

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

JUDGES 6:11-24

LESSON: THE CALL OF GIDEON

—June 14, 2020

SYNOPSIS

Deborah was a prophetess and judge in Israel. Deborah's skilled leadership and presence gave courage to Barak and the people of Israel. She composed and sang a song of praise to God after He had given victory over Israel's enemies. God fought for Israel from heaven and He used the stars and heavens as His weapons to wage war against Sisera. God caused the Kishon River to overflow and sweep the Canaanites away in defeat, tumbling their chariots and rendering their great advantage useless. And Deborah blessed a woman named Jael greatly for the murder of Sisera, the great Canaanite general. Deborah prayed and prophesied that all of God's enemies would be defeated the way that Sisera was defeated. Chapter 5 ends with the statement that, following this decisive victory over the Canaanites, "*the land had rest for forty years.*"

Chapter 6:1-10 After Israel's victory over the Canaanites, and the land resting for forty years, the cycle of apostasy – punishment- deliverance is repeated, because evil behavior continued in the children of Israel before God. They worshipped idols and forgot God's commandments. They were faithful in their worship to God for a while, but that faithfulness did not last. The consequence of Israel's sin was God handing them over to the Midianites for seven years. So, when the Midianites descended upon the land, the Israelites would retreat to the caves and hide themselves in dens in the mountains. Each year for seven years the Midianites, the Amalekites, and people from the east would come upon the Israelite's land like a plague infecting and destroying the land. The Midianites, the Amalekites, and people from the east would set up camp on Israel's land till they destroyed the produce of the earth, leave the land desolate as far as Gaza, take the sheep and the ox, and threaten the very lives of the Israelites. These people would come each year at harvest time with their cattle and their tents. Both they and their camels were beyond counting. They came like locusts in so great a number descending upon the land to destroy it. I guess enough was enough, for this happened each year for seven years. The Israelites became so impoverished by the Midianites and suffered so that they finally cried out to God for relief. This invasion left the Israelites starving in utter poverty. Time had passed before God answered the cries of the Israelites. He sent a prophet whose name was not revealed to preach the following message to the Israelites: "*Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage.*" First, the prophet begins to convey the mercy and blessings of God; what He's done for the Israelites; all the way back to bringing them out of Egyptian bondage. God is sending a message to Israel through the mouth of this prophet. Now, God's prophet really gets real with them! Second, the prophet quotes what God had already said to them: "**I am the Lord your God**" meaning 'I brought you up and brought you out!' God already said: "**don't fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell!**" But the thing is: "**you haven't obeyed My voice!**" This was to bring the Israelites into total recognition of what happens to them when they turn from God to false gods. It all comes down to obedience. They needed to recognize their sinful behavior, repent, and turn back to God in worship.

LESSON:

I. GIDEON'S DOUBT JUDGES 6:11-15

6:11 **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.** While the Israelites awaited further answer from God, the Angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak (some call terebinth tree) which was in Ophrah, a city located in western Manasseh where the oak belonged to Joash the Abiezrite of the tribe of Manasseh. Gideon, his son was hiding from the Midianites threshing wheat! The "angel of the Lord" is none other than Christ Himself—*the appearance of God in human form as the Angel of Yahweh.* Here Gideon was literally hiding by the winepress where he was threshing wheat meaning beating out the grain secretly to keep it hidden from the enemy.

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Normally, wheat was threshed (grain separated from the wheat stalks from the useless outer shell called chaff) in an open area on a threshing floor by oxen pulling threshing sledges over the stalks where the wind could blow away the lighter chaff when the farmer tossed the beaten wheat into the air.

He feared that the Midianites would steal it if he was caught.

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. The name "Gideon" (he who cuts down) means "Destroyer," "Mighty warrior" or "Feller (of trees)." God chose Gideon, a young man from an otherwise unremarkable clan from the tribe of Manasseh to free the people of Israel from Midian, and to condemn their worship of idols. When the Angel of the Lord said that the Lord was with Gideon, what he meant, and what Gideon understood him to be saying, confused him. So, when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said, *'The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor'*, meaning that Gideon would be the man against whom no one would be able to stand against, because the Lord would be with him wherever he went. And that he (mighty man of valour) would have success wherever he went.

6:13 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. Gideon questions the Angel of the Lord, for he failed to see how God was going to work through him. Gideon begins to remind the Angel of his present and past circumstances, that if the Lord is with them, why has all this happened to them? This was a new generation who had not seen the miracles of the past. They didn't see the miracles which their fathers told them about: bringing them up from Egypt. Gideon had only seen the Lord forsaking them and delivering them into the hands of the Midianites. So, Gideon's questions began with, "...if the Lord..., ...why then...?, ...and where be all the miracles...? ...and Did not the Lord...? Gideon can't even see the positive.

6:14 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?—The Angel of the Lord was God Himself speaking, telling Gideon, "Go in this might." **What might?** Well, He called him mighty man of valour (6:13). God saw his potential!

- Gideon had the might of the humble, threshing wheat on the winepress floor.
- Gideon had the might of caring, because he cared about the low place of Israel.
- Gideon had the might of knowledge, because he heard of God doing great things in the past.
- Gideon had the might of the spiritually hungry because he wanted to see God do those great works he's heard about.
- Gideon had the might of the teachable, because he listened to what the Angel of the Lord said.
- Gideon had the might when weak, for God's strength is perfected in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Going in the strength that God has given him, he was to save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. The Angel's assurance points to: **"Have not I sent thee?"** Now, Gideon has to recognize this message from God and receive that he is a **mighty man of valor**. It is important to know that God sends us, but it's even greater to know that He's with us, and going before us.

6:15 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. He continues to sell himself short; even his family. He made excuses for himself to the Lord. He interjected that his family in Manasseh was poor, and that he was the least in his father's house. He was the youngest son of his family and they were an insignificant family from a militarily impoverished tribe. In essence, he was saying that he was not qualified for this task; neither was his family, nor his tribe. Wow!

II. GIDEON'S REASSURANCE JUDGES 6:16-18

6:16 And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

Nevertheless, God is still reassuring Gideon by telling him that He would be with him as Gideon strikes down the

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Midianites, with a force as if he and God were one man. Gideon will soon become the fifth judge over Israel.

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. Well, the nerve of Gideon, he asks for a sign; some kind of visual proof that comes from the presence of God. He can't believe that he's truly found grace in the sight of God; that God would be with him, or that God wants to use him by sending him to strike down the Midianites.

6:18 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. Gideon didn't want the Angel of the Lord to leave until he brought forth an offering. And the Angel of the Lord agreed to tarry there until Gideon comes back again.

III. GIDEON'S GIFT TO THE ANGEL JUDGES 6:19-21

6:19 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. While the Angel of the Lord waits on Gideon to return, Gideon hurries home to prepare a young goat (kid); roasting it, baking some unleavened bread (cakes) with a bushel of flour. He brings it all back by putting the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot placing both under the oak, presenting it as an offering.

6:20 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. The Angel of the Lord then tells Gideon to take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock that served as an improvised altar. They were placed according to the direction of the Angel of the Lord. Gideon then was to pour out the broth meaning over the flesh and cakes as the Angel of the Lord instructed him. And Gideon does so.

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. The Angel of the Lord used the end of His staff that was in His hand and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And a fire arose out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And suddenly the Angel of the Lord was gone; vanished.

IV. GIDEON WORSHIPS THE LORD JUDGES 6:22-24

6:22 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. Finally, Gideon is seeing everything clearly and he believes this was the Angel of the Lord, for no one else could have brought fire up from a wet rock with a staff. He couldn't help but cry out "Alas, O Lord God" because this wasn't something he could keep in, for he knew he had seen the Angel of the Lord face to face.

6:23 And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Seeing the Angel of the Lord face to face, Gideon thought he was going to die, because no one has seen God's face and lived. But, the Lord said Peace to him, fear not (don't be afraid) Why? He wasn't going to die.

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. Gideon builds an altar unto the Lord calling it Jehovah-shalom which means "The Lord of Peace." This day it's still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

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Gideon, the son of Joash the Abiezrite was hiding from the Midianites as he threshed wheat by the winepress, when the Angel of the Lord appeared to him. The Angel of the Lord sat under an oak tree speaking to him, saying that the Lord is with him—mighty man of valour. Gideon's question was that if the Lord was with them, why had the Midianites come upon them, and where are all the miracles their fathers told them of? Gideon confesses the Lord has forsaken them and delivered them into the hands of the Midianites. The angel of the Lord was God Himself speaking, telling Gibeon, "Go in this might" meaning go in the strength God has given him to save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. God affirms to him— "Have not I sent thee?" In short, God recognizes in Gideon something that Gideon does not see himself. Gideon thought so little of himself, and was so filled with doubt and unbelief. He interjected that his family in Manasseh was poor, and that he was the least in his father's house (**6:11-15**).

But, God was patient with Gideon, telling him that He would be with him. God sees our potential for what we can become, as He works in our lives. Gideon is a great encouragement to people who have a hard time accepting themselves and believing that God can make anything out of them or do anything with them as an unexpected leader. Gideon now wants to see a sign if he's found grace in the sight of the Lord, and asks the angel not to depart, but stay until he brings an offering. And the angel said He would stay (**6:16-18**).

Gideon hurries home to prepare a young goat (kid); roasting it, baking some unleavened bread (cakes) with a bushel of flour. He brings it all back to the Angel of the Lord by putting the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot presenting it as an offering under the oak. The Angel of the Lord then tells Gideon to take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock that served as an improvised altar and poured out the broth. And Gideon does so as instructed. The Angel of the Lord used the end of His staff that was in His hand and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And a fire arose out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And suddenly the Angel of the Lord was gone; vanished (**6:19-21**).

Finally, Gideon realized this was the Angel of the Lord for no one else could have brought fire up from a wet rock with a staff. He couldn't help but cry out because this wasn't something he could keep in. Seeing the Angel of the Lord face to face, he thought he was going to die because no one has seen God's face and lived. But, the Lord said Peace to him, fear not (don't be afraid) Why? He wasn't going to die. Gideon builds an altar unto the Lord calling it Jehovah-shalom which means "*The Lord of Peace.*" This day it's still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites (**6:22-24**).