



Judges chapter 13: Samson

Vs 1: The cycle of sin, bondage, repentance and deliverance began again **and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for 40 years.**

Then God gave them SAMSON as a deliverer. He was the most enigmatic of all the Judges and difficult to understand. His name was SHAMESH = sun-man or 'man of light'.

Samson was a man of great contrasts: great physical strength **combined with great moral weakness.**

There was a mystery about his strength; he is usually depicted as huge and very muscular...but this was not so, for people had to enquire where his strength came from.....

Samson's story is very strange: a story of great opportunity and disastrous failure—

He was a failed vocation--- called by God from birth, filled with the Holy Spirit for his mission, yet ended his days in mass murder!

He is an important example of unfulfilled potential – he was so gifted that he might have done great things for God....

Samson failed himself, God, and his people, because he **did not conquer himself. He had no self-mastery**, which is essential for a spiritual life; **he was conquered by the flesh and the passions before being conquered by his enemies, but he was his own worst enemy!**

He judged Israel for 20 years when moral chaos was everywhere.

Vs 2-3: Samson's Parents: Manoah and his wife – whose name is not given.....

They were from the Tribe of Dan, a rebellious tribe who refused the territory given to them as their inheritance through Joshua. They soon went into idolatry and eventually were lost to the Chosen people altogether.

The parents lived at ZORAH, about 14 miles west of Jerusalem....so they lived in the inheritance given to their tribe before the Tribe departed for the north to find new territory, so they lived close to the Philistines and would have suffered from their oppression.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to the wife who was barren..... promising a son who will do great things for God. Samson was the only Judge who was given to Israel as a promised deliverer.... So, he **should have** pointed to the Great Deliverer, Jesus.

Samson is the story of what might have been, if the human will did not reign, causing chaos everywhere, and causing grief to those who loved him: **Do not grieve the Holy Spirit (who dwells in you): Eph 4:17-30**

Manoah's wife's name is not given., but according to Tradition she was called Hazzelelponi or Zelelponith. She was the daughter of Etam



Barren Women in the Bible:

- 1) Sarah who was given **Isaac** in Gen 11:30
- 2) Rebekah who was given **Jacob and Esau** in Gen 25:21
- 3) Rachel who was given **Joseph** in Gen 29:31
- 4) Manoah's wife was given **Samson** in Judges 13
- 5) Hannah was given **Samuel** in I Sam ch 1-2
- 6) The Shunamite & her unnamed son in 2 Kgs 4:8-44

The promised son was to be in the line of great men among the Chosen people

Vs. 4-5: **Heaven's Instructions regarding the child:**

- 1) He will be a Nazarite, that is consecrated to God for the whole of his life; Num 6:1-21
- 2) The sign of this vow was **uncut hair**, so it would grow very long over time.
- 3) Alcoholic drink was forbidden....as it would stir up the passions.....
- 4) Contact with the **dead** was forbidden for it would draw uncleanness upon him. He must be **in a state of purity** so that he **could** have a real relationship with God.
- 5) Samson's **mother** was also asked to remain pure so that no contamination of sin would reach her unborn child.
- 6) **He will begin to deliver Israel...** so, his failure was foreseen by God.

Did Israel not **deserve** a better deliverer at this time? It was later, during the time of Samuel that Israel seriously dealt with the problem of the Philistines..... but they were not conquered until the time of King David.

NB: It was very unusual for men to live the Nazarite vow for the whole of their lives.... the vow was normally taken for a short time.... example: St Paul in Acts 18:18

Map of Philistine Cities and Conquests



NB: The Philistines **represent** the Enemy in his persistent attacks on us **in a particular area** of our lives: Jesus said that **this type is only cast out by prayer and fasting: Mt 17:21**

Unfortunately, we will not see either P or F in Samson, so only **a beginning** of conquest could be attempted – Samson represents those who **claim** to have a relationship with God, but have no fruits to show. **By their fruits you will know them: Mt 7:15-20**

Here we see half-hearted service to God, but the self (ego) dominates and rules.... causing chaos inside of us and around us.

Vs. 6-7: report to Manoah: His wife described the Angel as a Man with a heavenly aspect... that he was awesome... but didn't give either a name or origin... yet acted with great authority...

Who is this Angel? Check Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 2:1-5; 6:11-24. It seems to be the same phenomenon – the pre-incarnate Christ directing history towards its goal..... The word communicating THE WORD OF GOD to God's Chosen people.

Who is the Angel of the Lord?

September 27, 2012 by [Jonathan McLatchie](#)



Throughout the Old Testament, we routinely encounter the mysterious character who goes by the title “The angel of the Lord.” By looking at the numerous appearances of this individual, we can piece together clues as to His identity.

1): The first time the angel of the Lord is introduced, he makes an appearance to Hagar, the servant of Abraham's wife Sarai.

In Genesis 16:7-13, we read,

The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸And he said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you

come from, and where are you going?” “I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.

⁹ Then the angel of the LORD told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel added, “I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.”

¹¹ The angel of the LORD also said to her:

“You are now pregnant
and you will give birth to a son.
You shall name him Ishmael,
for the LORD has heard of your misery.

¹² He will be a wild donkey of a man;
his hand will be against everyone
and everyone’s hand against him,
and he will live in hostility
toward all his brothers.

She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.” That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

What is of particular interest here is that the angel of the Lord speaks as though He is distinct from Yahweh yet also presumes Himself to be the very mouthpiece of God. In fact, he speaks in the first person and says “I will increase your descendants.” This is very peculiar. What’s more, in verse 13, Hagar identifies the Angel of the Lord as “the God who sees me.”

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**The second time** we encounter the Angel of the Lord, He again speaks to Hagar regarding her Son Ishmael. In Genesis 21:17-18, we read,

<sup>17</sup> God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. <sup>18</sup> Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.”

Notice that again, in verse 18, the angel of the Lord speaks using the first person (“...for I will make him into a great nation”), thus making Himself the very mouthpiece of God.

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The third occasion on we encounter the angel of the Lord is the incident involving Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah. Just as Abraham is about to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice unto the Lord, we read in Genesis 22:11-18,



But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.

¹² “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ **So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”**

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Again, the angel of the Lord **uses the first person** and assumes Himself to be none other than God Himself. In verse 12, he states, “you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” The angel also claims to be the one who gave Abraham the instruction to sacrifice his son Isaac (verse 18) and that “I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.”

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**The fourth occasion** on which we encounter the angel of the Lord is in Genesis 32, in which Jacob famously wrestles with God. In verses 1 and 2, we are told,



“Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is the camp of God!” so he named that place Mahanaim.” In verses 22-31, we read,

That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” but Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

The man asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered.

Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.” But he replied, “**Why do you ask my name?**” Then he blessed him there.

So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “**It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.**”

The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob’s hip was touched near the tendon.

In this passage, Jacob names the place Peniel, saying that it was “because I saw God face to face and yet my life was spared.” **Hosea 12:4-5** also identifies the angel in this scene as the “Lord God Almighty.”

The fifth time we meet the angel of the Lord is the **Burning Bush** appearance to Moses in Exodus 3. In verses 1-6, we read,



Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.”

“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”<sup>6</sup> Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Curiously, on this occasion, “the angel of the Lord” and “God” are used interchangeably. The angel of the Lord here describes Himself as “the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.”

The angel of the Lord **also appears to Balaam** (Numbers 22) and, in similar fashion, **to Joshua** (Joshua 5:13-15). We also encounter the angel of the Lord four times in the book of Judges.

**In Judges 2:1-4**, we read, The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land I swore to give to your ancestors. I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you, and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.’ Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? And I have also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; they will become traps for you, and their gods will become snares to you.’” When the angel of the LORD had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud,<sup>5</sup> and they called that place Bokim. There they offered sacrifices to the LORD.



Remarkably, the angel of the Lord here identifies Himself as the one who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt and led them into the promised land. Furthermore, the angel of the Lord identifies Himself as the one who made a covenant with the people of Israel — one which He will never break.

**In Judges 6:11-24**, we again encounter the angel of the Lord. We read,

The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.” “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”

The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.” Gideon replied, “If now I have found favour in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.”

And the LORD said, “I will wait until you return.” Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him



under the oak. The 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. <sup>21</sup> Then 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. When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, “Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!” But the LORD said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.” So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Again, the angel of the Lord is identified as none other than “the Lord” Himself (verses 14, 16, 23, 25, 27). In fact, Gideon asks for a sign to confirm that it really is God who is speaking to him. Gideon prepares a sacrifice and God consumes it by bringing fire from the rock. What’s remarkable is that it is only God who is to be worshipped in this manner. When Gideon sees the fire from the rock, he is terrified. He recognises the implications of having seen God face-to-face (see Exodus 33:20), but he is re-assured that he is “not going to die.”

**Judges 13:2-25 is the most remarkable of the appearances of the angel of the Lord.** The passage reads,

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

A certain man of Zorah, named **Manoah**, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, “You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

Then the woman went to her husband and told him, “A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn’t ask him where he came from, and he didn’t tell me his name. But he said to me, ‘You will become pregnant and have a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from the womb until the day of his death.’”

Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: “Pardon your servant, Lord. I beg you to let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born.”

God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her. The woman hurried to tell her husband, “He’s here! The man who appeared to me the other day!”

Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, “Are you the man who talked to my wife?” “I am,” he said.

So, Manoah asked him, “When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs the boy’s life and work?” The angel of the LORD answered, “Your wife must do all that I have told her. She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her.”

Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you.” The 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.)

Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, “What is your name, so that we



may honor you when your word comes true?”

He replied, “Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding.” 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: As 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. When 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.

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

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

Manoah is instructed in verse 16 to make his offering **to the Lord**. The reason given is that “Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the LORD.”

Manoah needed this explanation because he was going to offer this **to the man**, but did not even regard him as an angel, let alone the Lord Himself.

Verses 17 -18 remind us of the wrestling match between the angel of the Lord and Jacob back in Genesis 32, in which the angel declines to give His name, instead saying, **“Why do you ask my name?”** The statement given in verse 18 of Judges 13 (“it is beyond understanding”) has also been rendered “it is Wonderful.”

This bears a striking resemblance to Isaiah 9:6, in which one of the names given to the promised incarnate divine Messiah is “Wonderful.” When Manoah and his wife make an offering to the Lord, the angel of the Lord ascends in the flame.

This reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ who, being God incarnate, was made a sacrifice unto the Father. The ascension of the angel of the Lord in the flame which rises from the burnt offering on the alter carries much symbolic significance and undoubtedly represents the coming sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin.

Like those who had encountered the angel of the Lord before them, Manoah and his wife are fearful for their lives, as they recognise the implications of having seen God face-to-face.

In summary, we have seen that:

1. The angel of the Lord is repeatedly identified as God.
2. The angel of the Lord performs miraculous signs.
3. People expect to die after having encountered the angel of the Lord face-to-face, but none of them actually do die.
4. The name of the angel of the Lord is “wonderful”.

So, to conclude our discussion, who is the angel of the Lord?

As we read all of those accounts and piece together the consilience of clues, it becomes evident that the angel of the Lord is none other than **the pre-incarnate Christ Himself**. This makes sense in the context of the apostle John’s description of Christ as “the word” of God (see John 1:1). Moreover, as John’s gospel explains in 1: “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” And as Hebrews 1:3 declares, **“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.”** Christ describes Himself as the mouthpiece of God on earth and the revelation to mankind of what God is like (see Matthew 11:27). In fact, all that Jesus is and does interprets and explains who God is and what He does (see John 14:8-10).

Furthermore, it is the angel of the Lord who gives the command for the filthy rags to be taken off Joshua in Zechariah 3, and for him to be clothed in fine garments. The immediate context indicates that this is intended to symbolise the restoration of the priesthood of Israel. The text also symbolises, however, Christ clothing us with the garments of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).

The angel of the Lord represents a christophany — a **pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus Christ**. It also adds yet another example to the powerful and compelling cumulative case from the Bible's remarkable internal coherence and interconnectedness — a phenomenon which can surely only be explained by the Bible's divine origin.

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