

## 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.

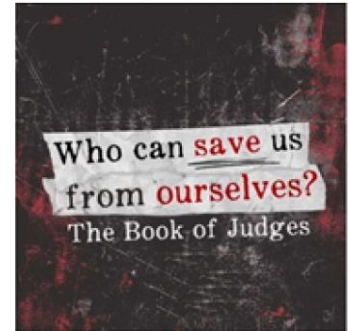
- Therefore what we need to remember is:
  - (1) God's Infinite Power
  - (2) God's Infinite Love and Mercy
  - (3) God's Infinite Wisdom in dealing with His children.

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.

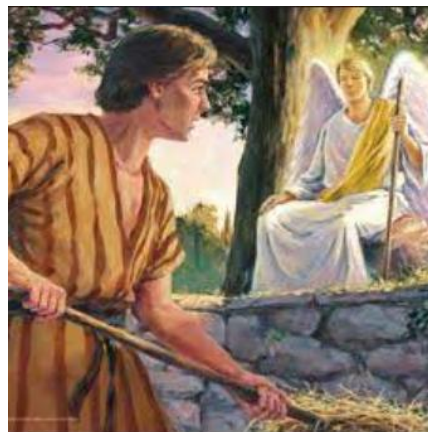
- (i) Gideon offers sacrifice to the Lord.  
God accepts the offering
- (ii) Fire from Heaven consumes the sacrifice  
– this was **THE** Sign that God was present.

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

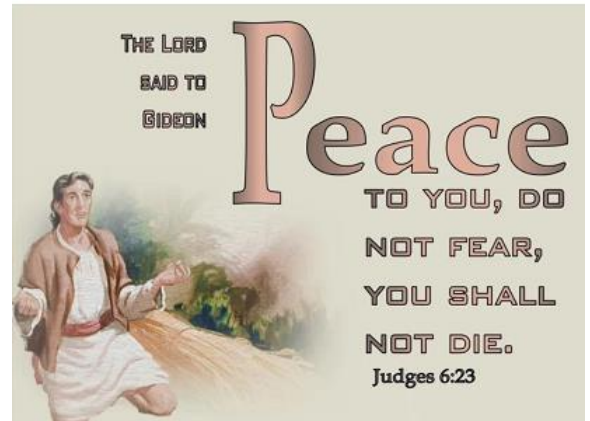
This is **the miracle** that **should** have satisfied Gideon.

**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.