

Judges Chapter 06 Commentary

1 ¶ "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. **2** And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. **3** And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; **4** And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. **5** For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. **6** And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD."

We believe that Deborah and Barak have died, and thus, without godly leadership, Israel has forgotten God again. Most commentators say about two hundred years have passed, since Israel was given possession of the land of promise.

As punishment, for turning from God to idolatry, God sent the Midianites, to bring them back to remembrance of God. Israel had to leave its cities and resort to living in caves and dens of the earth. Everything they did to provide sustenance of life by crops and cattle were consumed by the Midianites and others. Since there is no mention of a king, we can compare the Midianites and the others, who invade the land, to a plague of locust. For this seven-year period; Israel sowed their fields, and when harvest time came, these invaders came and took away the harvest leaving Israel without little or no food. They moved away to allow Israel to plant their crops, and when it was time to harvest, they came again each year, until Israel is devastated. The effect of this is Israel now realizes; their idol gods are of no value because they are not being protected by them. They finally remember God, and his salvation, and begin to pray to him once again.

Do you see what has happened in the religious orders of the world, in this scene? Many religious orders have turned from true gospel doctrine, and the King James Bible, and are being overcome by the plague of men, like locust, doing that which is right in their own eyes, and defiling all that is good and right. We are warned of these times in scripture in: **Mr 7:13 "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."** It breaks our hearts to see this downfall, of the true worship of God being destroyed, as men turn from God to idolatry.

"And Israel was greatly impoverished" Their sustenance of life is cut off and they are living under famine because they forgot God. The prophet Amos prophesied of this kind of time, which we see happening today, when there would be a spiritual famine, seen in: **Am 8:11 "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:"** As Satan continues to desecrate God's word of truth, by all the different interpretations and variations of the bible, it is like a plague of locust consuming all that is good for food, and God's people are left starving for the truth. Wherefore, we, like Israel, must cry out to God for deliverance from this terrible plague and dearth.

7 ¶ "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, **8** That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, **Thus saith the**

LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; 9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land; 10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice."

As Israel cries to God out of destitution and hunger. God sends a prophet, who reminds them of the wonderful deliverances God has wrought on behalf of Israel. This prophet is a man sent to teach Israel of who and what God is, since they have forgotten. God reminds them; you turned from me, and my blessings, to idolatry. You broke your vow to serve me only. Wherefore, I given you to the Midianites to bring you back to remembrance of me.

I pause to point out here; Israel is forsaken of God because Israel turned from God to idolatry. Apply this to your Christian life and ask yourself the question: when you are in the midst of trials and temptations: have I forsaken God and Christ? Is that why I am in this terrible situation? God has not forgotten Israel. God let Israel go their own way, which was choosing to serve self instead of God. God will let us do the same thing today. We must choose to serve God over self each day.

This is one of many reasons; we should not forsake assembling with God's people to hear the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, seen in: ***Heb 10:23-25; 23 "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.***" We need to be reminded; we serve the one true and living God, and that we have vowed to serve him faithfully.

11 ¶ "And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

"Joash the Abiezrite" Joash and Gideon are from the tribe of Manasseh, who was a son of Joseph, who was adopted by Jacob as his own son, seen in: ***Jos 17:2 "There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families."***

God, in his infinite mercy, sends an angel to speak to Gideon, who God will use to deliver Israel. Gideon is addressed as a mighty man of valor. Gideon remembers; God did bring Israel up out of Egypt to the land of promise, but they are now under oppression by the Midianites. Gideon's points out that God appears to have forsaken Israel, because of Israel's distress, and asks why.

14 "And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? 15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith

**shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. 16
And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."**

Notice, the scripture tells us plainly; God is now speaking to Gideon. Wherefore, we understand that the angel of the Lord is the pre-incarnate Christ. God tells Gideon that he is to be the leader of Israel. God gives him the promise "**thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?**" Gideon immediately begins to make excuses as to why God cannot use him. Gideon is not telling God anything that he does not already know. God gives Gideon immediate reassurance: "**And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.**"

I see myself in Gideon's shoes most often. Asking; how can I do this or that, forgetting that God is in charge? I cannot accomplish in my own strength, but what did God tell Gideon? "**Surely I will be with thee.**" We must remember; the victory is not in our own strength, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul reminds us of this in: **Php 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."**

17 "And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. 18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again. 19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. 20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. 22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. 23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. 24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites."

Gideon ask the angel of the Lord to wait, while he prepares what will be a sacrifice to the Lord. He follows the angel's instructions to place the present upon the rock. The angel touches the present with his rod; fire comes out of the rock and consumes the sacrifice; and the angel disappears. This is proof to Gideon that this is God that is instructing him.

Gideon now understands that this was an angel of the Lord, not a mere mortal man, and fears he will die, understanding that you cannot look upon the face of God and live. There are other appearances of "the angel of God" and the one to whom the angel appeared did not die. We are reminded that Jesus came in the body prepared and those who saw him did not die.

Gideon should remember, God has already told him that he is to deliver Israel from the Midianites, so he cannot die until God's work is accomplished. Another reason we can believe this is the pre-incarnate Christ is the acceptance of the sacrifice to him. Angels do not accept sacrifices made to themselves. God alone accepts sacrifices.

The angel is not in sight, but the voice of God, the Holy Spirit, is still present with Gideon and reassures him he will not die. Isn't this the message of the gospel of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ? Jesus incarnate is no longer present on the earth, but the voice of God is still sounding out to God's people through the Holy Spirit, which Jesus promised would come in his stead. We have this manifested to us through revelations from the King James bible, and the preaching of the Gospel.

Gideon builds an altar to God and names it "**Jehovahshalom**" which means *Jehovah (is) peace*. When we make our public confession of faith, in Christ Jesus, by joining the church and being baptized, we are, in effect, building an altar unto the Lord. Being born again; we have within us the peace of God which passes all understanding.

25 ¶ "And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: 26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. 27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night."

Gideon is given instruction to tear down his father's altar of Baal, and to cut down the grove of trees around it. He is to build an altar to God in this place where God is speaking to him. Gideon is to offer the appointed sacrifice upon it. Gideon did, as commanded by God, even though we are told he was afraid of his father's household, and the men of the city, who were the worshipers of Baal, and did it by night.

Apply this to our own lives as Christians. When you are born-again and understand that the hand of God is working in your life, the first instruction you are given is to remove the idols of your life. Do not just pack them up and store them somewhere, destroy them and all the pageantry that goes with them. If you believe you have security in the rituals of religion, tear these idolatrous thoughts from your heart and mind, and replace them with the very real presence of God's truths. If you have falsely believed you have control of your eternal destiny, forget that in its entirety, and turn to the Lord for guidance and direction, heeding his word of truth and living to his glory.

28 "And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. 29 And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. 30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. 31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. 32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar."

We do not know if Gideon told his father what was going on before, or after, the commandment of God was carried out. What we do know is that God convinced Gideon's father to stand for God, to

stand against Baal, and to stand up for his son, who was obedient to God. Joash tells the Baal worshipers, if Baal is a god, let him defend his altar.

The changing of Israel from idolatry to worshipping God began with Gideon and his household, then it moved out to the city of their occupation, and from thence to the tribes of Israel, whom God has begun to prepare, through the prophet he sent before calling Gideon to be Judge over Israel.

The same is true in our Christian lives: first, we are changed, then we can present the gospel message to our families, and then to those around us. Being born again, we begin sowing seed, the word of God, by living our lives anew, abandoning our former walks and talks, and walking and talking in accordance with "***thus saith the Lord.***"

Joash calls his son Gideon by the name of Jerubbaal, which means *Baal will contend*. This is confirmed in: ***Jg 7:1 "Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon."*** His message in doing this is: if Baal was a true god, he would have fought against Gideon and kept his altar from being overthrown. When we are born-again in Holy Spirit power, we are given a new name in Christ, which is demonstrated by throwing down all our altars to our previous idols, including the idol of our ego "look at me."

33 ¶ "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them."

"Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel." We know it is the time of harvest because Gideon was secretly threshing wheat, wherefore it is the time when these invaders are returning to get their free food. However, God is now on the scene and gives Gideon the faith to sound the trumpet of war.

At the sounding of the trumpet, Gideons family is gathered unto him: ***"and Abiezer was gathered after him."*** And Gideon sends for the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, to come to battle against the Midianites and Amalekites.

Once we make our public confession of faith in Christ, our enemy will begin to assemble to attack us in force. Your Christian warfare is now begun. Many of us will be like Gideon and need much reassurance that God has indeed called us to be Christians. However, having joined ourselves to the organized, visible, church, we have sounded the trumpet of war, and the church is gathered to us, and will aid us in our battle against the temptations of the devil and his minions.

36 "And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, 37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. 38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water."

Gideon, in weakness of faith, asks God for a sign, and further encouragement, and God grants his request, in the form of the miracle performed by God.

39 "And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground."

Gideon, still seeking assurance of his calling, asks God for a second sign, and God grants his request. I ask this question: can you witness with Gideon? I know that I can. Oftentimes, I have asked God for reassurance, that I am indeed a child of God, born-again by the Holy Spirit. I have asked for signs to know I was called to be his servant, and to be minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do not forget: God knows what Gideon needs and has provided these reassurances to him. We also have the same promises of reassurances of God, see in:

- ***Mt 6:30-34; 30 "Wherfore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."***
- ***Php 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."***

In the next chapter God will volunteer concrete reassurance to Gideon.

The lesson, of this chapter, is to be willing to obey God when he calls you to his service. Be willing to align yourself with God's chosen people, the church, and live in accordance with "***thus saith the Lord.***" God has filled us with the Holy Spirit in the new birth. God has left us the King James bible, which is filled with reassurances that we are God's chosen, called, and sanctified, people. Read and study it faithfully.

The bible tells us that the war has already been won by Christ Jesus. We have the reassurance of God's word that in our daily battles, of our warfare as defined in the scriptures: ***Eph 6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*** we have victory already in Christ Jesus. This is the same reassurance that God gave Gideon, when he told him that the enemies were delivered into his hand, if he but follows God's leading and commandment. Thus, the battles will be ours if we look to God and serve him faithfully. Thank you, Lord Jesus! for these assurances and precious promises, Amen!