

Theme: The Lord makes himself known. It is not simply to give us rules by which we can gain his favor; rather, he call us to believe on him and trust him to give us everything we need for salvation and life.

Background: Jephthah and the Ammonites – Samson and the Philistines
It will be important to look at Samson’s God, not just at Samson.

Introduction: When things look OK on the outside – but are rotting on the inside

I. All Is Not Well (12:7-15)

- A. The absence of peace/rest
 - Peace/rest is not mentioned – not since the days of Gideon
- B. An ominous refrain
 - “And he died”
 - No matter how great the accomplishments, they don’t last
- C. The “appearance” of rest
 - 1. Prosperous judges
 - a. “Barren” Jephthah gives way to men with full “quivers”
 - b. Self-promoting?
 - c. “Raised up” by God like Gideon, Ehud?
 - 2. No deliverance
 - a. Peace - The absence of conflict??
 - b. Abdon’s grave – with the Amalekites!
 - 3. Thinking all is well

II. Judgment Falls

- A. God defines “evil” (13:1)
 - 1. Evil in the sight of the Lord
 - a. God defines what is evil
 - Clear, unchanging, inalterable standard
 - b. *We* do not define what is good
 - 2. Justified in our own eyes
- B. God gives them over
 - 1. A new way of life
 - For 40 years
 - Accustomed to captivity/oppression
 - 2. They don’t “cry out”

III. God Provides (Compassion Triumphs) (13:2-7)

- A. Filling the barren womb
 - 1. The mercy of God
 - a. Not the result of repentance or confession
 - b. On the weak and forgotten
 - 2. The power of God
 - She *will* bear a son!
 - Taking away the reproach and sorrow
 - Like others before and after her
- B. One set apart
 - 1. Nazirite from birth
 - 2. A Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:3-7)
 - 3. To begin salvation
 - a. Set apart (separated/consecrated)
 - b. To begin to save them from Philistines
 - c. A work he can't finish!

Application: Will we reach heaven because of our great faith – or because of God's great faithfulness? (2 Timothy 1:9; Acts 2:21)

IV. The Lord's Assurance (13:8-25)

- A. Answered prayer (9)
 - 1. The return of the messenger
 - He returns (10)
 - 2. The 1st question (12)
 - Not asked in doubt
 - He wants more information
- B. The Lord's self-revelation
 - 1. Affirmation – Not “information” for Manoah
 - “We have not what we ask when we ask we know not what. Manoah's request was honestly meant and yet was denied.” Matthew Henry Commentary
 - 2. Give honor where honor is due (16-18)
 - Not a prophet, but a messenger
 - 3. The 2nd question (17)
 - Give me your name
 - 4. It is “Wonderful” (Job 42:3b; Psalm 139:6; Isaiah 9:6)
 - 5. the Angel of the Lord?
- C. Manoah's self-awareness
 - 1. Belief! (20)
 - 2. The fear of the Lord (21,22)
 - 3. The grace of the Lord (23)
 - Making his salvation known

Conclusion: We are called to believe. See the Lord's salvation!