

Judges 13:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

This verse belongs to the Samson cycle addressing Samson's birth and Nazirite calling. Samson represents both the heights of God-empowered strength and the depths of human weakness through moral compromise. His Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21) set him apart as holy to God, yet his persistent violations of this vow—contact with dead animals (14:8-9), seven-day feast (likely involving wine, 14:10), and finally revealing his hair's secret (16:17)—demonstrate progressive spiritual decline.

Theologically, Samson illustrates how spiritual gifts don't guarantee spiritual maturity. The Spirit of the LORD came upon Samson repeatedly, giving superhuman strength, yet this empowerment didn't produce corresponding moral transformation. His attraction to Philistine women (14:1-3, 16:1, 16:4) directly violated God's command against intermarriage with Canaanites (Deuteronomy 7:3-4). This demonstrates that God can use flawed instruments for His purposes, but this never excuses or endorses sin.

Samson's final prayer—"O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen

me" (16:28)—shows genuine repentance and renewed faith. His death accomplished more than his life (16:30), suggesting that even spectacular failure can be redeemed when we return to God. However, the tragedy is that Samson's potential was largely wasted through moral compromise. His story warns believers that consistent holy living, not merely spectacular spiritual experiences, characterizes faithful discipleship.

Historical Context

Historical Setting: The Book of Judges spans approximately 350-400 years (c. 1375-1050 BCE) during the Late Bronze Age collapse and early Iron Age. This period saw the disintegration of major empires (Hittites, Mycenaeans) and weakening of Egyptian control over Canaan, creating a power vacuum filled by emerging peoples including Philistines (Sea Peoples), Aramaeans, and regional kingdoms. The decentralized tribal structure left Israel vulnerable to external oppression and internal chaos.

Cultural Context: This passage relates to Samson's birth and Nazirite calling. Canaanite religion dominated the region, centered on Baal (storm/fertility god), Asherah (mother goddess), and Anat (war goddess). Archaeological discoveries at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) have provided extensive information about Canaanite mythology and religious practices. Baal worship involved ritual prostitution, child sacrifice, and fertility rites tied to agricultural seasons. Israel's persistent attraction to these gods demonstrates the strong cultural pressure to conform to surrounding nations' religious practices.

The material culture of this period shows gradual Israelite settlement in the Canaanite hill country with simpler pottery and architecture than coastal Canaanite cities. Iron technology was beginning to spread, giving military advantage to peoples who mastered it (note the Philistines' iron monopoly, 1 Samuel 13:19-22). The absence of centralized government during the judges period stands in stark contrast to the bureaucratic city-states of Canaan and the imperial administration of Egypt and Mesopotamia. This political structure reflected Israel's theocratic ideal—God as king—yet the repeated cycles of

apostasy showed this ideal required more than political structures; it demanded heart transformation.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this passage about Samson's birth and Nazirite calling reveal God's character in dealing with persistent human rebellion and incomplete obedience?
2. What patterns of spiritual compromise or incomplete obedience in your own life mirror Israel's failures during the judges period?
3. How does understanding the cyclical nature of sin and deliverance in Judges help you appreciate Christ's perfect and final deliverance from sin's power?

Interlinear Text

עַל יַעֲלֶה הַבָּנָה כִּי
H3588 H2009 H2029 and bear a son and no razor shall come H3808 H5921
וְיָלְדָת בְּנֵי וְלֹא וְמִזְרָה לֹא
H3205 H1121 H4177
רָאשׁ וְרָאשׁ כִּי נָזִיר נָזִיר אֱלֹהִים
on his head shall be a Nazarite unto God for the child H4480
H7218 H3588 H5139 H430 H1961 H5288
מִן הַבָּנָה יְהִי הָאֱלֹהִים
from the womb shall be a Nazarite unto God for the child H4480
H990 H1931 H2490 H3467 H853 H3478
וְיִשְׁרָאֵל אֶת לְהֹשִׁיעַ יְהֹשִׁיעַ יְהֹשִׁיעַ
from the womb shall be a Nazarite unto God for the child H4480
H3027 H6430

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 6:5 (Parallel theme): All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

1 Samuel 1:11 (Parallel theme): And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

1 Chronicles 18:1 (Parallel theme): Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 7:13 (References Israel): So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

2 Samuel 8:1 (Parallel theme): And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Methegammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

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