

BOOK OF JUDGES

CHAPTER 6

GIDEON



vs 1 Repeat problem: the 40 years of rest after the defeat of Sisera came to an end. Prosperity and complacency brought idolatry and immorality back.
So God permitted the Midianites to oppress them for 7 years – again this is God’s mercy not **allowing** His People to fall too far so that return is impossible.

2-6 **The Bondage:** Israel was so humiliated by the Midianites that she had to return to being **cave-dwellers!** They were, therefore, driven off the land! What happened? Israelites had become farmers, so the Midianites came each year to either STEAL or DESTROY their harvest.

- They came from the East and would destroy as far as **GAZA** on the West coast!
- They stole their cattle and everything else they could pillage, so the whole land was ravaged and God’s People were left nothing to live on.

Lesson: Sin destroys our lives – it robs us of all spiritual harvest and leaves our souls starving, and our spiritual lives return to **primitive** living.
Hence, St Paul says that **the wages of sin is death**: Rom 6:23.
Why would we risk losing everything – even eternal life – just for a passing pleasure or an apparent gain?

vs 6 **Thus Midian brought Israel to great distress and she cried to the Lord.**
It took **40 years** of humiliations, fruitless labour, poverty and domination by an oppressive power to make God’s People turn back to Him!

7-10 **When the Israelites cried out to the Lord... He sent a PROPHET.**
This is an **unnamed** Prophet (un-named) before God sent the next **Judge**.
This man reminded them of who God was and who they were in Covenant with God.
God spoke through him – so the prophet was **the voice in the (spiritual) wilderness of Israel**
Is 40:3 quoted by John the Baptist in John 1:23
cf Matt 3:3 Mk 1:3 Lk 3:4

His message: **I brought you up from Egypt...** He reminds us that we are conquered slaves to the enemy (Satan) without Him.
(of course Satan will use the Midianites – or any other source – to do his work for him)

- Yet God’s Loving Kindness defeats all evil only if we surrender to His Divine Will
 - that is all evil **INSIDE** and **OUTSIDE** of us.
 - He can use **us** to defeat evil in the world if He reigns within us.
 - So, our relationship with God is essential for personal, national and global reasons!
- We have no excuse:
 - (i) God delivered His People from slavery in Egypt
 - (ii) God delivered the Promised Land to them, defeating their enemies
 - (iii) Jesus defeated **Satan himself** on the Cross, releasing us from all spiritual enemies.

- Therefore what we need to remember is:
 - (1) God's Infinite Power
 - (2) God's Infinite Love and Mercy
 - (3) God's Infinite Wisdom in dealing with His children.

cf **Prov 3:6**

- The problem **is us** **But you have: not obeyed my voice** (KJV)
: not listened to my words (JB)
 - this is the **REAL** underlining **cause** of their distress, oppression, unhappiness
 - Israel thought the problem was the Midianites

But God showed them that the problem **was Israel**
We are our own worst enemies:
the problem is EGO, self-will, refusal to take God's word seriously.

And refusal to surrender to God's Will so that He can reign on Earth
and bring about the Kingdom of God and peace among man.



11-13 The Deliverer and Judge called by God: Gideon: the name means 'he who pulls or cuts down'!!

11a The Angel of the Lord came... while he sat under an oak (terebinth) tree.
This is a theophany – not **just** an angel speaking on behalf of God

Judges 6:14 **Then the Lord said: 'I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.'**

Judges 6:16 **The Lord answered, but I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."**

- Since no person has seen **God the Father** at any time (Jn 1:18; 5:27) and the Holy Spirit is pure spirit without bodily form
 - this has to be a manifestation of **THE SON** – who would, in the end, become Incarnate. He is manifesting in the flesh since **nothing is impossible with God**
Lk 1:37, Gen 17:15-17, Mark 9:23, Mt 19:26, Jer 32:17, 27

Remember The Captain of the Lord's Army - Joshua 5:14
This was also a manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ.

11b Gideon threshed wheat in the WINEPRESS... he couldn't thresh in the open because of Midianite attacks. It had to be done furtively.

- Here God called Gideon in the midst of his work in the winepress –
 - just as He called
 - Moses and David from minding sheep –
 - Elisha from ploughing the soil –
 - The Apostles from their fishing, washing and mending their nets.
 - Paul on the road to Damascus -

12-13 The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valour – the Lord speaks about the **future** here.

vs 13 Gideon replied: **O my Lord, if the Lord is with us** why has **all this** happened?
Where are all His miracles...

Gideon thinks that the problem **is God! The Lord has forsaken us.**
- but it is the opposite: Israel has forsaken God!!

- 14-16** 1) The Lord now tells Gideon to get up in the **power and grace** now available to him and save the Nation: Rom 8:31 **If God is FOR us, who can be AGAINST us?**
- 2) Gideon is now called to be a small redeemer in the long chain leading to the Great Redeemer of Humanity.
- 3) The Lord has made it clear that He wants to save His People, so Gideon can rely on the Power of God as **the Lord of armies** : Ps 46
The Lord of Hosts: this is Yahweh Sabaoth: 300 references in Old Testament!!

vs 15 Gideon admits his littleness and the non-importance of his clan.
He didn't know that **God chooses the weak things of this world to confound the strong.** 1 Cor 1:27

Yet this principle is repeated time out of number in the Bible:

- even Israel itself as a people of God illustrated this: Deut 7:7-16; Ps 90
- they were "nobody slaves" when He decided to redeem them from Egypt.

Yet it is not where you come from, but where you are going that is **VIP**.

How can I save Israel? Gideon **couldn't** save Israel. Only God could and He chooses the weak, small and useless (without God) instruments for His purpose.

vs 16 **Surely I will be with you.** It would be God's Presence with Gideon and his men that would bring about victory – just as it was with Joshua.

(NB)

- it was not SELF-confidence that Gideon needs but simply the realisation of:
(i) who God is and (ii) that this almighty God was **WITH** him!
- this was the same assurance which God gave to Moses in Ex 3:12
and that Jesus gave to His Church before leaving in the Ascension.
Mt 28:20 Behold, I am with you always even to the end of time.

17-21 A SIGN from the Lord:

Gideon wants to be sure that it really **is** God who is speaking to him.

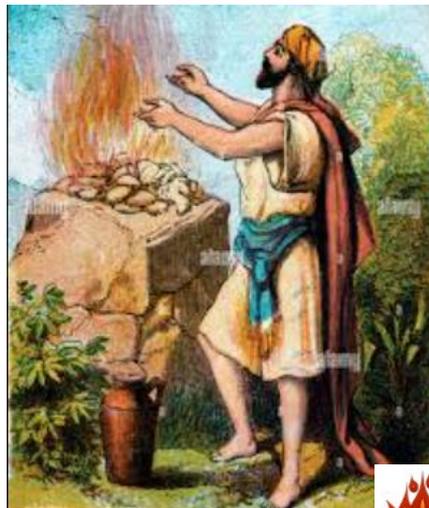
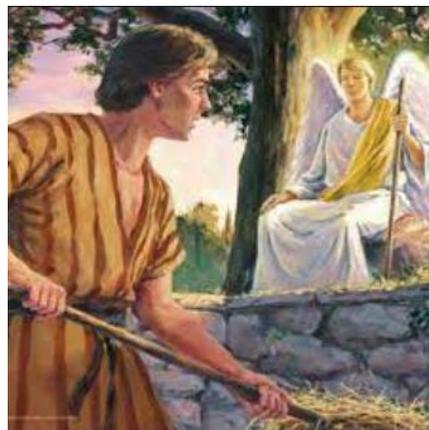
- (i) Gideon offers sacrifice to the Lord.
God accepts the offering
- (ii) Fire from Heaven consumes the sacrifice
– this was **THE** Sign that God was present.

cf Abraham Gen 15:17
Elijah 1 Kgs 18:38

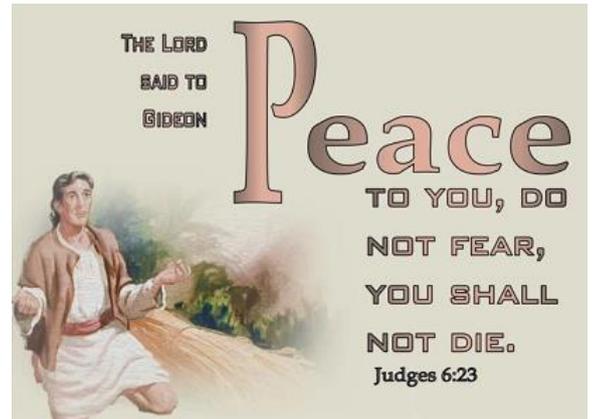
This is **the miracle** that **should** have satisfied Gideon.

22-24 Gideon reacts with Awe

- (i) He realises he is in God's Presence
- (ii) He was terrified
I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face
Ex 33:20: **For man cannot see Me and live**
Jn 1:18 1 Tim 6: 14-16 1 Jn 4:12



- We can only see God in His Essence after death so the Lord puts Gideon at ease with His Promise **Peace be with you; do not fear; you shall not die.**
- Yet Gideon had only seen a manifestation of God, but His True Presence was demonstrated in the fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice.



vs 24 **So Gideon built an altar there** which he called: **THE LORD IS PEACE**

- Ⓝ This personal encounter with God changes Gideon forever.
– he cannot remain the man he was.

Since he is now strengthened by God's Presence and Peace, he must go to war against the enemies of God and His People.

Lesson: Once we have entered a personal relationship with God; once we have settled our own situation with Him by entering the sacrifice of Jesus and allowing its redemptive powers to work in us; once we have built an altar to God in our hearts and once He can truly live in us and He is **truly Lord** of our lives then we go as His Representatives to deal with the issues concerning His Kingdom on Earth.

- Ⓢ We make space for God in our own lives and then help to make space for God in our world.