

## ENCOURAGING MANOAH

**Judges 13:22** *And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.*

**Judges 13:23** *But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these.*

The marriage of Job and the marriage of Manoah were both founded on faith and righteousness. They loved God and were faithful in every way until both houses received supernatural visitation. It is a paradox that Christian marriages can be strong and stable until the supernatural intervenes. In the case of Job, it was Satan who intervened violently, while an angel of God visited the house of Manoah. In the case of Job's house, his wife crumbled under the pressure. "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). The roles were reversed in Manoah's household – the angel's visitation brought a mortal fear upon him and he was certain the two of them would die, but his wife countered with 3 powerful arguments. She was certain that God sent the angel to bless them, which we will consider more carefully later. May I ask us all to reflect on the above for a moment! We look to heaven and mention heaven often in our walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, but what will a visitation from heaven reveal about our faith and love of God? The Bible is full of mixed responses when angels appeared to the people of God: Jacob recognized the angel at Peniel as an opportunity and an invitation to change his character forever while Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, was struck with muteness because of his unbelief. What will heaven reveal about your faith whether you are married or single?

**1Cor 3:13** *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

God used fire to test both households. The baptism of fire is intended to purify our souls. Our souls are very precious in the eyes of the Lord and he cannot stand to see any defilement or impurities in our souls, so he sends a fire of baptism in our lives once a while. The fire consumed everything Job had – his sons, daughters, possessions and devastated his health. His wife lost her faith and urged him, sadly, to curse God and die. Job replied, "Job But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 2:10). The fire revealed the faith of Job to be made of gold while his wife's was

stubble. On the other hand, Manoah's faith was shown to be built on shaky grounds – he misinterpreted the actions of the angel for the anger of God and thought he would die. Actually, he failed to distinguish the angel from God which is why he thought they had seen God and would die. One cannot serve God and think that God will kill you – this is not the kind of faith that pleases God. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). The Devil would like some people to believe that God is only dangerous and seeks to destroy – that is not God's character, but the Devil's. A story was told about a Christian woman whose unbelieving husband misunderstood her love and patience. She tolerated his abuse and rudeness always with great love and patience. One day he struck a bet with his equally corrupt friends that his wife would treat them with much love despite the late hour and their drunkenness. He went home, and sure enough, she woke up at that late hour with a smile, offered them food and kindness. When his friends asked her why she put up with this, she said that she loved her husband and wanted him to experience her Christian love and kindness because, since he hates the Lord, this life will be his only chance to experience love; in hell there is no love and kindness. Her husband had misunderstood her actions. Let us not misunderstand the actions of heaven, as did Manoah. Paul says, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

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Manoah's wife interpreted the angel's actions correctly. May God give us spiritual wives and husbands to interpret spiritual matters correctly! However, her message also has bigger implications for the entire world. Jesus Christ is God's burnt offering. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). This scripture reveals that God is not angry with those who accept his sacrifice on the Cross – his anger is reserved for those who reject his sacrifice. Do you believe this? If so, God is not angry with you. Amen! On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared to the assembled Jews, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: that God was very angry with them because of what they had done to the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:23). The Bible states that they were pricked in their hearts and were ready to do anything (Acts 2:37).

**Act 2:38** *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Have you obeyed Acts 2:38? Then rest assured that God is not angry with you anymore, you will not die but live forever surrounded by his eternal love and mercy. Manoah's wife kept preaching to her husband, "neither would he have shewed us all these things" (Judges 13:23). People of God, we know that God has not hidden his Gospel from us. The Lord Jesus declared "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). He further prophesied, "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11). Each time the Gospel is preached, the words of Manoah's wife are being fulfilled – God is not angry with us, he loves us and wants to save us.

Finally, the wife of Manoah's third argument was about God's present message: "nor would as at this time have told us such things as these" (Judges 13:2). God had just told them about the birth of Samson. Why would he then be angry with them? Similarly today, we believe that God is speaking to us every day about new things that he will do.

**John 16:12** *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

**John 16:13** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

We have this confidence, as the wife of Manoah declared, that God speaks to us even today. This means he is not angry with us nor will kill us, but has chosen us to fulfill his purposes on earth. Hallelujah! For all these reasons, let there be no fear, only great rejoicing, as Mary rejoiced, when heaven intervenes into our lives. Jobs, encourage your wives, wives, encourage your Manoahs! The Devil wanted to strike terror in the heart of Manoah so he would not be able to raise up Samson. Thank God for his wife – she encouraged him to accept Samson as the gift of God. He will not die but live to see his son destroy the enemy and set Israel free. Let us all determine to encourage many Manoahs in the church. They must believe that Jesus is with them so they can use this knowledge to do the work of God.