



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Judges 13:1-25

Samson: Bright Beginnings

TRANSCRIPT

[prayer removed from audio]

[Message] So, in the mean time we will be looking at the life of Samson for several weeks, dealing with the four chapters of his life. Now let's turn to Judges, chapter 13 and will you listen as I read this first chapter in the life of Samson. It has now been some years since Gideon had for a time delivered Israel from the hand of the Midianites. But now a new enemy has come on the scene and one that will plague the children of Israel for many, many years, the Philistines. We read in verse 1 of Judges, chapter 13,

“And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bore not. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the woman came and told her

husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very awesome: but I asked him not from where he was, neither told he me his name: But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. Then Manoah intreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and told her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, who came unto me the other day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man who spoke unto the woman? And he said, I am. And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy food: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is wonderful? (incidentally, the authorized version adds those words, seeing it is wonderful, that is the first part, seeing, and thereby indicates that the name of the angel was not wonderful, but rather wonderful is a description of him, and in this case the authorized version I think is absolutely correct, the name of the angel was not wonderful, but

wonderful is a description of him, in his being and also in his works) So Manoah took a kid with a meal offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on, and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. (you can sense through this the dawning recognition of how great this being was who appeared to Manoah, first he seems to be nothing more than a man, but then later he becomes a little more than a man, worthy of honor, and then an angel of the Lord, and now it has dawned upon him, evidently, that he has seen God) But his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meal offering at our hands, neither would he have shewn us all these things, nor at this time have told us things like these. (that verse is very important, we'll spend a little time on it in the message that follows) And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his Word. Let's...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]

[Audio begins] We are working Mark, giving him double duty these days, because he has been here at the 8:30 service and at the 11:00 service. We do appreciate the help that he gives us in the ministry of the music.

The subject for today is Samson’s mother, indisputable evidence of feminine logic. Woman, what shall we say? God created woman and boredom did indeed cease from that moment. But many other things ceased as well. “Woman was God’s second mistake.” so wrote Nietzsche, in *The Antichrist*. Aristotle said, “Woman may be said to be an inferior man.” “Frailty, thy name is woman” is one of Shakespeare’s’ contributions. The Babylonian Talmud has touched on a rather sensitive spot, in words that concern women, “Ten measures of speech descended on the world, women took nine, and man one.” [Laughter] Not everything said about women of course, is negative and cynical. “Oh woman, lovely woman, nature made thee to temper man, we had been brutes without you,” so Otway commented in *Venice Preserved*.

There’s one thing about women however, that men have almost universally found missing. That’s the power of logic, and the power of reasoning. In the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, when Lucetta is speaking to Julia, and they’re talking about men that Julia might fall in love with, after the mention of one or two, the name of Proteus is mentioned. And Lucetta speaks up and says that he is the one that is the choice one. And she’s asked by Julia, why she has that opinion. And she says, “I have no other but a woman’s reason. I think him so because I think him so.”

Well, I’m sorry to say, it’s all a fairy tale. Women do reason and many do it exceedingly well. In fact, many do it a great deal better than a lot of us men. And Samson’s mother was one who knew the power of logic. Her reasoning is the indisputable evidence that sound and compelling logic may reside in the female mind. In fact, the appeal of the logic of Manoah’s wife falls upon the human understanding with the same force as the logic of the divine love, when accompanied by the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit. And I think we shall see this when we come to that text, near the end of this chapter in which she expresses her own reaction to the tremendous event that had occurred in her life, the divine contact with the angel of Jehovah.

We said in our studies in Gideon that Judges was a sad book. It recounts the history of Israel from the time of Joshua to Saul. Israel is living in the miserable moral midnight of slavery to the Philistines in Samson’s day. The Philistines were very important people. They had come from other places. They were not really Palestinians, though the name Palestine is ultimately derived from them. They were a people who had unusual skills in metals, in iron, for example. And they were able to conquer peoples that were much more numerous than they, because of their skills and technology. In fact, in Samson’s day, if one of the children of Israel needed some work that had to do with iron, they had to go down to the Philistines cities because the Philistines would not allow them to have any of the metals. So it was a day of servitude under this war like people. And yet faith is present in Israel.

We know from the Book of Hebrews that there are four characters in the Book of Judges whose faith stands out. Gideon is one, Samson is one, Barak is one, Jephtha is one, and so faith exists even in these difficult times. And we want to study this jolly green giant of Judges, Samson, in our next studies. He’s the Atlas, the Cyclops, the Hercules of Israel. Not doubt, the leading member of the Zorah health club. [Laughter] But, he’s characterized, if you read Samson’s life, incidentally, without reading the New Testament, you might really wonder just how much of a man of faith he was. If there is a man whose life exhibits carnality, and worldliness, it is Samson’s. But there is no doubt that, at the end of his life, he had a triumphant exit. Speak about a grandiose exit, he had a grandiose exit and it was a magnificent expression of faith. I’ll always look forward to studying the last chapter of Samson’s life because it is such a manifestation of faith by a man who had a bright beginning, a very disappointing manhood, but a magnificent death. So the tragedy of Samson’s life closes in triumph.

He was man who was characterized by great power, but also great passions, which he found almost impossible to control. He reminds me at least, of the words that the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, when he exhorts the Corinthians about

the necessity of self-control. Paul wrote, “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.” The idea of self-control, that’s of tremendous importance in the Christian life. And Samson illustrates the failure of men to control their own talents and capacities.

The historical situation is given us in the first few verses of the 13th chapter, Manoah’s wife, longing for a child, for every Hebrew mother longed for children and especially male children because the promise of the Messiah still resided in the hearts and minds of those that were pious. And it’s evident that Manoah was a man of faith and his wife, if anything, was a greater person of faith. And so no doubt she entertained the possibility that she might become the Messiah’s mother. And the fact that she was barren was a great disappointment. In fact, in the east to be barren was a reproach. And so we read that the children of Israel had done evil again in the sight of the Lord and the Lord had delivered them into the hands of the Philistines and then, as the story centers upon the family of Samson, we read that “there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bore not.”

The troubles that come to us are frequently the things that prepare us for the things that God has for us in the future. And no doubt, the winds of trouble that had come to Manoah’s wife in her barrenness were designed to cast her upon the Lord, so that when the time came, and God in his own supernatural way, gave her a child, she would be the kind of mother for him that God intended that he should have.

Many of you, no doubt, have gotten down on your knees often, and asked for God to give you growth and holiness. You’ve asked for him to do something for you, to make you the kind of man or woman that he would want you to be. And you know in almost every case, that means increased infliction. It means increased trials, because it is through the inflictions of life, it’s through being in the furnace that we are truly tried, and learn what it is to have to depend on the Lord, and thus learn him. And Manoah’s wife

had been through the fires, she had been in the trials. And as a result of that she's prepared spiritually for what is going to happen to her.

I, as many of you know, am always, do not feel that my day is complete if I am not able to look at *Peanuts*. Some years ago there appeared a cartoon in which Lucy, who is the psychiatrist, or psychologist of the family, has her sign out for psychiatric help. And Charlie Brown is sitting there because well, he really needs it. And she's speaking. She had nine parts of speech, remember. And so she's speaking, “There's a real lesson to be learned from seeing Snoopy's house burn down,” you remember when that happened a long time ago. “Adversity builds character” she preaches, “without adversity a person could never mature and face up to all of the things in life.” And Charlie Brown says, “What things?” And she says, “More adversity.” [Laughter]

Well, adversity comes to us for our good. And it has come to Manoah's wife for her good, for finally, it is time for God to act. And we read in the 3rd verse that the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman and said to her, “You are barren.” The fault, the cause of the barrenness rested with the woman. He said, “You are barren. But you shall conceive and you shall bare a son.”

I've wondered as I've read this story many times, why did the angel of the Lord appear to the woman? It may indicate that Manoah's wife had unusual stature in the community and that is possible, because when you read the story of her relationship to Samson and also her reasoning as a result of this divine intervention, you cannot help but feel that she is one of the unusual women of the Old Testament. It may indicate her stature in the community.

But there is one thing I think that shines through this chapter, which is of very important practical significance. The Bible says that children are a heritage of the Lord. What a great thing it is when a father and a mother realize that those that are given to them are a heritage of the Lord. Our children are not ours. Our children are the Lord's.

They are his gifts to us, that we have for a time, and by the grace of God are to be means of fitting them for the life that lies before them.

One of the well known Bible teachers had a brother and he had a friend to whom had just been born a child and speaking of the woman's babe, as he wrote to her, he said to her, "Well Mary, the Lord has given thee another child. Now he says to thee what Pharaoh's daughter said to Moses' mother, 'Take this child, bring it up for me, and I will give thee thy wages.'" That's what it is to be a mother, and a father. It's to be given a gift that is the Lord's, and we have the responsibility of bringing it up for him. What a great concept that is, to have children that are given by God in trust and to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord for him, and for the things that he wants to do through them.

Now in the course of the angel's conversation with Manoah's wife, he tells her that Samson is to be a Nazarite from his mother's womb, "A Nazarite unto God from the womb." Now, a Nazarite was a person who engaged in certain vows of abstinence in order to devote himself fully to the Lord. In Numbers chapter 6 the details of the Nazarite are given. But we know that the Nazarite was first of all expected to abstain from wine, in other words, separation from sensual enjoyments.

It was lawful for wine to be drunk. It was lawful in New Testament times. Around the Lord's table, wine evidently was served, for men who misused the Lord's table became drunk from the drinking of the wine at the Lord's table. Wine, it is called in the Old Testament "the blood of grapes" because the connection between wine and blood is obvious. They both are red, they both are flowing liquids. But also, wine is said to be a symbol of joy. And so the fact that wine is used at the Lord's table is designed to express the joy of redemption. And when a person takes the wine in remembrance of our Lord's sufferings for us, he's taking that which indicates joy and which suggests the blood of Christ by which we have the forgiveness of sins. But the Nazarite is to abstain from wine. Separation from any kind of sensual enjoyment is the ideal.

And then further, he was to abstain from the cutting of his hair. You would think that today there are lots of Nazarites around. [Laughter] But of course this was to go much further than just the physical long hair. It was, in a sense, the separation from the pride of appearance, suggested by that.

And he was also to abstain from touching any dead body, and it's said in the context of the death of someone in the family, which suggests that there was separation from the dearest earthly relationships, in order that God may have the full and complete place in life, that he really should have in the lives of all of us.

The Nazarite was marked out by these separations, by these abstentions, in order that he might reflect what it is to be wholly God's, in a very illustrative kind of way. That's the kind of person that Samson was to be, and you'll notice as we read through the story of Samson, that so far as I can tell, he hardly ever lived up to what he was until his final act in which he truly became a Nazarite unto the Lord.

Well Manoah's wife is told that she too shall be a Nazarite because she's not to eat or drink anything that might suggest the things that would be contrary to her son's life. Well when she tells the information to Manoah her husband, evidently he was very much interested in this, naturally, but he wants some personal contact himself. We have no indication that he doubted the truthfulness of the things that his wife had said to him. We read in the New Testament, “The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man avails much” and so he immediately went to prayer. And he entreated the Lord and said, “Oh my Lord let the man of God, whom Thou didst send, come again to us and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.” We want to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and we want you to come and tell us how to do it.

Bishop Hall has said, “Well, mighty be the father of strong Samson that had such a strong faith.” But this man had his ups and downs too. But basically underneath he was a man of faith. Well the angel responds to the prayer of Manoah and there comes again visitation, consultation, which leaves them in the attitude of worship and wonder.

In the course of the return in which the angel reiterates all of the things that he has said previously to Manoah’s wife, they ask him what his name is. We read in the 17 verse, “And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?” What an interesting expression that is, “What is thy name” because it meant something a little bit different from what we mean by that. The name is just a means of identification with us. The name has become no more significant to us than a number. And in fact, numbers have become more significant than names. After all, they’re only probably a thousand, five thousand, Lewis Johnsons in the United States of America. They’re ten or fifteen right here in Dallas. A name doesn’t mean too much, but to the Hebrews a name meant a great deal. Names were reflections of character. And a name ideally was an expression of the inmost being of a person. It was really, not only identity, but description. And in the case of God, the name of God is a descriptive term. It suggests to us the character, the being, the essence, and the attributes of the person. And so when he says, “What is thy name?” it is probably to be understood as meaning more than, “What’s your moniker?” but it’s, “Who are you?” As a matter of fact, in the Hebrew text it is literally, “Who is your name?” a rather strange expression.

So evidence rests upon then, the question as a question asking him for a revelation of who he is. And the angel of the Lord answers, “Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is wonderful?” Now he does not mean by that that his name is wonderful. He’s not Mr. Wonderful. Now we do have that term, as you know, and it is the same word, the same root, in Isaiah chapter 9 as one of the Messianic titles, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” Even those names are names that are revelations of the inmost being and attributes of the Messiah. So here, “seeing it is wonderful” that is, it’s incomprehensible, it’s impossible for me to explain to you who I am. I am

incomprehensible. In a moment he will reveal his omnipotence by the fact that he can cause fire to rise up, creating it on the spur of the moment. So it is wonderful, and in a moment we read that he does wondrously. Look at the 19th verse,

“So Manoah took a kid with a meal offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord: and the angel did wondrously; (the Greek, or the Hebrew text says he “worked wonders in doing” is the way it should be paraphrased, “he worked wonders in doing;”) and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar.”

So what he did was to make fire arise out of the rock, consume the animals of the sacrifice, and then as the flame shot up towards heaven, the angel went over in the flame and ascended unto heaven himself. He did wondrously, his name was wonderful and he exhibited some of the characteristics of who he was and what he could do in what happened.

Now we know from the remainder of this passage here, particularly in verse 22, “We shall surely die because we have seen God.” that this was a theophany, an appearance of God, just as had happened in the life of Gideon. These appearances of God in the Old Testament are surely interesting. Generally speaking it is in the name of the angel of the Lord. He appeared to Adam in the Garden of Eden, it was he who came down and walked in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day, and had fellowship and relationship with Adam in the Garden of Eden. It was not God the Father, no man shall look upon him and live, he is spirit. It was not the Holy Spirit, his very title suggests that he was not a person who comes and has fellowship with men. It is the second person of the Trinity who in the future shall take to himself an additional nature, a second nature, and shall come down and dwell among men. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him, John will say

in his prologue. It was the Lord Jesus who was in the Garden of Eden with Adam. It was the angel of Jehovah, or the Lord Jesus, the second person of the Trinity who appeared to Abraham in the 18th chapter as he pled with God. It was he who appeared to Jacob, and he appears as both a man and a God and Jacob wrestled with him and came out of it the loser, as we know. It was he who appeared to Joshua outside of Jericho and appeared as a man with a sword in his hand. And when Joshua came into contact with him, finally he fell down before his face and confessed to him that he was his Lord. It was he who appeared to Daniel. These appearances of God in the Old Testament were God's ways of preparing the nation Israel for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ who would come as the incarnate God.

It has been very difficult for Israel to understand the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Now all Christians know that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is not easy to understand. In fact, in its final analysis, it is beyond our conceptions. The very fact that this is a representation of deity should make it absolutely essential that it be beyond our finite understanding because our God is an infinite God. We cannot understand the truths of, the ultimate truths of the Trinity. But we know that the Scriptures clearly teach that there is one God who subsists in three persons. And that the second person of the Trinity is he who took to himself this human nature and came to live here upon the earth. It was a startling thing for a people who were taught over and over again in the Old Testament that there is one God, “Hear oh Israel the Lord our God in one Lord.” So naturally, in their fights with the heathen and their many gods, Israel came to be impressed with the importance of the unity of God. That is an important doctrine, to which Christians hold. But unfortunately, by failing to study the theophanies of the Old Testament and by failing to study some of the passages of the Old Testament in their attention to the doctrine of the unity of God, they lost the ability, humanly speaking, to understand the tri-unity of our God. And so when the Lord Jesus came it was very difficult for Israel to comprehend the fact that the Lord Jesus could also be God. Now the reason for the theophanies was

of course preparation. Over and over God very patiently tried to prepare Israel for the time when there would come someone who would be God, and who would come in human form, the theophanies. But there were magnificent occasions in which God had personal dealings with the children of men.

Now Manoah is very much upset over this, because he remembers the passages of the word of God which in, for example, the Book of Exodus say, “There shall no man see me and live.” And he has come now to the conviction that this person who appeared to him is a divine being. And so we read in verse 22, as Manoah, having had this visitation from the Lord, turns to her. He says, “We shall surely die because we have seen God.”

Now at a time like this it's good to have a wife like Manoah had. It's wonderful to have a wife like her, and not a wife like Job's. I'm sure that Job's wife would have given him encouragement in his disappointment. She would have said, “It's true and it may be soon.” [Laughter] But, there are some people who say that women cannot reason. But the facts are that women often perceive a great deal better than men. Mr. Spurgeon has put it, “They look at once into a truth while we're still hunting for our spectacles.” and that was certainly the case here, because Manoah's wife understands fully the significance of the appearance of the angel long before it had dawned upon Manoah.

And she has three good arguments. They are irrefutable arguments. Listen to them, “His wife said unto him,” verse 23, “If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meal offering at our hands.” Now what a beautiful thing that is, she has seen immediately that the Lord who has been here, has received the kid, has received the meal offering, and not only that but has touched the rock, and the animal sacrifices have been consumed, the meal offering has been accepted, and the angel has ascended up to heaven in token of the acceptance of the offerings. And she sees immediately that if this divine being has accepted their offerings, then surely he's not going to slay them. It's evident in the offering that his desire toward them is good and not bad.

And you know this has such tremendous application to us today that I cannot forgo saying something about it. Because don't you see that if the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, has come and he has died upon a cross at Calvary as the representative man, as the substitute, as the burnt offering, as the sin offering, and don't you see that having been crucified, and having been placed in the sepulcher, and having been raised from the dead on the third day, by the Father, in token of the fact that he has accepted the work of the Son, that this work is sufficient for those who rely upon it? Don't you see that the offering, the sacrifice, has been accepted by God? And that if you have in faith laid your hands upon him as your substitute, as your sin offering, as your burnt offering, as your trespass offering, don't you see that in God's sight the penalty has already been born by you in your substitute? And because the penalty has been born already by you in your substitute, he cannot demand a further penalty. Don't you see there cannot be two penalties for your sins, if he has already born them? And if you have relied upon him you have acceptance with him. And the fact that he has been raised up is just as clear a testimony to the acceptance of Christ for us as if he had shouted from heaven, “The offering is accepted for you, you stand in him magnificent.”

But that's not all she says. She says, “He will not kill you because of his gracious revelations.” Look, she goes on to say, “Neither would he have shown us all these things.” Now of course she was looking at the way in which he has given revelation concerning the Son. He has also come and had fellowship with them. He has performed this might miracle right before them. They have been partnered to the divine manifestation. “He wouldn't have shown us these things if he intended to slay us.”

Now my dear Christian friend, God would never have intended to do away with you if he had shown you the depths of your sin, such as he has shown us the depths of our sin. Now those who never have any conception of their sin are different from those to whom God has opened the door and they have some insight into how evil and wicked they are.

One of the commentators commenting upon this says, “It’s like going down into the cellar of an old house.” I lived in an old house in Charleston, South Carolina. I never liked to go down into the basement. It was damp, it was forbidding, there were little creatures that were crawling around, which I never liked. Spiders, they were like Texas sized spiders as I remember them. It was molding, dank, and then there were strange little groves in which little yellow parts of plants would grow and without the sun they looked yellow, they almost had the pallor of death.

If God should ever open your human heart, that’s what it would look like. He reserves the look into the human heart for himself. Only he can see the true evil of the heart. And if he has revealed to us some of our sin, as he has revealed to us some of our sin, causing us to flee immediately to the cross to be delivered from the certain judgment if we should stand in our sin, he is not going to slay us. He’s shown us the emptiness of the world. And as we look around about us, we realize how foolish it is to count the things of this world as important. Vanity, vanity, all is vanity. The only hell that the redeemed ever have is that which they have here, and the only heaven that the lost have is their life here. This is a veil of tears through which we go and to make this the object of the activity of the whole of life is to lose your life. May God help us to see the truth of the world. And he’s shown us the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s implanted yearnings within us to be like him. He’s given us a desire for holiness. He’s given us a love for the word of God, and shall he not give us ultimately what he has implanted in our hearts, this desire to know him? He will not kill us because of the gracious revelations, the great things that he has showed us.

And finally, the third of her arguments, “Nor as at this time would he have told us things like these” she thinks of the promise of the child that is to come. We think of the great promises of the word of God, which make up the grace of the Holy Spirit and his work of sanctification. He saves us, he sanctifies us. He continues his sanctifying ministry. He sustains us. He supplies all of our needs. In fact he speaks so

tremendously about us that the apostle may say, in Colossians chapter 2, a book that the, many of the members of this assembly have studied over the past six or eight months, he says, “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye have been made full in him.” We are complete in him, all the promises.

And you know I love that promise over in Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 5 in which the writer of that epistle speaks about some of the things that trouble all of us in these money mad days, “Let your manner of life be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Why he would never give us promises like this, he would never cause us to understand things like this if he intended to do away with us. All of the revelation of the ministry of the Lord Jesus, all of the promises of God, all of these great things that he has done for us are assurances of us, to us, that he is anxious for our good.

Well the story concludes with the culmination of the promises in verse 24, “And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson.” He’s named, he begins to stir supernaturally. Samson, incidentally, is a name derived from the Hebrew word *shemesb*, which means sun, s-u-n, and so it’s almost as if his name were sunny. That’s a nickname with us. The name however, may come from a word that means to devastate, or to minister, but at any rate, he is named and we read the Spirit of the Lord began to move. Literally, this word has the idea of to strike like a bell. And so the force of it is that the Holy Spirit began to agitate Samson, to come upon him in power, to influence him and we shall see some of his mighty works that were performed when he was endued with power by the Spirit on high, shortly.

Let me close by just saying a word or two about this story by way of application. Where dedication exists, such as existed in the case of Manoah and his wife, the realization of God’s presence often comes. There are people who expect to have an experience with God but they do not give themselves to any seeking of that experience with the Lord. If you are going to have an experience with the Lord, generally speaking,

it is preceded by the work of the Holy Spirit in causing us to desire to know him. And as you are caused by him to seek the face of God, he often answers by giving you an experience of his face. And Samson's mother and father learned the truth in reality that God was not dead. As they sought him, he was found by them. There is a great difference between believing that there is a God and believing in the God that is. Every Christian, every Christian, should know what it is to have first-hand contact with the Lord.

And finally, you are present with us this morning. You have heard me make reference to the fact that the Lord Jesus came to die, to shed his blood, that sinners might be forgiven. You have heard great news. It's great news for sinners to know that a sacrifice has been made, that a substitutionary sacrifice has been offered. The very fact that you are here this morning, by the providence of God, argues that God does not in his benevolence, desire that you perish. The Scriptures say, “He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” The very fact that you are here argues for the desire of God that you know fully the redeeming grace that is in Jesus Christ our Lord. May God speak to your heart, may he open it up just a little bit and show you how sinful you are, how condemned you are, how much you have offended a holy God, how desperate your case is, how soon if you do not turn you are to come into the hands of a God who condemns and may you flee to the offering that has been made for sinners. And if the Holy Spirit should so work in your heart, and you come to the foot of the cross and say, “Oh Lord I am a sinner. I do believe in the Lord Jesus. I need this salvation.” you shall experience the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. But do not sit in an audience like this never having had that experience and think for one moment that your case is not desperate before God, it is. You can know a great deal about God and be lost, as the demons give abundant testimony. May God cause you to come to him, whom to know is life eternal. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Our Father we thank Thee for the truths of the chapter that we have studied. We praise Thee for the Old Testament revelation concerning the work of the Son, Father, and Spirit before the days of our incarnate savior's work. And we pray that we may think seriously about our relationship to Thee, oh God. If there are some here who do not know the Lord Jesus, who have been resting in a false sense of security, oh God touch them. Cause them to see their lost condition. And cause them to come to him. And Father for the believers, we pray oh God that Thou wilt help us to remember that the things that Thou hast shown us are encouragements. Thou hast acted in goodness toward us, complete goodness. Thou dost desire our own good. Oh may we respond. May we know what it is to seek Thy face in holiness and righteousness, and enable us Lord to be of use to Thee before Jesus comes. May grace, mercy, and peace go with us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.