

When Children Disappoint.

Judges 14:1-4.

Sunday afternoon, September 11, 2011.

I. Manoah and his wife's pride and joy.

- A. Imagine the hope and joy Manoah and his wife harbored in their hearts as they brought little Samson in this world.
- B. Samson's mom was careful not to eat or drink anything from the grapevine as little Samson, even in the womb, was a Nazirite, and therefore set apart to God.
- C. Carefully they taught him the Scriptures, and how to live as a Nazirite, one who was set apart to God.
- D. What hopes they had for Samson, for the Angel of the Lord had said that Samson was going to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. Judges 13:5.
- E. The way all this would come about was a way that Manoah and his wife could never have anticipated.

II. Everything goes horribly wrong.

- A. Samson appears to have been a strong willed child, (see the end of Vs. 3.) and Manoah and his wife probably had some run-ins with Samson before.
- B. On this one fateful day however Manoah and his wife's world was turned upside down as the unthinkable happened.
- C. Samson comes home one night announcing that he has seen a woman, one of the daughters of the Philistines, in Timnah, which was one of the towns of the Philistines. He goes on to say to his father: "therefore get her for me as a wife."
 - 1. Samson was an Israelite; he was not to marry foreign women, and certainly not one from among the enemies of God's people. (Or do we have more evidence here that Israel had come to accept the Philistine rule over them as the new normal? Samson doesn't seem to think anything is wrong with marrying a Philistine woman.)
 - 2. Samson was a Nazirite; one that was set apart to God; one who dedicated his life to God; one who sought to live particularly close to God, and one who desired to spend his life in serving Him.
 - 3. Certainly marrying a wife from among the Philistines did not fit in with this picture.
- D. The Angel of the Lord had said nothing about this when He announced Samson's birth, and Manoah and his wife were quite sure that this ran contrary to the divine plan.

They protest that she is from the uncircumcised Philistines; they ask Samson why there is not a woman that pleases him among his own people; does he really have to go to the Philistines?
- E. We see Samson's determination and strong will come out in his reaction to his parents objections: "Get *her* for me, for she pleases me well."

III. Samson's bottom line

- A. Samson's reply to his parents reveals his bottom line; that fundamental principle around which everything must revolve and before which everything else must

- bow. “Get *her* for me...” but why her? “Because she pleases me well.”
- B. There you have it. The fundamental principle around which everything in Samson’s life revolves: “My good pleasure.” This is the religious principle of Samson’s heart. This is the idol before which everything must bow.
1. Never mind that Samson was an Israelite. That little fact was secondary, and had to bow before the desire to have this woman.
 2. Never mind that Samson was a Nazirite. That too was made serviceable to the desire to have this woman.
- C. This brings us face to face with the question: What are the fundamental ruling religious principles of your heart; things before which everything must bow? High on the list of ruling desires in the hearts of many, even of the Lord’s people, are the concepts of ease, comfort, convenience and pleasure. How opposite are these concepts to the way the Lord Jesus assumed His human nature, and assumed His station on this earth as a humble servant. Remember that it is His image that the religious and ruling principles of our hearts are to be conformed to.

IV. There is a bigger picture here.

- A. We feel with Manoah and his wife in these circumstances. This is not what they signed up for in meeting with the Angel of the Lord. We sense their anger; their frustration; even their despair.
- B. In the midst of these feelings the text lets us in on a secret which Manoah and his wife didn’t know. A secret that brings comfort to us in times like these.
- C. Chapter 13 ends with the Spirit of the Lord moving on Samson; the next thing we know Samson goes to Timnah, and he wants to marry this Philistine woman.
1. Shouldn’t we be just a little suspicious that the Spirit of the Lord had something to do with this whole event; unlikely as that may seem at first?
 2. Then our suspicion is confirmed in chapter 14:4. The Lord outright takes credit for the whole proceeding. “His (Samson’s) father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord.”
 3. It was because the Lord was seeking an occasion to engage the Philistines. Here again is evidence of Israel’s acceptance of the Philistine rule over them as the new normal. The Lord has to invent an occasion against the Philistines for Israel neither attempts to shake off their yoke of bondage, nor do they even cry out to the Lord for deliverance.
- D. But how can this be of the Lord when it clearly flies in the face of all that God had revealed by way of His will for Israel’s lives?
1. This does not mean that Samson was right in his pursuits; nor that his parents were wrong in their objections.
 2. Rather it means that God chose to incorporate Samson’s hormones and his bull-headedness as an integral part of the work He was doing in redemptive history at that time. (As he incorporated the malice of Jew and Roman in the redemption He worked through the greater Samson, the Lord Jesus Christ.)
 3. Remember those words: “but his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord.” Sometimes what you do not know ends up being your greatest comfort.