

## Judges 6 Israel Oppressed by Midian

Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD handed them over to Midian for seven years. 2 The power of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. 3 For whenever Israel had sown, the Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and the people of the east and march against them.

4 So they would camp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel, nor a sheep, ox, or donkey. 5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts in number, and both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to ruin it. 6 So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD.

7 Now it came about, when the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD on account of Midian, 8 that the LORD sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, and he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: 'It was I who brought you up from Egypt, and brought you out of the house of slavery. 9 And I rescued you from the hands of the Egyptians, and from the hands of all your oppressors, and I drove them out from you and gave you their land, 10 and I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live." But you have not obeyed Me.'"

## Gideon Is Visited

11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, valiant warrior." 13 Then 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 the LORD not bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian."

14 And the LORD looked at him and said, "Go in this strength of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" 15 But he said to Him, "O Lord, how am I to save Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." 16 Yet the LORD said to him, "I will certainly be with you, and you will defeat Midian as one man." 17 So Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then perform for me a sign that it is You speaking with me.

18 Please do not depart from here until I come back to You, and bring out my

offering and lay it before You.” And He said, “I will remain until you return.” 19 Then Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour; he put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought them out to him under the oak and presented them. 20 And 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 came up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. 22 When Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, “Oh, Lord GOD! For I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!” 23 But the LORD said to him, “Peace to you, do not be afraid; you shall not die.” 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25 Now on the same night the LORD said to him, “Take your father’s bull and a second bull seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly way, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down.” 27 Then Gideon took ten men from his servants and did as the LORD had spoken to him; and because he was too afraid of his father’s household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night.

28 When the people of the city got up early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal had been torn down, and the Asherah which had been beside it had been cut down, and the second bull had been offered on the altar which had been built. 29 So they said to one another, “Who did this thing?” And when they searched and inquired, they said, “Gideon the son of Joash did this thing.” 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it.” 31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal, or will you save him? Whoever will contend for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, since someone has torn down his altar!”

32 Therefore on that day he named Gideon Jerubbaal, that is to say, “Let Baal contend against him,” because he had torn down his altar. 33 Then all the Midianites, the Amalekites, and the people of the east assembled together; and they crossed over and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 So the Spirit of the LORD covered Gideon like clothing; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout Manasseh, and they also were called together to follow him; and he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and

Naphtali, and they came up to meet them.

### Sign of the Fleece

36 Then Gideon said to God, "If You are going to save Israel through me, as You have spoken, 37 behold, I am putting 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 will know that You will save Israel through me, as You have spoken." 38 And it was so. When he got up early the next morning and wrung out the fleece, he wrung the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not let Your anger burn against me, so that I may speak only one more time; please let me put You to the test only one more time with the fleece: let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground." 40 And God did so that night; for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

### Pauls helpful insights

1. They did evil in Gods sight, so God let Israel's enemy, Midian, persecute them for seven years.

2. The Midianites would attack, burn and destroy, so that the Israelites with hid in caves and live in dens.

3. They left no food, no seed, no cattle for the possibility of reproduction.

4. Midian was many and so overwhelmed Israel's capacity to defend themselves.

5. The nation of Israel was very low in spirit body, devastated in their own land and were starving.

6. Israel in repentance cries out to God for deliverance from the enemy.

7. A prophet brought a word from God in response to the cry from the nation.

8. Why does the prophet declare God's history with Israel and the importance of reminding them that it was Him, who brought Israel out of slavery.

9. Had they yet not learned it was God who delivers them from their oppressors?

10. He told them not to let fear be in them. How difficult is this to do?

11. Now there was an angel of the Lord who sat under the oak tree. Do you think he might have paid them a visit?

12. We are introduced to Israel's new saviour – Gideon. What kind of person do you see him to be?

13. The angel speaks to Gideon and even calls him 'O valiant warrior'. Was he?

14. Gideon has a question for the angel, 'if God is with us then why has all this happened to us?'

15. His question was, 'why has this happened to us' and 'where are all the miracles our fathers told us about'.
16. Because of the circumstance Israel is in regarding captivity, he thinks God has left them, but has He?
17. When you are facing difficult circumstances do you ever feel like this too?
18. God, through the angel, tells Gideon to go and deliver the nation of Israel from their enemy.
19. He says 'have I not sent you?' – well, had God not sent him?
20. Gideon says 'how can I go and do this, I am no-one?'
21. Why does God use the 'are nots' to bring the 'ares' into humility?
22. Gideon is asked to be obedient, but it is God who will bring about the deliverance.
23. Do you think it was right for Gideon to ask for a sign?
24. Why did Gideon need to feed the angel?
25. Why did the angel not eat the meal but create an offering out of the meal?
26. Gideon was afraid of the angel, but it is not the intention of the angel to make Gideon afraid!
27. Why did Gideon name that place the Lord is peace?
28. God's instruction to Gideon is clear and it will bear many consequences.
29. They cut down the false god with the help of Gideon's men, the day after the night before someone will pay for these actions!
30. The questions, 'who did this' and 'who is to blame', but everyone knows that it was Gideon and his men.
31. They came looking for Gideon but he is protected by the words of his father as he invites baal to stand up for himself!
32. What is it for God's spirit to come upon a person?
33. Gideon invites the nation to join him in the battle against the nation of Midian and declares 'God will save them'.
34. Is it right to test the Lord?
35. Was it right that God's people were living off the scraps of the land?
36. When Gideon realised he had been talking to the angel of the Lord, a great fear fell upon him for his life