

Judges Chapter 6

1 Corinthians 10:11 “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition,...”

- This isn't just O/T history per se, these things are written that we too might be warned against the dangers of turning our backs upon God, and that we might live for God and serve Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength.
 - It's been 200 years since Joshua led the children of Israel across the Jordan River, conquering Jericho and all the land of Canaan. How things have changed since then.
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V: 1-6 The land had rest for 40 years and again the children of Israel enter into this vicious cycle of sin and rebellion against God – doing evil in His sight.

- This is the 4th apostasy and the 4th servitude that the children of Israel have gone through as a result of their disobedience.
- They are delivered into the hands of the Midianites and the Amalekites, also the children of the east – meaning either those from Assyria or Babylon.
- Genesis: After Sarah died, Abraham married a woman named Keturah, with whom he had six sons, one of whom was named Midian. Eventually Abraham sent the sons of Keturah away and over the years the Midianites became enemies of Israel, constantly attacking the people.
- The Midianites and the Amalekites were nomadic herdsmen travelling from place to place, living off the land consuming everything, then moving on. Chapter 8 tells us that their army numbered 135,000 warriors, meaning that probably 4-5 times as many made up their total population.
- For seven years the Israelites are forced to live in caves and eek out a living. Their oppressors destroying the land taking everything of value, they were impoverished, leaving nothing for Israel to survive on – neither livestock, nor crops.

V: 6b “... and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.”

- It's always amazing how long it takes them / us – 7 years.

Psalm 34:6 “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

Just like the lyrics to that old hymn: *What A Friend We Have In Jesus*:

“Oh what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry every thing to God in prayer!”

V: 7-10 Something different: God sends not a judge at first, but a prophet:

- Others have been called prophets; but this is the first time a prophet, un-named in this case, is sent to rebuke and warn the nation of Israel.

Prophet: (H-5030) nabi'y', naw-bee'; inspired man, that prophesy, prophet.

- A prophet is someone who speaks for God, who speaks forth the word of God.
- This prophet is sent to remind Israel of what God has done for them, what their responsibility was, and he rebukes them for being disobedient to God's word.
- Before Jesus entered the scene in His public ministry He sent a prophet before Him as a herald; John the Baptist came to prepare the way.
- So too as this un-named prophet paves the way for a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.

V: 11 An "angel of the Lord" appears in Ophrah, under an oak tree on the property of Joash, the father of Gideon.

(Map) Ophrah = "Fawn" located across the Kishon river from Megiddo.

- Gideon's father would have had a front row seat to the battle between Barak & Sisera 47 years earlier, he might even have been involved. What happened?
- The picture we have here is that he has his own altar to Baal and a grove right next to that – he's become a complete pagan.
- Gideon is threshing wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites, a sad picture indeed. Threshing was done on hilltops, not in wine presses.

V: 12 The angel of the Lord tells Gideon "**The Lord is with thee**" – which is true, this is another "Christophony" or "Theophony" a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.

- V: 14 – "**The LORD looked upon him...**" V: 16 – "**And the LORD said unto him...**"

"...**thou mighty man of valor.**" At the moment this description seems like a bit of a stretch – but God always sees the long view of things.

V: 13-14 If the Lord is with us, if He is for us – then why are we getting hammered? Basically Gideon is arguing with the Lord.

- The Lord didn't answer his question He just looked upon him – with loving eyes – and said "**go**". (Don't worry about that, just do what I told you to do...)

- “**Have not I sent thee?**” – so of course you’re going to be victorious!

V: 15-16 It seems like God often has trouble with His recruits:

1. Moses said he wasn’t eloquent; so he couldn’t go.
 2. Jeremiah said he was too young; so he couldn’t go.
 3. Saul said his father’s house is nothing; so he couldn’t go.
 4. Barak wouldn’t go unless Deborah went with him.
 5. Gideon is saying my family is poor, and I’m the least...
- In essence Gideon asks “but who am I?” – It doesn’t matter who we are, what matters is who God is and what He is able to do.
 - Then the Lord ever so graciously gave Gideon these precious words:

V: 16 “... **surely I will be with thee...**”

Hebrews 13:5 “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

- We are often in the same place, Lord I can’t do this; or Lord I’m not qualified – God’s answer is always the same: “... **surely I will be with thee...**”

Romans 8:31 “... if God be for us, who can be against us?”

Romans 8:35-39 ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- Moses had said earlier: “**If you won’t go before me, I won’t go.**” (Exodus 33:15).
- If God’s not in it, then we shouldn’t be either.
- But if He is then it should be full speed ahead.

V: 17-18 This may have seemed surreal to Gideon, if this is real, if I’ve truly found grace in your sight please wait so that I can bring you an offering.

- Seeking confirmation is not a bad thing; demanding proof is different as we’ll see.

V: 19-20 Gideon goes in and quickly prepared a kid of the goats, some unleavened bread – the bread of haste, and the broth.

- Given their situation, their poverty, this was a costly offering.
- Think back to Leviticus:
 1. A goat, in this case a kid: a sin offering.
 2. The unleavened bread: a meal offering, an offering of thanksgiving.
 3. The broth, poured out as a drink offering or offering of consecration.

V: 21-24 The Lord receives Gideon's offering: symbolized by touching it and causing flames to consume it.

- As the Lord departs, then Gideon realizes who he's been talking with and is afraid that he's about to die – because no man can see God and live.
- The Lord again addresses Gideon and says: "Peace be unto you, fear not: you will not die."
- Gideon responds by building an altar – Gideon worshipped the Lord calling that place "Jehovah-shalom" – The LORD is peace, picking up on God's pronouncing peace upon Gideon.
- It appears that Gideon is looking beyond the battle just as the Lord is looking at Gideon beyond the present situation.
- God gave Gideon a message of peace to prepare him to fight a war. Unless we're at peace with God, we can't face the enemy with confidence or effectively fight the Lord's battles.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

- "Shalom", means peace but it is much more than just the absence of hostilities, it carries with it the ideas of well-being, health, and prosperity.

V: 25 That same night the Lord speaks again to Gideon.

- Take the best bullock: the younger one – God always gets the best.
- Break down the altar to Baal, cut down the grove – the place where Ashtoreth, the counterpart of Baal was worshipped.
- This is what the nation had been called to earlier: which they had failed to do.

Deuteronomy 7:5-6 ⁵“But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. ⁶For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

- Unless Gideon was willing to deal with the sin in his own house, he would be useless in dealing with the sin of his people and nation.
- If a man can't rule his own house well, if he isn't willing to confront sin there, then he has no business ruling others or confronting sin elsewhere.
- Ministry begins at home.

V: 26 Build an altar unto the Lord at His designated place: offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood from the grove.

- It's never good enough to just tear down or remove that which is profane in our lives – it has to be replaced by building up that which is holy.

Matthew 12:43-45 ⁴³“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. ⁴⁴Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. ⁴⁵Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”

V: 27 Then Gideon took 10 men – 10 makes us think of the 10 commandments – and did as God had said, being obedient to the Word of God.

- Gideon tore down the altar and grove by night because he was afraid of what everyone else would do – practically this ensured that he wouldn't have to fight off his own family and deal with the interference of his neighbors while trying to do what God said.

V: 28-31 The men of the city arose to discover that their places of worship have been destroyed and once they figure out who did it – they want to kill him.

- Joash, Gideon's father steps in: Joash = “Yahweh gives”
- If he meaning Baal is a real god then let him plead for or defend himself.

Speaking of false gods and idols:

Psalms 115:4-7 ⁴“Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. ⁵They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: ⁶They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: ⁷They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not:

neither speak they through their throat. ⁸They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

V: 32 Gideon got a new nick name was changed that day – because he threw down the altar of Baal; he was now Jerub-baal.

- Jerubbaal = Baal judges, or “Let Baal plead”.

V: 33 Enter the Midianites and the Amalekites into the valley of Jezreel.

- (Map) Jezreel is the valley between Mt. Gilboa and Mt. Moreh. It is the eastern part of the valley of Megiddo, also known as the Jezreel. They more or less run together.
- The valley is about 15 miles long and about 12 miles wide, it is very fertile and it is where the battle of Armageddon will be fought.

V: 34-35 “But” – contrast: “The spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon”.

- Gideon blows a trumpet and Abiezer gathers to him, basically his home town.
- By the Spirit: they were moved from wanting to kill Gideon to following him.
- They then went out as messengers to gather Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali to war.
- And they all came, 32,000 men responded.

V: 36-40 Gideon puts God to the test; this is not a good example to follow.

- Putting out the fleece is not a biblical method for determining the will of God.
- This is recorded, but it demonstrates a lack of faith.
- It’s actually an approach used by people like Gideon who lack the faith to trust God to do what He said He would do.
- It’s not our place to “test” or to “prove” God – God has already said that He would be with Gideon, that He has delivered the Midianites into his hand.
- God however is gracious and patient and accommodates Gideon through the two tests.

Psalm 103:14 “For He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”

- Later there will be times when the people will as an example draw lots trying to determine the will of God; but after Pentecost we don't see anything like this – the church is led by the Spirit of God who helps His children to understand and discern the perfect will of God.
- There is no formula for knowing the will of God, it is simply revealed by His Spirit.

Romans 12:1-2 “¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

- When we are completely given over to Jesus, when we're holding nothing back and willing to do what He says – then we know very well what He wants us to do.
- Confirming vs: demanding proof.

1 John 5:4 “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

- More faith = more of God's word.

Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”