

## **Day 244 - FRIDAY: September 1st**

### Judges 6

#### Judges 6:1-40 NKJV

Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains. So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. Also I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.' " Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the LORD

appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!" Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man." Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back." So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them. The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face." Then the LORD said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the

second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it; and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down." So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built. So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it." But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar." Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said— look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You

will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

The UCG reading plan: "Deborah and Barak's victory brought Israel 40 years of independence and peace. But Israel again did evil in the sight of God, and God once again delivered them over to their enemies, this time the Midianites. For seven years the Midianites, with smaller contingents of Amalekites and Mesopotamians, would raid Israel during harvest seasons, swooping down and confiscating all the produce of the fields. Many Israelites took to the hills to live in caves, no doubt because the invaders would seize even the foodstuffs stored in houses, and dwelling in highland caves provided a place both of security and of safe storage. Gideon was a Manassite, but of the smallest of that tribe's clans, and he himself the "least" in the house of his father—implying the smallest, youngest, least important or least thought of. In any case, he was clearly not a man of any considerable wealth or influence. But God often works through the unknown and apparently insignificant. This is also true of New Testament times (see 1 Corinthians 1:26).

During this oppression, God, through His prophet, plainly told Israel why they were being oppressed (verses 8-10). Yet, when the Angel of the Lord—who seems to have been the Lord Himself in this case (compare verses 12, 14, 16, 23), i.e., the preincarnate Christ as messenger of the Father (compare Genesis 16:10-13)—appeared to Gideon, Gideon asked why all this had happened. Apparently few paid

any heed to the words of the prophets. Nevertheless, the time for punishment was to be ended, and God had chosen Gideon as the instrument of that deliverance.

Our introduction to Gideon is somewhat humorous. He is threshing wheat not out in the open on a threshing floor as would normally be the case, but hidden in a winepress out of fear of the Midianites stealing the grain from him. Yet this divine Messenger's first words to fearful Gideon are, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!" (verse 12). "Both statements seemed absurd. First of all, where was the God of Israel? Second, anyone with eyes to see could know that he was no mighty man of valor. Gallant generals and fearless warriors did not hide from the enemy in winepresses" (Phillip Keller, *Mighty Man of Valor*, 1979, p. 25). But God often refers to people according to what they will become. Gideon certainly didn't come across as mighty or valorous initially, but by believing and trusting in God, he ultimately lived up to the confidence God placed in him and truly became a mighty warrior, a man of valor. Interestingly, the name Gideon itself actually meant "Hewer," "Feller" or "One Who Cuts Down," perhaps implying an *overcomer*. And after God's calling, Gideon would begin fulfilling the meaning of his name.

His first action was to destroy the local altar to Baal—another sign that few Israelites were listening to God's prophets. When the local officials sought to put him to death, Gideon's father Joash challenged them to let Baal prove his own divinity by taking vengeance on Gideon through some supernatural means. The challenge was ironic, because it would show Baal completely incapable of taking vengeance upon anyone—Midianite, Amalekite, Mesopotamian or even the smallest, most insignificant man in Manasseh. Of course, nothing happened. Joash then called Gideon by the name Jerubbaal ("Let Baal Plead" or "Let Baal

Take Revenge"), thus making him a living taunt to the worshipers of Baal.

The destruction of the altar, and the confounding of the Baal devotees, gave evidence to Gideon that God was on his side. He would need the encouragement of that thought, for then the seasonal raids of the Midianites and their confederates commenced. When they appeared, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and he gathered an army from Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali—again, only a few of the tribes of Israel.

While the Spirit of the Lord had come upon Gideon, he had as yet developed little faith. He required another sign from God that God would truly deliver Midian into his hands. While this was probably for his own sake, he may also have felt it necessary for the Israelites to know, with the evidence of such signs, that God had chosen him to fight the battle. In any event, God did perform the famous fleece signs. Gideon, we can see, was still used to walking by sight, not faith. Nevertheless, the success of his enterprise was not to come from his strength but God's. The signs were given, and Gideon was emboldened.”  
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Verse 12 – The Lord calls Gideon a “mighty man of valor” (NKJV). The word “mighty man” in Hebrew means “strong, mighty, brave (BDB)” and the word “valor” in Hebrew means “strength, might, efficiency, wealth, army (BDB)” and is most commonly translated as “army” in the NKJV. As the reading program above indicates, it seems God sees the potential within Gideon to be a mighty warrior for God & Israel.

Verse 15 – Gideon now calls his family “weakest” in Manasseh and the “least” in my father’s house. The word in Hebrew translated as “weakest” means “low, poor, weak” (BDB). It appears likely that they

were the low-ranking family within Manasseh without a lot of honor. The Hebrew word translated “least” means “little, insignificant, young”. Like David, Gideon appears to be the youngest of the family from a “low” household. How often God chooses the one no one else would choose. He did the same with each of us so that He receives the glory for the great things He does in and through each of us.

Verse 26 – I find this so interesting. God normally makes such a clear distinction between clean and unclean (holy and common), but here to likely demonstrate His great power over the false gods Israel was worshiping, He has Gideon use the wood from the image as the wood for the Burnt Offering to God. Which because of the next verse, isn’t even done in the sight of all the people of the city.

Verse 27 – This brings back to mind how God called Gideon a mighty man of valor, yet, here again, we see him afraid of both his father’s household and the men of the city. He doesn’t seem so bold and strong yet. Yet, why did God choose him? Was Gideon the only one within his household who wasn’t fine worshiping false gods? This may be the case since we see that he feared his own household being angry with his actions to cut down image and break the false god altar. He may also have been afraid of individuals trying to stop him before he was able to complete all that God had asked of him, where by doing it at night he may have it done before anyone could react.

Verse 34 – This trumpet is again the Hebrew shofar which was often used as a call to war.