

GOD CALLS GIDEON — A FARMER — TO DIVINE SERVICE

TEXT: *Judges 6:12-16:*

***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.*

***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.*

BACKGROUND

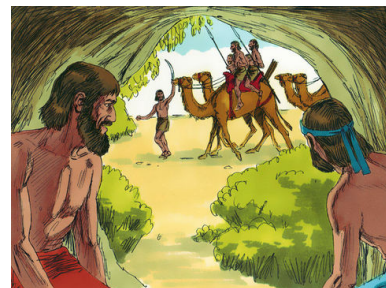
This conversation occurred in an unusual place. Gideon was down in an old winepress. He was trying to stay hidden from the sight of the Midianites so he could thresh out a little grain with a stick in order that his family might eat. If the Midianites saw him, they would swoop down and rob him. He felt very miserable and fearful — not anything like the mighty man of valor the Angel called him.

Judges 6:2-4:

***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.*



GIDEON – THE DOUBTER



Gideon found it hard to reconcile the facts of the present with the God of the past. He may have thought about Moses' glorious victory at the Red Sea, in contrast to Israel in its present circumstances.

The words of the Angel — *The Lord is with thee* — did not encourage him. They stung his heart as he wondered how he could be in such humiliation and need if God were there!

APPLICATION

Many of us can identify with Gideon's feelings of depression. All of us have, at times, felt forsaken because of prevailing troubles.

The doubter, Gideon, asked for a sign from the Lord.

Judges 6:17: And he said unto Him, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, then shew me a sign that Thou talkest with me.

NOTE: We often hear of doubting Thomas, but here was a doubting Gideon! Today, do we have doubting Jim and doubting Jane – and on and on?

GOD'S RESPONSE

The Lord didn't immediately solve Gideon's problem or answer all of his questions. However, the Angel did give Gideon assurance that God was with him:

By fire out of the rock:

Judges 6:21: 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.



By giving Gideon peace in his heart to replace fear:

Judges 6:12: And the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

Note: When we seek help from God, often the help does not come until we open our hearts to receive His peace and give up our fearful thoughts.

GIDEON – THE MAN OF ACTION

Even in his despair, Gideon was a man of action:

- **He was threshing out the grain.**
- **He had not given in to the idea of ‘What’s the use’.**

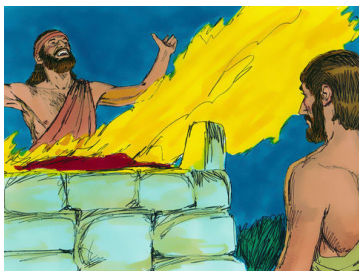
Many Israelites no longer planted, harvested, or threshed grain, thinking the Midianites would just take it anyway.

Now that faith had replaced doubt, Gideon was ready for larger action than small-scale threshing!

Judges 6:24: Then Gideon built an Altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Judges 6:25-26:

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.

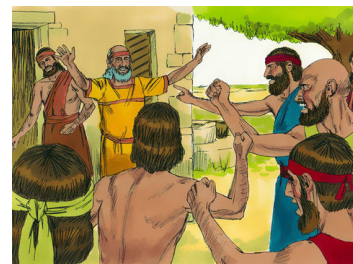
It caused quite a stir among the Israelites when they found what he had done, and they wanted to kill him.

Judges 6:28-32:

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.

This action of devotion and faith, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon.

Judges 6:34: But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.

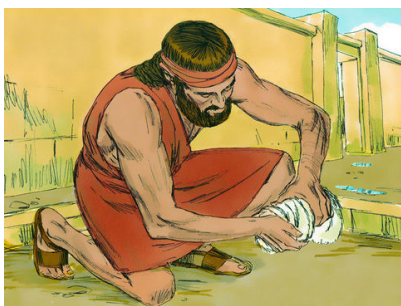
Gideon didn't jump to conclusions. He checked to see if it were really God calling him by asking that He give him a special sign:

Judges 6:36-40:

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.



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.

God also spoke to Gideon during that same night and told him He would give his enemies into his hands. However, God said that if he were still afraid to attack, he should take his servant down to the enemy's camp and listen to what they were saying, after which he would be encouraged.

Judges 7:9-15:

9 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host:

11 And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host.

12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude.

13 And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.



14 And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.

15 And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

Then Gideon blew a trumpet and called the people together.

- ***The hosts of the Midianites and Amalekites were gathering to come against them. They were encamped in the valley of Jezreel.***

Note: Jezreel is the ancient city of Megiddo which is the Armageddon of Revelation!

- ***There was to be immediate confrontation between Israel and the enemy.***

Gideon vowed to God that — if it were God’s Will — he would be God’s instrument to save Israel and defeat the Midianites.

GIDEON’S ARMY OF DEVOTED FOLLOWERS

32,000 answered the call of Gideon’s trumpet.

22,000 never even began to really serve — they were afraid of the odds against them and went home.

10,000 remained to face an overwhelming number, and they bravely started toward the battlefield.

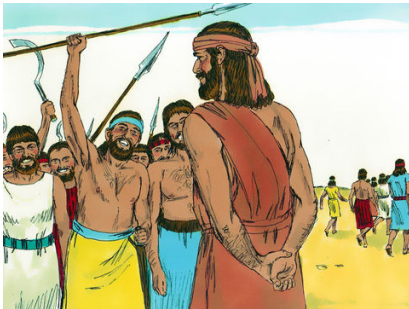
- However, a further weeding out was necessary.
- A Test was Prepared.

They came to some water, and all were hot and thirsty. Some dipped up water in their hands and drank from their hands, keeping moving all the time — their heads up, going toward the battle. 300 did this.

Some thought only of self-satisfaction and threw themselves on the ground, bowing their heads and drinking — not watching, nor pressing on to engage the enemy. 9,700 did this.

Judges 7:1-7:

1 Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.



2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and

two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed

down upon their knees to drink water.

7 *And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.*

8 *So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.*



God instructed Gideon to take only the 300 alert men to engage the hosts of the Midianites and the Amalekites. The victory was going to be of the Lord — not of man. Men of faith and courage would be God's instruments.

HOW FAR CAN WE IDENTIFY WITH GIDEON?

- **As a person of doubts?**
- **As a person who seeks God's Guidance?**
- **As a person who follows guidance with action?**
- **As a person who inspires others to follow?**

CONCLUSION

God is the same — yesterday, today, and forever. We need dedicated men like Gideon to whom God can say: *Arise, get thee down into the host, for I have delivered it into thine hand.*

Judges 7:9: And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

There is an enemy! But God is with us!!

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