

# THE CALL OF GOD TO GIDEON

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Judges 6:1-40

LESSON 192 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### Judges 6:1-40

<sup>1</sup> And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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;

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; *for* both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it.

<sup>6</sup> And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites,

<sup>8</sup> That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage;

<sup>9</sup> And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### NOTES:

#### **In Dens and Caves**

We remember that God had promised the Israelites that if they obeyed His commandments He would bless them in the city; He would bless them in the field; He would give them good homes and abundant crops; and when enemies would come against Israel from one direction they would flee in seven because God would fight for Israel.

But now we find that the Israelites are living in dens in the mountains, and in caves, like animals. Where are the homes that they were to have enjoyed in the city? And what about their crops? The Israelites would plant grain, but when it was about time for harvest the Midianites and Amalekites, Israel's enemies, would come with their cattle and camels and eat up or destroy nearly all the crops of the Israelites so that they had little to eat.

#### **A Cry to God**

Whenever the Israelites found themselves in serious trouble they would remember God, and would cry to Him for help. This time, when they called for help against the Midianites, God sent a prophet to tell them why they were suffering. He reminded them of the miracles God had worked for their forefathers when He delivered them from Egyptian bondage; and how He had driven out their enemies ahead of them when they entered Canaan. The reason things were different now was that Israel had disobeyed God and had worshiped idols.

They did the right thing to call upon the Lord. God had promised that He would forgive them if they repented; and He kept His promise. As soon as they turned toward Him, He began to work for them.

#### **Gideon Introduced**

There was a young man in Israel, of the tribe of Manasseh, who was threshing wheat in a winepress. That was a strange place to be threshing wheat, but he was hiding from the Midianites who wanted to destroy his grain, and he probably thought they would not look there.

Outwardly there was nothing unusual about Gideon. His family had never done anything outstanding, and they did not have much money.

But God looked into Gideon's heart and saw that he would obey Him if he knew what to do. So He sent an angel with a commission to make Gideon a leader in Israel.

#### **The Angel's Visit**

The angel looked like a man when he came and sat down under the oak near where Gideon was threshing. When he spoke he said to Gideon, "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." It may have been hard for Gideon to understand that. He knew that God had worked miracles for his ancestors in Egypt and in the wilderness. Surely, if God were with him he would not be

the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;

<sup>10</sup> And I said unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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?

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

<sup>17</sup> And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

hiding in a winepress to do his pitifully small threshing. Would they be living in caves if God were with them? And what had Gideon ever done to make the angel think that he was a man of valor?

The valor in Gideon was that he would obey God. He would not be afraid of the men around him but would do the will of the Lord. Jesus told His followers: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Obedience is what God is looking for.

God could use Gideon because he would listen when God spoke; The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; . . . that no flesh should glory in his presence" (I Corinthians 1:27-29). God uses the weak things so that everyone will know that it is God who has done the work. If He should choose a popular army general, or a brilliant politician, people might think that it was by his own worth that he had won the victory.

### The Meat Offering

Gideon wondered if the angel, who he thought was just a man, really meant what he said, so he asked for a proof. Gideon asked him to stay there under the oak until he brought him something to eat. The angel promised to wait.

Gideon killed a kid and prepared it, and made some unleavened bread. The meat he put into a basket, and the broth he took in the pot, and presented it with the unleavened bread to the angel. But the angel did not eat it. What he said must have sounded very strange to Gideon, but Gideon obeyed.

The angel told Gideon to place the meat and the bread on a stone and pour out the broth. Gideon might have thought it a great waste; they were poor, and if the angel did not want to eat the food he had prepared, his family would eat it. But Gideon obeyed without question; and when the food was arranged on the rock, the angel touched it with his staff, and fire came out of the rock and burned it up.

Do you see what the angel had done with the food that was offered to him? He had made it a sacrifice unto God. As the smoke rose from the sacrifice, the angel disappeared. The angel had made a covenant with Gideon. He promised that the Lord would be with him when he fought with Midian. And the sacrifice was a seal to the promise.

Now Gideon was frightened. He had seen an angel. When people are about to die they sometimes see angels, so Gideon thought he was going to die. But he heard the voice of God say to him: "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." Gideon was comforted and realized that he had been called of God to work for Him. He built an altar as a memorial that the angel of God had spoken to him here, and he called it Jehovah-shalom, which means: The Lord is peace.

### Idols Destroyed

Gideon was called to deliver Israel but he had hard work before him. First, he must persuade the Israelites around him to forsake their idols and worship God. God did not let him waste any time. That same night the Lord appeared to him and told him to tear down the altar of Baal and destroy the grove where the shrine was kept. Then he should build an altar to God and offer a sacrifice of his father's fine bullock, which had perhaps been raised to offer to a heathen god.

The worship of idols was serious business with those who did it. Would Gideon dare to destroy the false gods and the place

<sup>19</sup> 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*.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> And the LORD said unto him, Peace *be* unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

<sup>24</sup> Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it *is* yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

<sup>25</sup> 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:

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and *so* it was,

of false worship? Would he be afraid that perhaps the gods could hurt him or put a curse on him? The people who worshiped those gods believed that they had power.

Many people in Africa and India today believe that false gods, witches, or medicine men can put curses on them. Some of them can, too, by the power of the devil. But Jesus can break that power. Whenever anyone turns to Jesus and believes in Him, the devil or his priest has no more power over him.

### Gideon's Faith

Gideon had had a call from God and he believed what God said and was not afraid to trust Him. The next night he took ten of his servants and they boldly knocked down the altar of Baal and cut down the grove. Then they built a new altar to God, and offered the bullock upon it.

When the men of the city woke up in the morning and saw their precious idol dishonored, they were very angry and wanted to kill the one who had done it. But Gideon's father came to Gideon's defense, and reasoned with the men of the city. If their god were so mighty, would he not have punished Gideon for dishonoring his altar? If Baal could not even help himself when his idol was thrown down, how could he help anyone else?

### Helpless Gods

We are reminded of the gods the Egyptians worshiped when Israel was in bondage. When God brought the plagues upon Egypt, not one of those gods moved to defend himself. The Egyptians worshiped the Nile River, but God turned it to blood until they were nauseated by it. They worshiped the frog, and God sent so many frogs that they were in the bread dough, in the stoves, in the beds, and everywhere the Egyptians went, until they thoroughly hated them. The cow was worshiped, and God sent a disease among the cattle that killed most of them. Of what good are such gods who not only cannot help people but cannot help themselves?

The men of the city seemed to be persuaded by Joash's reasoning and did not harm Gideon. The first step in Gideon's fight was won. He had his own people on his side.

### Gideon's Fleece

The Midianites and Amalekites were gathered again, ready to come against Israel. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon to rally Israel's armies, and Gideon blew the trumpet which meant a call to arms. Word was sent throughout the tribes of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they answered the call and came up ready to go to war.

Things had gone well for Gideon up to this point, but he wanted to be very sure that he was doing what God wanted him to do. He knew the battle belonged to God, and his part was to follow orders. Gideon asked for another proof that he was to be Israel's leader. He would put some wool on the ground; and if in the morning it would be wet, but there would be no dew on the ground around it, he would know that God had answered him and had really appointed him as Israel's leader. Surely enough, when the morning came the fleece was wet, and the ground was dry.

Gideon asked for just one more proof. He would lay the fleece out another night; and this time it must remain dry, and the ground be wet with dew. God answered again; just as he asked. The wool remained entirely dry although all the ground around it was wet with dew.

because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do *it* by day, that he did *it* by night.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

<sup>33</sup> Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.

<sup>34</sup> But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.

<sup>35</sup> And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

<sup>36</sup> And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine

Now Gideon was satisfied. He was sure that it was the will of God for him to try to conquer the Midianites and the Amalekites who were troubling God's people, and he knew that God would help him win the victory.

### QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the condition of the Israelites at this time?
- 2 What was Gideon doing when the angel came to visit him?
- 3 What was the angel's message?
- 4 Why did Gideon hesitate to accept the message?
- 5 How did the angel prove that what he said was true?
- 6 What happened to the meat, bread, and broth which Gideon brought to the angel?
- 7 What was the first thing Gideon and his men did at God's command?
- 8 What did the people of the city think about it?
- 9 How was Gideon spared from death for what he had done to Baal?
- 10 Tell the story about Gideon's fleece.

hand, as thou hast said,

<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> 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.

<sup>40</sup> And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

