

Special Births for Special Callings Final Days of Advent December 17- December 23
Monday, December 19, 2016 8:15 AM **Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a; Lk 1:5-25** (There is a providence at work that will often use or at least call people to some kind of service that is out of the ordinary in regard to what people normally want or desire.)

There's nothing more natural than a husband and wife desiring to have a child. It is one of the more bitter experiences of ordinary life when that cannot take place.

Now here **we have two different couples desiring a child naturally and praying naturally that their natural desire would be fulfilled.** On the surface it seems as if that indeed is what's happened, but that is not actually what either story says. Both show that a barren couple suddenly became with child, yes. However **in both cases that son did not fit into the normal pattern that would have been expected and desired.** Both were, to put it mildly, unusual. **Both had a life and a mission that had nothing to do with the family.** Usually of course an elderly couple in particular depended on their sons for support and so on. I don't know if Zechariah got any support from John; he did not earn a living. I don't know whether Manoah and his wife got any support from Sampson; he didn't have a job either.

So in this world of prayer and petition, in this world where we have our natural desires, we have to recognize that there is something else at work. **There is a providence at work that will often use or at least call people to some kind of service that is out of the ordinary in regard to what people normally want or desire.** This is the way God works, and must work. If you think about it, if Sampson's parents had known what was going to happen him, would they actually wanted to have him? If John the Baptist's parents had known what kind of life he was going to lead, would they have been so desirous?

And so it is with all of us. **Do we really realize how we and our desires sometimes have to cede to the greater good,** purposes that we cannot imagine, roles and missions that have really nothing to do personally with us, at least directly, but are very important to the overall well-being and salvation of the world? That's what this story of the birth of John the Baptist and the story of the birth of Sampson are trying to indicate, this **overarching providential care that God has for the whole world,** and how it works so slowly, and how it requires of so many people very special sacrifices and **very difficult forms of obedience, and without which the providence of God could not operate.**