



## Divine Intervention

### RECAP

**This week's focus: "God extends His grace even when we don't see that we need it."**

Chapter 13 of Judges opens with the familiar line that the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord. As a result, they were subjected to oppression for 40 years at the hands of the Philistines.

Keeping in step with the cycle we've seen in the book of Judges, we're left to anticipate the Israelites crying out for the Lord to help deliver them. But we don't get that. Instead, we get an entire chapter devoted to how Samson would come to be Israel's next judge. All of this happened despite Israel's lack of crying out to God.

The rest of the chapter follows the interaction of a man named Manoah, his unnamed and barren wife, and a man of God who we know to be an actual angel of the Lord. This angel first shows up on the scene and informs the barren woman that she will, in fact, become pregnant (3). Along with the announcement, he also provides some specific instructions for her to drink no wine or other fermented drinks and to avoid eating unclean foods (4). After her specific instructions, he lets the soon-to-be mom know that this son of hers will be a Nazirite (see Numbers 6) and will deliver Israel from Philistine oppression (5).

From there, the woman runs to her husband with this incredible news (6-7), after which he prays the angel would return (7). God hears Manoah's prayer and has the angel return, once again, the angel goes to his wife and not him (8), so his wife runs and gets him (9-10).

The next several verses (11-14) are a back-and-forth between Manoah and the angel. Manoah continually seeks clarification from the angel about details that the angel had already made clear to his wife in the previous encounters. (Men - go figure!)

After Manoah hears the angel's answers he turns into a host and finally extends the invitation of a meal to the angel (15), to which the angel encourages him to prepare a burnt offering instead (16). Before Manoah begins to make the preparations for the offering (19), he gets sidetracked trying to learn the name of the angel (17-18).

Manoah and his wife's eyes were finally fully opened as to the identity of the man of God being an angel after he offered the goat and the grain offering to the Lord, only to see the angel ascend to heaven in the flames (19-21). Manoah interprets this to mean that he and his wife will surely die since they were face to face with God. His wife, on the other hand, is a bit wiser and realizes God wouldn't kill them after making the promise that they'd be the parents of Israel's next deliverer (22-23). This chapter comes to a close with the birth of Samson and the line that "the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him" (24-25).

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### SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Question: What's something a person has done for you that you didn't expect - like a surprise party, trip, or gift?

### STUDY (about 30 min) Read Judges 13

2. How did God speak to you through the scripture and the sermon this week? Is there anything that was unclear, or that you have questions about?
3. With Samson, God provided a deliverer to Israel without a cry of repentance. Retell the story of a time in your life when God intervened even though you didn't cry out for His help.
4. Read 13:2-5. If you're a woman, how do you think you would respond if you were Manoah's wife, and an angel showed up with that message? If you're a man, how would you respond if your wife came to you with this message from a "man of God?"
5. Following the requirements of a Nazarite vow was counter-cultural and an extreme way to be set apart for God's purpose. What are ways you "swim upstream" against the culture (secular and perhaps even some strands of Christian culture that may not be biblical) of our day? What might be ways God is calling you to "swim upstream"?
6. Manoah and his wife eventually respond to an unknown messenger with hospitality. How do you define hospitality? How does hospitality bring heaven to earth?
7. Manoah was distracted by an irrelevant question (vs. 17) and didn't understand to whom he was speaking. Share your own life experience when you didn't understand what God was up to. How does the pursuit of irrelevant questions, deter you from being obedient?
8. Manoah's wife was barren, and they were hopeless before God intervened. What are the lifeless or barren areas of your life that you'd like God to breathe new life into?

### SUPPORT (15 min)

Break up into groups of 2 or 3. Share an area in your life where you want to see God bring new life (i.e. marriage, family, work, spiritual walk). Then pray that God would bring new life into those areas and give each of you a greater awareness of His presence.