

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[Jdg 6:1-40 NKJV] 1 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,

There are a few things I want you to look at –

The first thing is that the Children of Israel continued the cycle of turning their back on the Lord.

This is on the heels of what happened in chapter 4 – where the nation was singing the Song of Deborah, when the nation was rejoicing about God's deliverance, about God's victory over the enemy –

They stopped singing the Song of Deborah –

Now, before we shake our heads at the Children of Israel, we must remember that we do the exactly the same thing -

And they went back to worshipping Baal and Asheroth, they went back to wanting to live their lives like the Canaanites.

So verse 1 tells us that the Lord used the Midianites to correct them, to chasten them, to spank them.

And God is doing this, not because He is a mean God – He is doing this because He loves them – in the same way that He chastens us – He wants us to come back to Him.

He chastens us because we are His.

Now, the Midianites were cousins of the Children of Israel.

When Sarah died – Abraham took another wife.

Keturah

And they had six sons

So Abraham, because he wanted to protect the inheritance that belonged to Isaac – he sends them to the east.

One of the sons was Medan – and his descendants –Midianites.

And throughout the OT, we see the Midianites in battle against the Children of Israel.

So God allows the Midianites to come in – and this time, it took seven years for the Children of Israel to cry out to the Lord.

2 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.

As the Midianites oppressed the Children of Israel – instead of crying out to God, instead of repenting, they continued to do evil, and chose to hide from their enemies.

Hiding was hard work; they "made... dens... caves... and strongholds."

It would have been so much easier to turn to the Lord.

Hiding was a terrible strategy that only prolonged their suffering.

Instead of hiding, they needed to pursue holiness; but they stubbornly refused.

3 So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. 4 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. 5 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. 6 So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

When it was harvest time, the Midianites and the Amalekites and some of the other ites, they would come in and they would be like pirates, like locusts – and they would

either steal the harvest or they would destroy the fields so the Children of Israel couldn't make a living.

When they would take their animals to graze, the ites would come in and take them away.

As the people were on the verge of starvation, after seven long years - they cried out to God.

Now, over the last couple of weeks, we have seen the pattern that whenever the Children of Israel would cry out, God would raise up a judge and the judge would deliver them and turn them back to the Lord.

God does something a little different this time –

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, 8 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; 9 '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. 10 '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.' "**

God hears their cries –

And He responds by sending them a prophet – He is going to deliver a message to them through this prophet.

We don't know the prophet's name

We don't know where he came from

The important thing is the message

And the message is –

I did not deliver you from bondage and bring you into this land - in order for you to go back to bondage

I did not bring you into this land and then abandoned you and left it up to you to defeat the ites by their own strength.

You see, the message was to remind them of their identity and of God's intentions.

God didn't stop working when they came out of Egypt.

God held back the Red Sea, the Jordan River, and even the sun, and He would continue to do mighty works.

God wants them to relive His power on their behalf

And I believe that this is a very important disciple for the believer.

We should always relive what God has done on our behalf.

I had you make a note – do not fear the god of the Amorites

Meaning that the Children of Israel already feared the god of the Amorites, they had already showed reverential fear toward them – the reverential fear and honor that belonged to the One True God.

11 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.

Here in verse 11 – we are introduced Gideon, and by the looks of our text, we can see that Gideon is having a miserable day.

He is threshing wheat –

And the way people would thresh wheat during these days is they would gather the harvest, take it up on a hilltop where there was plenty of wind, and they would throw the wheat up – the wind would blow the chaff away and you would be left with the edible portion of the wheat.

However, Gideon – because he fears that the Midianites are going to come and take the wheat – he is threshing wheat in the winepress – the winepresses were down in the valley – where there was less wind and also the winepresses were not that big – so he doesn't have much wheat to begin with.

And the Angel of the Lord (Jesus – preincarnate), is watching Gideon.

12 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD [is] with you, you mighty man of valor!"

You mighty man of valor – that is how Jesus addressed Gideon.

Valor – means someone who exhibits tremendous courage

Valor would be a word we would use for some of the individuals we have seen on the news over the last two weeks who are fighting for their freedom.

Gideon is hiding out – threshing wheat.

He is afraid of the Midianites.

To the world – Gideon is the opposite of what valor is.

So why would Jesus call him a mighty man of valor?

I am going to come back to this in a little bit.

13 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."

“If God is with us why isn't He doing all the stuff we've been told He did for our ancestors?”

Why are all these bad things happening to us?

That is how Gideon responds to Jesus

It is the same response that sometimes we make –

The scriptures tell us that God loves and will never forsake us –

But when troubles come our way –

Sometimes we respond with -

“If God loves me and is with me, then why am I going through all this?”

“If He’s done all the stuff the Bible says, why don’t I see a shred of His power in my life?”

“I don’t need a big miracle – I just need help with my marriage, with my financial situation, with my kids”

14 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?" 15 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." 16 And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites **as one man**."**

Once again, Jesus refers to Gideon as mighty – go in this might of yours

And Gideon responds with – there is no might in me,

I am the weakest among my brothers who are the weakest among my tribes who are already weak.

So why would Jesus again refer to “might”

Is Jesus referring to his potential???

If Gideon was developed and trained under someone could he be a man of valor? Is this what Jesus is referring to????

Could he be like the karate kid?

The answer is “no” –

Here is the thing church

God's calling was God's enabling.

Gideon could do it because the Lord had called him to do it, and would therefore empower him to do it.

What does this mean to us?

It means that anything God is calling us to do, or to endure, includes His enabling to do it, or to endure it.

The Angel of the Lord saw Gideon as a mighty man of valor because he was one, right then, if Gideon would only realize it.

Gideon didn't realize it –

Just like Moses didn't realize it when God told him that he was going to be the instrument that He would use to deliver His people.

“Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh” Exodus 3

I have a speech impediment – I've been talking to sheep for forty years (Exodus 4)

Gideon uses the same excuse here –

I'm a nobody

You see, when God told Gideon he was to be Israel's deliverer, he immediately began thinking of how to fulfill his call in the ways the world would do it.

In order to defeat the Midianites, the Amalekites and the other ites – you need to assemble a bigger army that they have.

So Gideon felt he was disqualified from doing this because he didn't possess that skill set.

God answers Gideon by saying, “I don't need an army Gideon – I just need you”

17 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.

“Okay, if you’re really who You say You are, & You want me to know that You’re appointing me to bring deliverance to Israel – give me a sign.”

Gideon is seeking confirmation from the Lord

I think far too many times, we make decisions because we had a hunch or because it seemed like it was a good idea or because it made sense at the time – and it turns out to be a foolish decision because we failed to seek confirmation from the Lord.

Church, God responds to honest doubt –

We should always be seeking confirmation on the decisions we make.

18 "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." 19 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].

Before we continue, we need to remember a few things about what was going on earlier in the chapter.

Gideon is going to prepare a goat and he is bringing unleavened bread –

But earlier in the chapter, we read that the Midianites were taking their animals, they were taking their harvest and destroying their fields.

This means that what Gideon was going to offer the Lord – it was going to be pretty much everything he had. It was going to be costly.

Not only that – but Gideon tells the Lord to wait for him.

He has to catch the goat, skin the goat, prepare the goat, boil the goat, make the unleavened bread – this must have gone on for hours -

And the Lord waited for him as Gideon brings this offering before Him.

20 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. 21 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.

Gideon is commanded to put the meat and the unleavened bread on the rock – and the Angel of the Lord touches it with His staff and the meat and the bread are consumed by fire.

Gideon wanted a sign – how is that for a sign, Gideon.

And when Gideon turned – the Angel of the Lord was gone.

22 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." 23 Then the LORD said to him, "Peace [be] with you; do not fear, you shall not die."

After Gideon saw what happened to the meat and the bread –

And when he saw that the Angel of the Lord departed

He finally put two and two together and realized that this conversation he has been having was with the Angel of the Lord

The bad news is that he now thinks he is going to die – why did he think this? The Angel of the Lord had appeared previously to other individuals – they didn't die.

It could be that he was superstitious or it could be that he was just a big weenie – he was always scared.

Back in verse 13, he was scared because he didn't see the hand of the Lord, and here he is scared because not only did he see the hand of the Lord – he saw Him face to face.

And God comforted him and told him he wasn't going to die

24 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.

Gideon constructed an altar near the rock where the goat and bread were consumed.

And he named it Yahweh-Shalom

The Lord is peace –

This altar became a memorial to God for Gideon and for those who followed him.

When Gideon looked at that altar, it reminded him how the Lord had called him and given the promise to be with him.

It was the point at which God began a new work in Gideon, and through him, to that entire generation.

As the deliverer of Israel, Gideon knew that peace would come, not through his strength or skill, but through God's presence.

25 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; 26 "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."

Before Gideon could go out against the enemy, he had to deal with the very stuff in his own family that had opened the door to the enemy in the first place.

God called Gideon to clean house.

You see, Gideon's dad had an altar of Baal in his own backyard and he also had an Astarte pole –

And if they were in his father's backyard – then it is most likely that Gideon had been worshipping these false gods too.

And we will see the effects of this – because as we will see in a few weeks – when we get toward the end of Gideon's life – idolatry was deeply rooted in his heart.

27 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.

Gideon responds to the Lord's command

He was obedient -

He rounds up 10 of his servants and they tore down the altar and the wooden image.

However, notice that the scriptures clearly point out that he did it by night because he was afraid.

Fear is a sign of lack of faith

That is why the Lord encouraged Joshua over and over again to be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid.

What we need to note is that God doesn't rebuke Gideon for doing this at night.

He doesn't rebuke Gideon for his lack of faith.

He knows spiritual growth is a process, & that faith is something that takes time to develop.

Gideon will learn, his faith in God will deepen, & as it does, his courage will grow.

So God is patient with him & lets him learn without heaping criticism on him.

28 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. 29 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." 30 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."

The people wake up in the morning – they see the altar and the wooden image destroyed –

They do their investigation and everyone is pointing their finger to Gideon.

So the people want to kill Gideon – the irony is that they should have gone after Joash – because Joash was the one who was violating God’s law.

He was one of the individuals that was encouraging idolatry by having altars in his backyard.

So the people go to Joash and tell him to bring out his son.

31 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!" 32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar."

Joash response to the people –

“Let Baal defend himself!”

Joash was a man who’d gone along with the sensibilities of his time.

When it became popular to worship Baal, he’d built him an altar.

When it became popular to erect a pole – he erected a pole.

But when his son took a stand for righteousness, Joash came to his senses & realized he’d been living for the wrong things.

And Joash gave his son the nickname - Jerubbaal = “Let Baal deal with it!”

Church,

Gideon is a great example of a man who grew in faith from fear to courage.

He went from hiding in a winepress to courageous deliverer of the people of God.

Yet Gideon was a man no different than you & I.

What made him great was his dependence on a great God.

His courage came from trusting in the Lord who promised to be with him.

That same promise is made to you and I in Christ.

Gideon was an “altared” man – one who was changed by the revelation of God.

You and I can be altared people too is we will but offer ourselves as living sacrifices.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, “I am a sinner.”

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

CALVARY
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Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

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