



# Lesson Nasso / "Give an Accounting"

Numbers 4:21 – 7:89  
Judges 13:2-25  
John 11:1-54

GRAFTED IN FELLOWSHIP

KING GEORGE

2-3-5774 / 31 May 2014

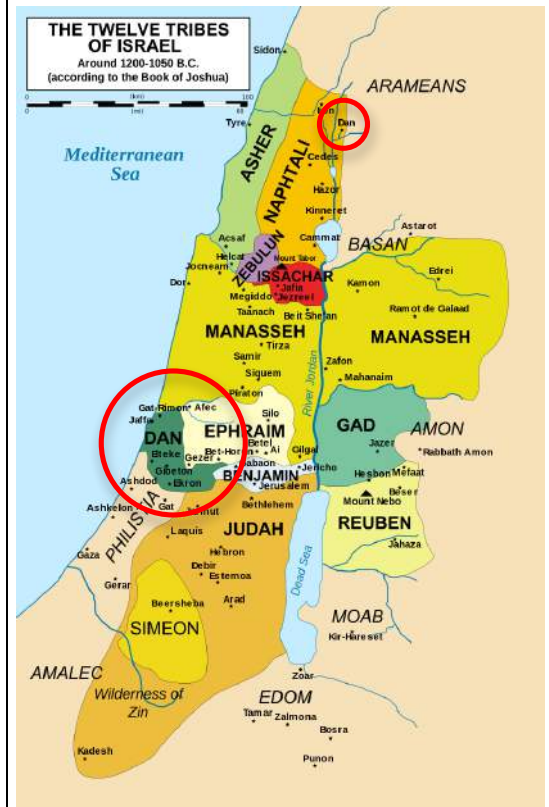
All scripture references are New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise indicated.

## My Notes:

### Historical Context:

- Tribe of Dan in Israel (Joshua 19:40-48)
- They found their territory difficult to secure.
- Amorite problem
  - + Judges 1:34 – And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley;
- Ephraim helped subdued the Amorites,
- Still had the Philistine problem
- Many moved north (Judges 18).
- After Joshua, no leadership.
- A loose coalition – a tribal confederation
- Under the leadership of local judges
- Some authority
  - + Administered Torah
  - + Settled disputes
  - + Rallied support for military campaigns
  - + But no authority to unite Israel
- Could not effectively enforce the Torah's prohibitions against idolatry and syncretism.
  - + Judges 17:6 – In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.
- Recurring cycle
  - + Religious apostasy – idolatry and syncretism
  - + Oppression – in the form of a hostile nation
  - + Deliverance – redeemer to deliver the people
  - + Reform – returned to covenant fidelity
  - + Then the cycle began again.
- The haftarah portion: under Philistine oppression:
  - + Judges 13:1 – Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.
- Attempt to push Israel into the hill country
- The Danites were hardest pressed by Philistine aggression.

## Your Notes:



syn·cre·tism – noun; 1. the attempted reconciliation or union of different or opposing principles, practices, or parties, as in philosophy or religion. (Dictionary.com)

**Numbers Rabbah** (or **Bamidbar Rabbah** in Hebrew) is a religious text holy to classical Judaism. It is a midrash comprising a collection of ancient rabbinical homiletic interpretations [sermons] of the book of Numbers (*Bamidbar* in Hebrew). (Wikipedia)

## Why This Portion?

- Corresponding Torah portion contains the laws of the nazirite vow
- *Numbers Rabbah* 10:5 – commentary on Judges 13:2-25 and Parashat Nasso

## In Depth:

### Manoah and his Wife

Judges 13:2 – Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren and had no children.

- Manoah
  - + Danite
  - + Lived in Zorah
- According to Numbers Rabbah
  - + Manoah was righteous
  - + Uneducated
  - + God-fearing
  - + Married Hazzelepni (tribe of Judah)
- Barren
- More midrash:
  - + Quarrel – barren vs. infertile
- Angel of YHVH appeared
  - + Judges 13:6 – So the woman came and told her husband, saying, “A Man of God came to me, and His countenance *was* like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He *was* from, and He did not tell me His name.
- Settled the argument
  - + Judges 13:3 – And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Indeed now, **you are barren** and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.
- Midrash:
  - + Hazzelepni was righteous
  - + Merited to have an angel speak to her
  - + Bring peace
- "You shall conceive and give birth to a son".



## The Miracle-Child

Judges 13:3 – And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, “Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

- Biblical theme: Barren women miraculously conceiving
- YHVH miraculously reverses their barrenness
- A miraculous conception
- Each child had a great and divinely ordained destiny.
  - + Judges 13:5 – "...shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines".

- Samson was to become a judge and deliverer
- Samson foreshadows King David
- Jacob blessed his sons
  - + Genesis 49:16-17 - "Dan shall **judge his people** As one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that its rider shall fall backward.
- Genesis Rabbah – "Our forefather Jacob foresaw Samson and thought that he was the Messiah. But when he saw his death he exclaimed, 'For Your salvation I wait, O LORD.'"

## A Nazirite from Birth

Judges 13:5 – For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

- Angel said the son was to be a nazirite from birth.
- Nazirite is *nazir* (נָזִיר), from the verb *nazar* (נָזַר), "to separate."
- Nazirites: vow of separation.
- Parashat Nasso details Nazirite vow. (Numbers 6:1-21)
- Anyone (man or woman) could undertake a nazirite vow.
- Nazirite abstains from:
  - + Fruit of the vine (raisins or grapes)
  - + Wine (new or old)
  - + No intoxicating drink
  - + Cannot cut hair
  - + Avoid contact with a dead body
  - + Even in the death of close family members
- Completing the vow:
  - + Cuts hair,
  - + Offered hair in the Temple
  - + A series of prescribed sacrifices
- Midrash?:
  - + Angel did not mention death restrictions
  - + Due to life-long nazirite, did not apply to Samson
  - + How can he kill Philistines and separation from corpses
- Unique to Samson: do not to "eat any unclean thing"
- Eating unclean meats?
- Talmud: "unclean thing" might refer to foods forbidden to nazirites."
- Three famous nazirites: Samson, Samuel and

**Numbers 6:1-21:** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin. 'All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD. 'And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day. He shall consecrate to the LORD the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled. 'Now this is the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering, a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offerings. 'Then the priest shall bring them before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering; and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of a peace

## John the Immerser

- All three were nazirites for life prior to birth
- The ordinary nazirite: a month to several years
- Each conceived in otherwise barren wombs
- Their grateful mothers raised them in separation under the nazirite vow.

offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. 'And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated hair, and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; they are holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.' "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the LORD the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation."

## Angels Unawares

**Judges 13:6** – So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name.

- Compare with other biblical accounts
  - + Abraham entertained three travelers at his tent
  - + Jacob's all-night wrestling partner
  - + A "man" finds Joseph wandering
  - + At Jericho, Joshua saw a man with a drawn sword
  - + Gideon with a man sitting under a sacred tree
- So far as Manoah's wife knew, just a prophet
- She described the visitor as a "man of God" with the appearance of an angel of God.
- "Man of God" primarily a title for prophets.
- This prophet had an angelic look.
  - + Numbers Rabbah – From this you may learn that when the prophets went out on a mission for the Holy One, blessed be He, the Holy Spirit which rested upon them gave them an awe-inspiring appearance in the eyes of those that saw them, so that all were afraid of them, for they looked like angels.
- In English idiom, "angelic" implies innocence and benevolence.
  - + For example, a boy with an angelic face is one who appears to be without guile.
- Artwork depicting cherubim as winged babies
- Manoah's wife clarifies what she means:
  - + "very terrible" (נורא מאד – nora meod)
- An angelic countenance is fearsome and awe-inspiring (not innocent and baby-like) adds color to the

narrative of Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin:  
+ Acts 6:15 – And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

## Relating the Incident

Judges 13:7 – And He said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.’ ”

- Manoah's wife left out some pieces of information
- She told him:
  - + The promise of the conception
  - + The prohibitions
  - + The boy's fate to live as a nazirite.
- She did not tell:
  - + About the child's prophetic
- Why did she leave this detail out?
  - + Only those parts of the prophecy which she felt her husband needed to know
  - + The angel had not instructed her to relate the prophecy to Manoah.
- Her husband needed to know:
  - + About the predicted conception
  - + The prohibitions
- Midrash: "She did not tell Manoah that the promised son will begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines because she was afraid that if the prophecy became public, the Philistines would hear of it and kill him."
- The angel later repeated his message, he omitted mention of heroic destiny.
- Other stories:
  - + Rebekah did not tell her husband Isaac the prophecy over Jacob and
  - + Miriam did not, at first, of Yeshua
    - Joseph remained ignorant until the angel appeared to him.
- Manoah's wife did not mention she was infertile
- Manoah entreated YHVH in prayer:
  - + Judges 13:8 – Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, “O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born.”

## The Second Visitation

Judges 13:9 – And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came

to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her.

- YHVH heard Manoah's prayer
- The man of God returned to Manoah's wife
- Why return to the woman?
  - + To emphasize that she was to be the recipient of the prophecy
  - + Did not want to imply that she was in any way unreliable
  - + Numbers Rabbah – "Another reason: to make her more beloved in her husband's eyes."
- She ran quickly to tell her husband
- Manoah asked, "Are you the man who spoke to the woman?"
- The angel affirmed that he was
- Manoah asked, "What shall be the boy's mode of life and his vocation?"
- The angel only repeated the details that Manoah's wife had already given him
  - + Omitted the boy's future vocation
  - + Omitted any mention of the woman's bareness

## Feeding Angels

**Judges 13:15** – Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You."

- Prophets received pay for prophecies
  - + **1 Samuel 9:7** – Then Saul said to his servant, "But look, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread in our vessels is all gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"
  - + **1 Kings 13:7-9** – Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward." But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'"
  - + **Amos 7:12** – Then Amaziah said to Amos: "Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, And there prophesy.
  - + **Didache 13:1** – But every true prophet who is willing to dwell among you is worthy of his meat,
- Manoah attempts to offer the mysterious prophet a young goat
- The angel refuses the offer
- In the story of Gideon:
  - + The angel took on the guise of a man of God

and prophesied to Gideon about his destiny  
 + Gideon attempted to pay with a meal -- a young goat and unleavened bread and broth  
 + The angel told him: Judges 6:20 – The Angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so.  
 + The angel touched the food with his staff  
 + Miraculous fire consumed the meat and bread  
 + Then the angel vanished

- Likewise, the angel tells Manoah:
  - + Judges 13:16 – And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD.” (For Manoah did not know He *was* the Angel of the LORD.)
- Why did the angels refuse to eat the food set before them?
  - + Midrash: "If Manoah had known that he was an angel he would not have asked him to eat, for he knew perfectly well that there is no such thing as eating in heaven."
  - + The three angels with Abraham pretended to eat

### Prepare a Burnt Offering

Judges 13: 16 – And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD.” (For Manoah did not know He *was* the Angel of the LORD.)

- The goat is a burnt offering rather than a meal
- The Torah forbids sacrifices outside of the Temple
- Moses commanded to bring sacrifices to YHVH only in the place that God had chosen
  - + At that time, might have been at Shiloh
- The angel seems to instruct him to break one of God's commandments
- Also, Torah prohibits a non-priest from making a sacrifice
- Manoah was not from the priestly line of Aaron
- Another complication:
  - + Deuteronomy 13:1-4 – “If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, “and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ “you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. “You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him,

and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

- The sages of the Talmud reconciled these difficulties by appealing to Deuteronomy 18:15:
  - + Come and learn. [The Torah says in Deuteronomy 18:15, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your country- men,] you shall listen to him." You must listen to him even if the prophet tells you to transgress one of the commandments of the Torah, as Elijah did on Mount Carmel. Every case must be weighed according to the needs of the situation. (b. *Yavamot* 90b)
  - + In other words, extenuating circumstances warrant a temporary transgression
- This explanation, however, fails to satisfy.
  - + This rule for a known, verified, and established prophet.
  - + Manoah had no way of knowing if the man speaking to him was a legitimate prophet.
- A more satisfactory explanation:
  - + The dissolution of Levitical authority in the days of the judges
- Samuel is an example of offering a sacrifice xxxxxxx
- Technically speaking, did not apply until after the establishment of the Temple.
- Moses explains it applies after a place is chosen:
  - + Deuteronomy 12:5 - "But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go.
- Tabernacle stood at Shiloh, YHVH had not yet chosen the location He would place His name
  - + Therefore, the laws incumbent upon the centralized Temple did not yet apply
- Subsequent to the Temple though, the Torah says:
  - + Deuteronomy 12:8 - "You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever *is* right in his own eyes—
- In Manoah's day:
  - + Judges 21:25 – In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

### Why Do You Ask My Name?

Judges 13:18 – And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it *is* wonderful?"

- Manoah asked the man of God for his name
- The angel replied, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?"
- Jacob received a similar reply
  - + Genesis 32:29 – Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell *me* Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why *is* it *that* you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.



- Why did the angels refuse to offer their names?
- Midrash:
  - + An angel does not know its own name because his name changes depending on the errand he must perform
- Is this true?
  - + The angel Gabriel displayed no such reluctance to divulge his name.
- Instead, the angels refuse to give their names only when they act as the angel of YHVH
- The angel carries God's ineffable name
- YHVH explained to Moses that He places His name within His angel:
  - + Exodus 23:20-21 – “Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. “Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name *is* in Him.

**Personal note:**

- I believe the “angel” (malak, messenger: H4397) is Yeshua
- Isaiah 9:6 - For unto us a Child is born; to us a Son is given; and the government is on His shoulder; and His name is called **Wonderful** (pele) Counselor, The Mighty El, The Prince of Peace, The one who Fathered Everlasting life. (HRB)

**Wonderful**

**Judges 13:18** – And the Angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?”

- The angel explained he could not answer his question because his name is "*pele* (פֶּלִיאַ), " a word translated as "wonderful"
- The word *pele* often describes a thing "too wondrous," "unattainable," or "incomprehensible."
- Consider the examples of *pele* (or a cognate of it) replaced with the word "incomprehensible"
  - + Exodus 15:11 - “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing **wonders** (incomprehensible)?
  - + Deuteronomy 17:8 – “If a matter arises which is too **hard** (incomprehensible) for you to judge, ...
  - + Deuteronomy 30: 11 – “For this commandment which I command you today is not too **mysterious** (incomprehensible) for you, nor is it far off.
  - + Psalm 139:6 – Such knowledge is too **wonderful** (incomprehensible) for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.
  - + Job 42:3 – You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too **wonderful** (incomprehensible) for me, which I did not know.
- Therefore, his name is too incomprehensible to communicate the ineffable name of God
- As Manoah offered a burnt offering to YHVH:
  - + Judges 13:19b – And He did a **wondrous thing** (*pala*, פֶּלִיאַ) while Manoah and his wife looked on—

- The word *pala* also carries the sense of something "extraordinary."
- Parashat Nasso describes the nazirite vow with the same word:  
+ Numbers 6:2b – ‘When either a man or woman consecrates (*pala*, פלא) an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD,
- This is a second point of connection between the Torah portion and the haftarah.

## Ascending in the Flame

Judges 13:19 – So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—

- Manoah did as the angel instructed
- Employing a large rock as an altar, he offered the sacrifice
- The Hebrew word translated as "burnt offering" is the word *olah* (עולה), a word whose root (*alah*, עלה) means "going up"  
+ Yet another connection: *nasso* has a root word of *nasa* (נשא)(H5373), and means to “lift up”
- Why is it called an *olah* offering?  
+ The fire completely consumed a burnt offering  
+ All of it "went up" in flames
- The angel illustrated the point by ascending in the flames
- Manoah and his wife fell on their faces in worship.
- Likewise, in the Gideon story, fire consumed the meal, and the angel vanished from sight
- Distressed, Manoah said:  
+ Judges 13:22 – And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!”
- In the Torah, YHVH tells Moses:  
+ Exodus 33:20 – But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.”
- Manoah thought that this principle applied also to the angel of YHVH
- After Jacob's encounter, he remarked:  
+ Genesis 32:30 – So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

- With Gideon, he cried out:  
+ Judges 6:22-23 – Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face.” Then the LORD said to him, “Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.”
- Manoah did not hear a comforting voice from heaven, but from his wife

### The Birth of Samson

Judges 13:24 – So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.

- Manoah's wife named her son *Shimshon* (שִׁמְשׁוֹן), based upon the Hebrew word for the sun (*shemesh*, שֶׁמֶשׁ).
- The name enters into English as Samson, but literally means "Sunny" or "Sunshine"
- Possibly an association with the nearby city of Beth-shemesh (House of the Sun).
- Her own city of Zorah could be considered a suburb or in biblical expression, a daughter of Beth-shemesh.
- "The child grew up and YHVH blessed him."
- Midrash:  
+ "How did He bless him? Though his physique was like that of other men, his masculine strength flowed like a rushing river."
- Judges 13:25 – And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.
- It was called Mahaneh-dan, (the camp of Dan) because Danites like Samson's family still resided there.
- Most of the tribe had long ago abandoned their ancestral territory
- Those remaining suffered Philistine aggression
- From the hilltop of Zorah, Samson could see the plains Joshua had given to his tribe
- He knew this rightfully belonged to his tribe, but the Philistines controlled it
- Then the Spirit of YHVH began to stir within him, and "Jacob's prophecy came to be fulfilled, as it is written:  
+ Genesis 49:17 – Dan shall be a serpent by the way, ...

Resources used:

- First Fruits of Zion, Torah Club Volume 3, Voice of the Prophets
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:12\\_Tribes\\_of\\_Israel\\_Map.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:12_Tribes_of_Israel_Map.svg)
- <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/syncretism>
- [http://www.ask.com/wiki/Numbers\\_Rabbah](http://www.ask.com/wiki/Numbers_Rabbah)