

Then Manoah Knew that He was The Angel of The Lord

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- [0 : 00] We can resume our public worship of God by singing to His praise from Psalm 89. Psalm 89, we can read from the beginning of the psalm.
- God's message I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall by faithfulness make to be known to generations all. For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure thy faithfulness even in the heavens, thou wilt establish sure.
- I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously, and to my servant whom I loved, to David sworn have I, that I thy seat establish shall forever to remain, and will to generations all thy throne build and maintain.
- The praises of thy wonders, Lord, the heavens shall express, and in the congregation of saints thy faithfulness. For who in heaven with the Lord may once himself compare?
- Who is like God among the sons of those that mighty are? Great fear in meeting of the saints is due unto the Lord, and he of all about and should with reverence be adored.
- [1 : 27] O thou that art the Lord of hosts, what Lord in mightiness is like to thee, who campest round heart with thy faithfulness.
- And so on, we're going to sing from verse 3, 6 stanzas. Psalm 89, I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously.
- I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously.
- And to my servant whom I love, to David sworn have thy, that I thy seed establish shall forever, forever to remain, and will to generations of thy throne build, build and maintain.
- The praises of thy wonders, Lord, the heavens shall express.
- [3 : 17] And in the congregation of saints thy faithfulness.
- For who in heaven with the Lord may once himself compare?
- Who is like God among the sons of those that mighty are?
- Great fear in meeting of the saints is due unto the Lord, God of hosts, what Lord?
- And he of all about him should with reverence be adored.
- [4 : 44] God of hosts, what Lord in mightiness is like to thee, who campest round heart with thy faithfulness.
- Thy faithfulness. Let's join together in prayer.
- second permissioning of singly. O Lord of hosts, O Lord of hosts, O Lord or God, we marvel at the variety of descriptions that we discover within your own world that reminds us of who you are and what is to be said about you.

and a God who is compassed about with holiness and that holiness is something that we can but talk of at a surface level even the holiest of saints are holy, holy by reason of your own intervention in their lives and in the ability that you have bestowed upon them to consecrate themselves to your service and even there they bemoan the fact that they are not what they would wish to be while they recognise that there are limitations placed upon them by reason of their very creaturehood and the fact that as creatures they are fallen nevertheless it is their heart's desire that they would be like their Lord and their Saviour and it is their great prospect however unlikely it may seem to be to them as they are that one day they will be like him and they shall see him as he is we give thanks O Lord for the gospel that holds out such a prospect to all saints even those who think of themselves to be the least of these as the apostle of old who thought of himself as someone who who came to know Christ as one who was a disciple born out of time and yet the knowledge that you ingrained within him was such that he desired nothing better than to know Christ because that was to him better by far than any other knowledge that he could attain to as we gather this evening in the name of Christ may we be conscious of his presence amongst us we give thanks for the promise that he gave to his church even as we read this morning as he gave instruction concerning the particular ministry to go to the whole earth and make Christ known making disciples of all men we give thanks that while that is something that is ongoing that we see even in our own experience how it was so important for others to have done that so that we could have something of that to impart to others we give thanks for the testimony of the saints while there is only one saviour there is no doubt many ways in which we can get to know that saviour the preeminent way is through the preaching of the word and we give thanks for the opportunity to preach and proclaim

Jesus Christ and him crucified we bless you and praise you for all who would wish to hear of him and who have it in their hearts to seek him with the promise set before them that those who seek him merely will find him we pray for your blessing upon the youth of our community as they look forward with anticipation to a life long lived and all the prospects that are held out to them very often what they see before their mind's eye are so many glittering and attractive propositions designed to draw them in and to make them think that everything that is in the world will bring to them the craving of their soul there is a master who knows our failings and who has many centuries of experience in baiting the hook that once it takes a hold that seldom lets few loose from its hold but we give thanks that there is that there is one who is the fisher of men who has equipped others to go out with the net of the gospel and to bring in the young just as surely as any others are brought in so we pray for the young of our community thankful for every home and household that is containing all such that they may find themselves with young people deciding to come to our knowledge of Christ and to avail themselves of the opportunity that they have before they are sucked into the quagmire of this world's wickedness we pray for the middle aged those who are industrious in their role within our community and so taken up with all kinds of legitimate interests whether it is building homes or establishing their own work or being involved in the workplace of others but so many of these things that are so necessary become the abiding interest of our attention and even of our affection so much so that we do not have time for the

[12 : 30] Christ of the gospel we are drawn away from him to other things and their legitimacy would appear to us to mean that there is a need to give time to these things before we give time to the needs of our soul Lord many have discovered that their life has almost abated without them realising how quickly the years pass and how soon our time in this world is spent and we may be in company with them tonight who are in that very boat that predicament confronts them and while they are still on mercy's ground there is a hope for them but they are still the target of the wicked one who would say to them why bother now with the things of your soul what use are you for the

Christ who is calling people to his service what service can you give your life was nearly spent and why why would you think that there is anything that you can offer to that saviour of sinners alive from the master of lies the deceiver who seeks to deceive we pray Lord whatever place we find ourselves in this evening that we would question the standing we have in the sight of God and if there is any doubt in our mind to make sure that we bring our doubts and questions to be answered by the one who has all answers we pray for wisdom to know where to come direct us to the food stool of Christ that those even who have perhaps by reason of their own earlier convictions committed to

Christ and yet now their convictions are not so certain and now their witness and testimony is not so sure we pray for them Lord that you would remind them that Christ is still the same that the God of heaven is still God and that no matter how we find ourselves from time to time as many do under the under the effects and the influences of the world that we may remind ourselves that there is someone to whom we must go and to whom else can we go for you alone possess the words of everlasting life we pray for your blessing upon the proclamation of truth that speaks to each of us wherever we are and whoever we may be open the eyes of our understanding that we may be persuaded by the truth of

God that is able to make us wise to salvation remind us again of the need that we have to plead the promises of God and to pray until we pray to accompany the world with prayer so that those who are yet without God without hope in the world that they would hear the word and that they would believe the word and that they would commit to the word even the one who is the way the truth and the life we ask that your blessing would accompany the service here this evening and in every other location where Christ is lifted up in the gospel may we marvel at his forbearance his willingness to embrace all who would seek him may the power of almighty God accompany the labors and the endeavors of those that you have sent out into the harvest fields we know that the fields are whitened to harvest and the day will come when the husbandman will come and the harvest will be cut down

Lord hear our prayers and petitions on behalf of those who so diligently labor where their labor seem to be unrequited and there is no fruit to be seen in your time we will see what has been done and why and we will see each one of us where we are with God whether we have done or good or evil we pray for our nation that is negligent and woefully ignorant of the things of God we pray Lord that you would bring us back to a sense of the realities that eternity sets before us that the nation upon which you have fixed your gazes a nation that has one king and that throne is occupied never to be dethroned he is one who has a kingdom that knows no end and while we look at a nation that has a king and a family that is royal and has politicians to govern in his name very very few of them are mindful of the spiritual realities that your word sets before us mercy fully undertake for us that we may turn with penitent hearts into the presence of the king seeking that he would extend the scepter that is royal and bless us all remember the nations of the earth we pray for the places that we know of that are assailed by drought by famine by fire and flame those that are in the grip of war and the horrors that war brings we are so fearful of what it does and so mindful of the awfulness that we see brought to our attention and yet the remoteness makes us so often steely hearted in the sight of those that are brought to our attention who are crippled by their griefs and their sorrows oh lord of god be merciful to us that we would know to turn to the god who is here and answer of prayer and bring out petitions on behalf of others who cannot pray for themselves so watch over us we ask blessing your word to us and cleansing us from sin in

[19 : 54] Jesus name amen I'm going to sing now from psalm 28 psalm 28 reading from the beginning to thee I cry oh lord my rock hold hold not thy peace to me less like those that to pit descend I by thy silence be the voice hear of my humble prayer when unto thee I cry when to thine holy oracle I lift mine hands on high with ill men draw me not away that work in equity that speak peace to their friends while in their hearts doth mischief lie give them according to their deeds and dills endeavored and as their handiworks deserve to them be rendered

God God shall not build but them destroy who would not understand the Lord's own works nor did regard the doing of his hand forever blessed be the Lord for graciously he heard the voice of my petitions and prayers did regard let us sing these verses 1 through to 6 of psalm 28 to thee I'll cry O Lord my rock hold not thy peace to me to thee I'll cry O Lord my rock hold not thy peace to me blessed like those that took it descend

I by thy silence be the voice hear from my humble prayers when unto thee I cry when to thine holy oracle I lift my hands on high with them and draw me not away that work in which I love me peace to them friends my end their hearts to mission

I give them according to their deeds deeds I do them death for that and I will send them the works deserve to them be rendered red God God shall not build but them destroy who would not understand the Lord Lord the Lord Lord did every

God the doing of His hand forever blessed be the Lord for He He heard the voice of my pageant patience and prayers did regard the voice of my pageant patience and prayers did regard with regard the children of

[25 : 34] Israel did evil again in the Lord delivered them into the hand of the family of the Dan and his wife was the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman and said unto her behold now thou shalt conceive and bear a son and eat not any unclean thing for thou shalt 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 to the Lord and said to the man and the man and man and man he and man and he said to the man and man and man and man and man and man and he and he and man and he and man and the and the angel of man and the man and man and man and man and man and man and

And Manoah arose and went after his wife and came to the man and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest 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 anything 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.

[28 : 57] And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread. 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 saints 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 secret?

So Manoah took a kid with a meat 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 off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar.

[29 : 57] And Manoah and his wife looked on it, 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 sinned 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 meat offering at our hands.

Neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would at this time have told us such things as these. And the woman bare 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 Eshtarol.

[31 : 02] Amen, and may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word. To his name be the praise. Let us sing now some verses from Psalm 139.

Psalm 139. And at verse 13. Verse 13.

For thou possessed hast my reins, and thou hast covered me, when I within my mother's womb enclosed was by thee.

Thee will I praise, for fearfully and strangely made I am. Thy works are marvellous, and right well my soul doth know the same.

My substance was not hid from thee, when as in secret I was made, and in earth's lowest parts was wrought most curiously.

[32 : 11] Thine eyes my substance did behold yet be unperfect. And in the volume of thy book my members all were writhed, which after in continuance were fashioned every one.

When as they yet all shapeless were, and of them there was none. How precious also are thy thoughts, O gracious God, to me.

And in their son how passing great, and numberless they be. And so on. We'll sing from verse 13.

For thou possessed hast my reins, and thou hast covered me. For thou possessed hast my reins, and thou hast covered me.

When I within my mother's womb enclosed was by thee.

[33 : 28] He will I praise, for fearfully, and strangely made I am.

Thy works are marvellous, and right well my soul doth know.

My substance was not hid from thee.

When as in secret I was made and in earth's lowest parts was wrought most curiously.

Thy nights my substance did behold yet be unperfect.

[34 : 52] And in the volume of thy book my members all were writhed.

Which after in continuance were fashioned every one.

When as they yet all shapeless were, and of them there was none.

How precious also are thy thoughts, O gracious God, to me.

And in their son how passing great, and numberless they be.

[36 : 17] I would like us to turn to the chapter that we read in the Old Testament book of Judges, chapter 13.

We're going to look at pretty much the Old Testament book of Judges, chapter 13. We're going to look at pretty much the whole chapter, but we can read again at verse 19.

So Manoah took a kid with a meat 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 off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar.

And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife.

[37 : 27] 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.

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 showed us all these things.

Nor would he, nor would us at this time have told us such things as these. There is a refrain that runs pretty much through the whole of the book of Judges.

It's such a prominent refrain, it's difficult to get away from it. And it goes like this.

The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.

[38 : 39] Not only do we have these words, we also, you could have you place alongside the following thought, which is also repeated.

Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And I think these two statements complement each other in a sense.

Not only does God have a poor opinion of them, but it is made worse by their own inability to discern the fact that they have a problem.

They cannot see what God sees. And what they do see is completely different to what God sees.

And you can understand why that would be a problem. We know that God, as we were singing the last psalm, sees all things. There is nothing that escapes us notice.

[39 : 53] Not just the world in which we live and what goes on in it, but what goes on in our hearts and in our minds. All these things, our thoughts are known, well known to God.

So the fact that God is displeased with them resulting in judgment doesn't mean that they appreciate that it is a judgment.

Now you can understand the difficulty that presents. The fact that God is displeased with them is something that they should, I would hope, be recognized or recognizable.

But that isn't the case. You would imagine that God bringing judgment to bear upon an individual or a generation that people would pretty quickly recognize this is God at work.

But that's not the way it is. And if you think of our own generation today, would it be possible to say that God is displeased with us as a people, as a generation?

[41 : 21] There are many who believe that that is the way things are. God is displeased, exceedingly displeased with the world in which we live in.

How many Christians would be aware of our nation as a people, as a people? And yet how many would be aware of the fact that there is God's displeasure?

How many people would be willing to acknowledge it? How many Christians even would be ready to state that as a fact or even as a possibility?

How many Christians would be able to acknowledge it? Dale Ralph Davis, a commentator, writes that what we find at the beginning of this chapter, a declaration of 40 years oppression by God because of the sin of the people.

And he says, you would expect that as a result of that, the people would cry out to God.

[42 : 41] And there are times when God judges a nation and judges a people. And that is the response. Well, that's the required response.

When God judges, when God brings his own condemnation to light, the appropriate response is for there to be repentance, for there to be sorrow for the sin that causes God offence, for there to be a turning away from it and a turning back to righteousness.

But what Dale Ralph Davis says, it appears as if this people are so content, as it were, with their bondage.

And remember, the nations around them are their enemies and they are allowed to oppress them at will.

And yet they seem to be willing to yield to that oppression or to sit under it, as it were.

[44 : 01] They have become accustomed to their circumstances. And because they're accustomed, they are unwilling to do anything about it.

Now think of that for a minute. Think of how readily we can become accustomed to all kinds of things.

And when that mindset takes a hold of us, we can just close the hatches and burden down our shirts and persevere with whatever it is that we're doing.

Introduce that thought into the spiritual realm. And if you begin thinking along the lines that the God who blesses his word is not blessing his word.

And you become accustomed to that. You become fixed in your thinking and consider it well.

[45 : 25] Maybe that's what we have to put up with. And if that whole thought takes a hold, and then inactivity is the response.

It is a response. Believe it or not, inactivity is a response. Failure to do something is a response. Failure to act is a response.

When action is required, when a person is really needing to do something in response to whatever it is that has come their way.

Well, that's the kind of background that we have here. The situation really is such that if you read the book of Judges through from beginning to end, it's not a book that you want to rush to.

Many, many commentators say that the book of Judges is a sad book. And it's a book of great difficulty.

[46 : 36] Especially because the people who would expect to read the book of Judges are God's people. These are the people who read the Bible habitually.

God's people are the people who have an appetite for the scripture and who want to read God's word. But the content of the book of Judges is such that it confronts us with a situation that not one of us is content or comfortable with.

It makes us see the misery that there is in the world. And that misery is seen in the lives of those who are God's people.

They are in a situation where their disobedience is the cause of their misery.

And their disobedience is leading them into further and deeper experiences where there is no life to be found or seen.

[47 : 55] Now at this point in the experience of the Judges, there is this chapter which is a sort of bridge to the last ages of the Judges.

And this chapter seems to be quite a unique chapter in the sense that most of the chapters speak about the activities of the Judges.

But this is introducing us to Samson. And even though Samson is not mentioned until the end of the chapter, this is a chapter that speaks to us of his parents and their experience of God's promise.

And it's how they react to God's promise that I want us to think about. I want us to think about the people here who are confronted and they're God's people, mind.

They're God's people that have received God's promise. And the way that God deals with them leaves us wondering, well, where were they in relation to God when God spoke to them?

[49 : 15] It is, as I said, a book that speaks to a people that are too experienced in the darkness of this world and not sufficiently experienced in the things of God.

So the principal characters are brought to our attention almost at the very outset of the chapter.

Manoah and his wife, or rather Manoah's wife and her husband, Manoah. There was a certain man of Zorah of the family of the Danites, his name was Manoah, and his wife was Baran and Baernaut.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman and said unto her, Behold, now thou art barren, and baerest not.

And so on. Now, from my perspective, the interesting thing there, I believe it's interesting anyway. Without question, the situation that's confronting us here is a situation that has probably got much to say about the attitude of the people of God to being childless.

[50 : 42] Because the people of God, especially those that God had spoken to and entered into covenant with, were assured of God's blessing, and the fruit of the womb was a measure of that blessing.

So children were something that spoke to them of God's favor. And you see that repeatedly, and it's interesting how often this predicament confronted the people of God, especially those that God were going to favor and bless and use as mighty instruments in his cause.

But in this case, Manoah and his wife, they are childless. And the Lord speaks to them. And instead of speaking to Manoah, which is what you would expect, because he is the head of the household, he is the man of God, he is the one that is named, if nothing else.

But it is his wife that is approached. And if you notice, the reader is told who spoke to Manoah, Manoah's wife, in verse 3, and again in verse 9, and verse 13, and verse 16.

The account that you read, what she sees, and what she understands by what she sees, is that a man of God has come to her, and spoken to her.

[52 : 35] As far as she is concerned, that is who has come. Somebody, and she identifies the person as a man of God, possibly a prophet. Somebody that God, because it is God's word to her, that is being spoken by her.

The promise that she receives from this man is from God, so naturally she concludes, this is a man of God. But in the account that you have here, her appreciation of who has spoken to her, differs to the presentation that the passage makes to her, of who it is.

She calls him a man of God, and the writer says, the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman. She goes back to her husband, and she tells her husband, that a man of God has spoken to her, and the writer, who has presented this to her, at all times, calls the person, an angel, no, the angel of the Lord.

And that itself is, I think, quite interesting, that the passage refers to the communicator of the promise as the angel of the Lord.

The recipients of the promise do not recognize the messenger as the angel of the Lord. They see somebody, and recognize somebody, albeit as God's servant, but they do not see the significance of who the servant is.

[54 : 22] At least, not until verse 21 do we read there that they recognize, at verse 21, then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord.

And I think that this has a bearing on how they were placed spiritually. The time in which they lived, and the spiritual climate was such that they were not as spiritually alert as they were, as they could have been.

and so discerning as they could have been. I'm not insisting on this, but I think, personally, I think that that is the way things were.

I hope I'm not reading too much into it, but it does seem remarkable that when God speaks, he speaks, first of all, to the woman and not the man, and both of them are looking for the man of God rather than the angel of God.

Now, it shouldn't surprise us because if the messenger was an angel from heaven, not everybody has been able to recognize angels when they came to speak to them.

[55 : 54] if you go to Hebrews and chapter 13, we read there that it is possible for some to entertain angels in a way.

Now, some interpret that and point to specific instances in the Old Testament where the patriarchs were encountered with an angel and didn't recognize it at the outset.

but I'm sure experientially that you've read and heard of people who were confronted by seemingly ordinary people, recognizably human and foreign, and yet with hindsight they thought, well, these may be angels without us realizing it.

but let's move on. It's possible, at least, that there was something about this very gradual understanding of what the Lord was saying to them.

The angel appeared to Manoah's wife, we've already said that, and she was the first point of contact.

[57 : 10] He prayed to God, but his prayer was answered by the angel speaking to her. Now, I don't know, we can't insist on this, but I would suggest naturally she would want to go and tell her husband of her experience, but you would have expected his prayer to have been answered to himself and not to her, but that is not the way it is.

And when you look at verse 9, 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.

it seems to me that that statement itself is suggestive. It is telling you something about the purpose of God.

If God wanted to speak directly to Manoah, he would have, but he speaks to her wife, his wife, and he speaks to her rather than speak directly to him in answer to his prayer.

Now, we're not told why he did that. We're not told much about the reason that God has for dealing with them in this particular way, other than that we discover that when the angel of the Lord speaks to her, not only does he tell her that she is going to have a child and that child is going to be a Nazarite, but she herself is placed under the same Nazarite vows as the child that she is going to bring into the world, which seems strange, does it not?

[59 : 09] Before he was born, Samson was placed under the vows of a Nazarite, and if you want to find out what they are, just go back to the Old Testament book of Numbers and chapter 6, and there it describes to you the various rules and regulations that governed that.

But what that meant was that when her son would be born, he would be dedicated to the Lord, and more than that, the vows were upon her before he was born.

Some see there a type of Christ, but maybe that's taking it a bit too far. but I think also we need to notice that the Lord was not ashamed, well maybe that word is not appropriate, but he dealt with the woman realising she was a woman and was willing to confer upon her the privilege of his word coming to her directly, even though she was a woman, and in that generation she would have been a second class citizen if you like.

And the amazing thing further is this, that the whole passage does not give her name. she is called Manoah's wife, she is not given the name Mary or any other name, just Manoah's wife.

And I think it reminds you of the workings of God's mind, which is so contrary to us. You would think that if the Lord meant for this woman to do a great work, that at very least he would give her a name.

[61 : 12] At the very least her name would be remembered. But it reminds us of a very subtle truth that we can take on board, and that is that many things that God does in this world is done by him through people that are unidentified.

He works in the world sometimes through men and women that are not applauded or lauded or identified in any way, yet the work of the Lord is accomplished by them.

And the role that he gives to her is of the utmost import. The third thing I want you to take on board and think on these things, they're just observations and they're not, I think any person who can read through this chapter can reflect on these things for yourselves.

You can notice her intuition moving from a man of God to a man with the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible.

I think they are both taken on a journey of discovery. there is deep mystery attached to their encounter and perhaps the fact that their eyes are opened gradually rather than all at once suggests to me in a way the situation from which they're beginning.

[62 : 56] You know, you've got to go back to the context, you've got to go back to the spiritual situation in which the church had descended and into which God was beginning to work afresh.

And the people of God needed to be handled, I suppose, with care. Because a face-to-face encounter with God in all his glory suddenly might well have had a counterproductive effect.

Maybe that's too human a thinking. or too obvious a thinking. But we have to understand that sometimes God takes note of our vulnerability and our humanity and deals with us accordingly as he dealt with them.

Now, there's a mystery, as I said, concerning the encounter. but if you'll notice the insistence that it was the angel of the Lord that was speaking to them.

And very often, and it's not always the case, but you'll notice that it is Manoah who, after discovering the significance of the encounter, that he calls the angel an angel, then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord.

[64 : 40] Manoah has come to a knowledge of that, but the description that is given to us consistently is the angel of the Lord. God. And usually, when that is the case, it is asking us to think of the possibility at least, that the angel of the Lord is the Lord himself in a human forum, or in a recognizable forum, and speaking directly.

It's what's called either a theophany, which is a manifestation of God in a physical way, because God does not have a body, he is spirit, but there are occasions where you have a theophany, where God speaks directly to his people in a physical forum, where that forum is clearly identified as God.

God. And the angel of the Lord very often speaks of the Melech Yahweh, it speaks of the God of heaven addressing his people as a physical entity that they can recognize, their eyes can see, and the glory of that person was identifiable to them.

and the suggestion is, I think, for me anyway, that the person that spoke with them was none other than the Lord himself.

and when you move on again, and it's interesting, the progress that they are making together, you know, the woman talks to her husband, she tells him what she has heard, she goes to him for affirmation, he goes to the angel, he goes to God in prayer, and he goes to the angel and wants the same information to be brought home to him.

[66 : 52] Now, it is still very much as if he's feeling his way into what he is being led into. When you get to verse 21, it shows that they both appreciate the significance of the encounter.

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. It's as if they've come to this realisation at long last.

This isn't just a messenger from God, this is God himself that's speaking to us, although Manoah uses the word an angel rather than the angel.

Professor Cartwright used to teach in the college has written a sermon or composed a sermon and some of these sermon notes were published in a book of a variety of writings and he wrote about this encounter and his opinion was this, that Manoah and his wife fell to the ground overwhelmed by the sense of divine glory and of their own sinfulness.

You can't have one without the other. It doesn't matter who you are. Whoever you are, if you're a descendant of Adam, if you come face to face with God and you become aware of his holiness, at the very moment you become aware of his holiness you become aware of your own sinfulness.

[68 : 38] And that was something that was true of them. They had seen something he says of the unapproachable holiness of the one who had come so condescendingly near to them and converse with them.

But they're not on a par, are they, in their response. All the time you've seen that Manoah's wife seems to be a step ahead of her husband.

Manoah speaks in verse 22. He said to his wife, we shall surely die because we have seen God. And what does she say?

His wife said to 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 showed us all these things, nor would us at this time have told us such things as these.

She's a very astute woman. He too is right. He too is saying the truth. He was right, but he was wrong.

[69 : 56] He was right in the sense that if this was God, he was certain that God was somebody who would deal with him as a sinner.

But he appreciated the fact that God's mercy was demonstrated in him coming to them by way of the angel of the Lord.

And not only that, but receiving the sacrifice that was offered, and not mixing their blood with the blood of their sacrifice.

The fact that the angel ascended into heaven in the flames was confirmation to them. This was a divine encounter. And his wife was right.

His wife was more spiritual, I think. Maybe some people don't like that idea, but sometimes it's right.

[71 : 01] And I think that this chapter in its own way, some people don't understand why this chapter exists. Why not go straight from the announcement of the birth or the provision by God of a son to a childless couple, and that son being revealed as Samson?

As Samson. Why all this? Well, I suggest to you that it is because of the very circumstances in which they are found, where their lack of spirituality is attributable to their ongoing problem, living in a nation that has gone away from God.

I quite believe the fact that God can introduce himself to us instantly and give us wonderful insights.

us. But our God is wiser than any one of us. And, you know, when we pray for revival of religion, do we not?

We should do anyway. And we pray for that to be not just local but national and international. What do we expect?

[72 : 41] What do we expect when these thousands and millions of people are converted to Christ? What will we find?

Are we going to instantly be confronted by John the Baptist or by Paul or people of that who have immense knowledge of the scripture and immense appreciation of Christ and all that he stands for?

Well, there's no doubt that God can instruct people so that they can be like that. But God has to speaking with all respect to what God does, how he does it.

This ignorance that is in the hearts and minds of so many people about the things of God may well require people to almost wade toe by toe into waters that are too deep for them to appreciate the very extent of what they're entering into.

I think that's something that we find here, that 50 years, 40 years of darkness is not something that will go away without God intruding into that darkness with his own light and when he does so, it may well be that it's like a dawn that's coming rather than the bright flashes that Paul the apostle experienced.

[74 : 23] Well, I hope these thoughts have given you thought and you go back to it and think about what God is doing and why and how and what the end result is.

If you go to Samson, what did God do? Well, we're told the Spirit of the Lord began to move Samson at times in the camp of Dan between Zora and Eshtal.

What kind of person was Samson? He certainly doesn't fit the bill as far as many people are concerned as a saint that was so holy and without sin that he couldn't but be God's entrance far from it and yet he was God's chosen vessel to declare and do his work for him at that particular juncture.

May God encourage us to think for ourselves on these things. Let us pray. Lord God, we give thanks for the fact that you take note of where we are when you come into our lives.

There are some people and you come into their experience and they have had no knowledge of you as God and you introduce them to yourself and piece by piece at times you lead them into a voyage of discovery where they marvel at the things that you present to their senses.

[76 : 00] At other times it may well be that your purposes for them are such that their race will be a short one and their introduction will be a shorter experience of greater glory.

you know what you do and why you do it and to that end we commit ourselves looking for a day of great power even if we see that day or not we commit ourselves to the God who is able to do all things well.

Forgive us in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. I'm going to sing from Psalm 104. Psalm 104 at the beginning for stanzas.

Bless God my soul O Lord my God thou art exceeding great with honour and with majesty thou clothed art in state with light as with a robe thyself thou coverest the earth and likened to a curtain though the heavens stretch the earth who offers chambers to earth the beams within the waters lay who doth the clouds his chariot make and wings of wind make way who flaming fire his ministers whose angels spirits doth make who earth's foundations took lay that it should never shake and so on verses 1 through to 5 of Psalm 104 bless God my soul O Lord my God thou art exceeding great with God my soul O Lord my

God thou art exceeding great with honor and with majesty thou clothed art in state with light as with thou robe thyself thou covenlardan Like unto a curtain thou The heaven's trenches thou

[78 : 54] Who off his chambers Doth the beams within the waters lay Who doth the clouds his child make On winds of wind make way Who flaming fire his ministers His angels spits of me Who e'er's foundation still lay

That it should never shake Amen.

May grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all, and never end on us. Amen.