

THE CALL OF GOD TO GIDEON

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

LESSON 192 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10).

[BIBLE TEXT](#) in King James Version

Judges 6:1-40

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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;

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

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

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

⁸ 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;

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

I The Wretched State of Sinners

1 Israel sinned; the Midianites conquered them and left them destitute, Judges 6:1-6;

Psalm 106:41-43

⁴¹ And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

⁴² Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

⁴³ Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

2 The Children of Israel cried to God and He sent a prophet to remind them of their sins, Judges 6:7-10;

Psalm 106:44

⁴⁴ Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

Hosea 5:15

¹⁵ I will go *and* return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

II The Angel's Message to Gideon

1 As Gideon threshed wheat, the angel appeared with a message from God, Judges 6:11, 12

2 Gideon wondered at the divine call, Judges 6:13-16;

Exodus 3:11

¹¹ And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

2 Samuel 7:18-20

¹⁸ Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

¹⁹ And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And *is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?

²⁰ And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant.

Jeremiah 1:6-9

⁶ Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I *am* a child.

⁷ But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

⁸ Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

⁹ Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

3 The authority of the angel was attested by a sign, Judges 6:17-24;

Leviticus 9:24

²⁴ And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: *which* when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on

⁹ And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;

¹⁰ 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.

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.

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

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.

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?

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.

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

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.

¹⁸ Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set *it* before

their faces.

1 Kings 18:38

³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

2 Chronicles 7:1

¹ Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

III Gideon's Destruction of Baal

1 The first command of God to Gideon was that idolatry be overthrown and an altar built for God, Judges 6:25-27;

Matthew 6:24

²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

2 Corinthians 6:15-17

¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

2 The men of the city desired to put Gideon to death, Judges 6:28-30;

Jeremiah 26:11

¹¹ Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man *is* worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

John 16:2

² They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Acts 9:1-2

¹ And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

² And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Acts 26:9-11

⁹ I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

¹⁰ Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

¹¹ And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

3 Gideon's father stood with Gideon against the men of the city, Judges 6:31, 32;

2 Timothy 4:16-17

¹⁶ At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge.

¹⁷ Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

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*.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

²⁵ 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:

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Then Gideon took ten men of his

4 The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon as the Midianites gathered for war, Judges 6:33-35;

Judges 15:14-16

¹⁴ And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

¹⁵ And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

¹⁶ And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

Ephesians 6:10-12

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

IV The Faithfulness of God

1 Gideon asked for a sign that he was called to lead Israel, Judges 6:36-38;

Exodus 4:1-9

¹ And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

² And the LORD said unto him, What *is* that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

³ And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:

⁵ That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

⁶ And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous as snow.

⁷ And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his *other* flesh.

⁸ And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

⁹ And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour *it* upon the dry *land*: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry *land*.

2 Gideon desired the second demonstration, and God granted the request, Judges 6:39, 40

NOTES:

Day of Trouble

The man who sins must expect to reap the result of that sin. Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and almost immediately the protecting hand of the Lord was removed from their lives and lands. On this occasion God allowed the

servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and *so* it was, 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ 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.

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

³³ 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.

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

³⁵ 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.

Midianites, a people who had once been subdued by the Children of Israel, to invade the land and put Israel in oppression. The conqueror was now the conquered. Sin had robbed the once proud army of Israel of its power and will to fight, until now they would rather flee than engage the enemy in combat. The dens of the mountains and caves became Israel's hiding places. The Midianites came in great hordes, like grasshoppers, and destroyed all the increase of the land until Israel was greatly impoverished and without sustenance.

"Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psalm 50:15). Israel did call upon God, after seven years of cruel oppression by the Midianites. It seems strange that men wait so long to call upon the only One who can help them out of their trouble. God proved Himself ready and willing to answer the prayer of the people; however, before He sent a deliverer, He sent a prophet to remind the people of their sins and their need of repentance. No doubt the message of the prophet had its effect, because soon afterward the angel of God appeared to the man whom God had chosen to lead a victorious band against the enemy.

A Man of Valor

The angel of the Lord found Gideon threshing wheat by the winepress — the last place the Midianites would expect to find grain. "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour," was the salutation of the angel. Gideon answered, "If the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" Gideon was similar in this respect to many people today — he failed to realize that God allowed this affliction for the express purpose of bringing the people back to Himself. The Psalmist declared: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Psalm 119:71). The furnace of affliction often proves to be the great purifier of the metal in the lives of God's children.

When Gideon heard the call of God to deliver the Children of Israel out of the hands of the Midianites, he displayed the same trait that has marked most of God's human instruments. Gideon was truly humble. In answer to the declaration that he should save Israel, Gideon replied: "Wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Judges 6:15). True humility is a wonderful working tool in the hands of God. It has been said that humbleness is the only ladder to honor in God's Kingdom. How many of God's great men have expressed their inability in one form or another when God called them to His work. Moses said, "Who am I?" when the Lord instructed him to go to Egypt and deliver the Children of Israel from the bondage of their oppressors. Moses continued to serve God in humility throughout his lifetime, so that the Bible declares: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). The example of Moses' life and work for God stands as a monument to this day. The prevailing need of the world today is a great many men who are willing to say, "Who am I?" and are willing to let God use them as He wills.

Gideon's Altar

As Gideon talked with the angel that brought the message from God, the truth gradually unfolded that this was no ordinary messenger. Gideon desired that the messenger would not depart until he had an opportunity to bring a present. The angel said that

³⁶ And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said,

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 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.

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

be would tarry. When the present was brought, the angel directed that it be placed there upon a rock. The angel touched the offering with the end of the staff that was in his hand, and fire rose up out of the rock and consumed the whole offering. The angel departed at the same time.

Gideon had heard much about the God of Israel, but this seems to be the first recorded personal contact that Gideon had had with God. His first reaction was that he must die. The conviction had no sooner entered his heart than the words of reassurance from Heaven settled in, a great calm upon his soul: "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die."

Gideon found a greater Measure of peace with God in that very hour, for we read that Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord: The name that he gave to that altar is very significant, "Jehovah-shalom," which means "the Lord is peace." God was calling Gideon forth to the fiercest warfare, yet Gideon erected an altar which meant that "the Lord is peace." Is it not the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ that prepares a man to fight "the good fight of faith"? To be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, against the rulers of darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places, it is absolutely necessary to have a personal knowledge, through an experience with God, that the Lord is peace. God has that experience for all who realize their need of it and will come to Him in earnest prayer.

Destruction of Baal

The first instructions for action that God gave to Gideon were that the altar of Baal and the grove beside it be thrown down, and that an altar be built unto God. This was no small assignment, for the whole city worshiped Baal. Gideon did not parley with God about the command, but the same night he took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had said unto him. Here is another secret of truly successful service to God — to do what He commands as soon as possible. To parley with God or to delay obedience to His command will, in almost every instance, make the assignment difficult to perform. If we do what God asks when He calls, His grace will be on hand to bring the work to a successful conclusion.

Gideon did this work at night because he feared the inhabitants of the city, but he did not fear them to the extent that he did- not do the work at all. There is a vast difference. The enemy of men's souls will try to instill fear in the hearts of God's soldiers at the beginning of some special call in the Gospel, to the degree that they will give up God's work and go back into their old ways. Let us make some sorties for God, even though we do fear the result. Our persistence to duty will wear down the most tenacious emissary of Satan. By the time Gideon had finished with the Midianites, there was no fear in his heart. God's promise is, "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). By the time the Lord has perfected His love in our heart, all the fear of men or their opinions will be gone

Taking a Stand

Since the dawn of history, the children of God have been persecuted by the children of the world. Gideon soon found this to be true in his case. When the men of the city arose the next morning after the altar of Baal had been destroyed, they were greatly disturbed. It did not take them long to determine who had done this work. The man who serves God is marked by the world, even though his experience with God is not of very long standing. The men of the city decided that Gideon should die

QUESTIONS

- 1 In what way was Israel's plight particularly grievous at this time?
- 2 How long did it take Israel to realize that there was a way of escape?
- 3 To whom did the angel of the Lord appear? and what was the salutation?
- 4 How did the Lord know what kind of man Gideon was?
- 5 What was Gideon's reaction when he realized that he had been talking to an angel of the Lord?
- 6 What was the first task that God assigned to Gideon? How soon did he perform this task?
- 7 What kind of reception did this work receive from the men of the city?
- 8 In what two ways did Gideon ask for proof that God had chosen him to lead Israel against the Midianites?

immediately for his action against their idol.

A definite stand for God will influence others to stand with you. Gideon's father took his stand on the side of his son, against the men of the city. "Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? ...if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar" (Judges 6:31). Joash had never seen Baal do any good. Apparently now he was ready to trust in the God of Israel to see what He would do. The standing together of these two men had a remarkable effect, for when Gideon blew the trumpet to gather the men of Israel into an army, the men of Abiezer, Gideon's home country, were gathered after him.

Gideon's Fleece

Gideon asked for a sign, not as the wicked and adulterous generation of Jesus' day sought for signs, but Gideon asked that his faith might be confirmed and made stronger in the Lord. Gideon was but a newly appointed leader, and the army that was gathered with him were raw recruits. The Midianites lay in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude. There was no wonder, then, that Gideon felt his need for more faith in God.

God answered Gideon's prayer, as He will answer every honest seeker after Him. Gideon placed a fleece of wool upon the ground and prayed that the fleece be wet with dew during the night, but that the ground might remain dry all around the fleece. If the Lord would fulfill this request, then Gideon would know that God designed to deliver Israel by, his hand. The Lord performed the request exactly as Gideon asked for it — the ground was dry all around, but Gideon wrung a bowlful of water out of the fleece. No doubt the tempter was on hand to tell Gideon that this was a natural occurrence, that a fleece of wool would naturally draw the moisture from the air during the night.

Two Answers

The second night Gideon reversed the sign and asked that God would allow the fleece to remain dry and that the ground all around would be wet with dew. To take any doubt out of Gideon's mind about his call to deliver Israel out of the Midianites' hand, God condescended to answer the second petition. When Gideon arose the next morning the fleece was dry, but the ground was wet with dew. Direct revelation was needed in many instances during those early days of God's dealings with men.

Today we enjoy the full light of the Gospel, as it has been unfolded through our Lord Jesus Christ in redemption and sanctification; and for those who seek Him, the Holy Ghost has been given to lead into all truth. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13, 14). However, even today God often answers prayer in some particular way to assure His people that their request has been granted. He still loves to be proved by His people that He might show Himself strong in their behalf, Do we have problems today? Let us bring them to the Lord in sincere prayer with a "Thy will be done," and watch Him work it out.