacredness to God will be marked by his never having his hair cut. He has a very special destiny: to start the process of delivering Israel from the Philistines ⁵. It would not be finished until the days of David, but Samson's destiny was to start the battle for freedom from the Philistines.

¹ 13:2

² 13:3

• *Sampson – a Nazirite even before he was born*

³ John 1:18

• *A man with a destiny*

⁴ 13:4

⁵ 13:5

• *Deliverance from the Philistines*

Each time the Israelites fall into sin, the depth of their fall is deeper than before. Now their defeat by the Philistines is very serious and it will be generations before they are released from Philistine domination.

1. Manoah and his wife are treated differently by the angel

1. **Manoah and his wife are treated differently by the angel.** The angel appears only to Manoah's wife, not to Manoah himself. Only Manoah's wife is told of the birth. Only she is given instructions. Only she is told of the destiny of the child. Perhaps the reason for this is that it is Manoah's wife who specially has to avoid wine and unclean food, but it seems strange that Manoah himself is not at first involved. Manoah's wife tells her husband what has happened but he knows of it only through her ¹.

¹ 13:6-7

• *Each person has a distinct personality*

Why should God treat Manoah and his wife differently. One can think of several reasons. God is sovereign and likes to treat each person individually. Husbands and wives each have to have their own distinct relationship with God. Each person is a distinct personality, with different temperaments. The fact that one person gets visions and dreams and another person gets revelations in an entirely different way – perhaps less dramatically – need not worry any of us. We have different needs, different personalities, and God treats us according to His own will and our own needs.

• *God treats us according to His own will and our own needs*

• *The fact that God treats each person individually tests us*

The fact that God treats each person individually tests us. It determines whether we have problems with jealousy or with pride. Manoah is in danger of jealousy. Why should his wife get visited by an angel but he be left out? Manoah's wife is in danger of spiritual pride. She might say to herself 'I have been visited by an angel, but my husband has not! Perhaps I am spiritually superior to my husband'.

2. Manoah and his wife respond well to their different spiritual experiences

2. **Manoah and his wife respond well to their different spiritual experiences.** I said that they were both in **danger** of reacting badly, but actually they both react rather well. Manoah does the right thing. If you are left behind in some spiritual experience, the best thing to do is pray, and that is what Manoah does, asking that he might be told about the boy for himself. He says 'Please let the man of God... come to us again...' ¹. He does not want to leave out his wife – he does not say 'come to **me**' – but he wants to be included in what has happened to his wife.

¹ 13:8

• *Further testing*

The result is surprising. The text says ‘God listened to the voice of **Manoah**; and the angel of God came again to the **woman...**’ ^{□1}! Manoah’s prayer is heard but he is still left out of the experience of the angelic visitation! Once again there is a test: will one of them respond with jealousy or pride?

□1 13:9

• *Although God was treating them individually, they were each wanting to move together without the other partner being left behind*

Manoah’s wife does the right thing also. Just as Manoah prayed ‘Please let the man of God. .. come to us again...’, so Manoah’s wife did not want Manoah to be left out of the angelic visitation. She made the angel wait while she ran quickly to get her husband ^{□1}! Neither Manoah nor his wife wanted the other spouse to be left out of what was happening. Although God was treating them individually, they were each wanting to move together without the other partner being left behind. It is a sweet and tender picture of a couple where neither wanted to be left out of what was happening to the other. Husbands and wives could learn a lot from it! (One could compare this story with the story of Abraham and Sarah where Sarah seems to have been left out of what was happening to Abraham, and the incident with Hagar was the result! Abraham has a revelation that a child was to be born from his own body, Genesis 15:4. It led Sarah into a mistake – Genesis 16:2. God had a revelation which included Sarah but it came to Abraham not to her – see Genesis 18:10.)



□1 13:10

3. Manoah’s wife is ahead of her husband in using spiritual logic

3. Manoah’s wife is ahead of her husband in using spiritual logic. The couple catch up with each other and they receive the message from the angel together ^{□1}. They are hospitable to the angel and as a result discover that they have been speaking to the angel of the Lord ^{□2}, whose name and nature can never be fully revealed ^{□3}. This alarms Manoah. ‘*We shall surely die...*’, he says ^{□4}. At this point the woman uses what we can call spiritual logic. ‘*If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have ... shown us all these things...*’ ^{□5}. Spirituality involves making some deductions from the goodness of God; some more examples are found in Matthew 6:25–30; Romans 5:10; 8:31–35. So Manoah’s wife helps her husband to see that all will be well. God is working in their lives. He has no plans to kill them, only plans to bless them.

□1 13:11-14
 □2 13:15-21
 □3 13:15-21
 □4 13:22
 □5 13:23

• *Deductions from the goodness of God*

		<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p> 
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