

Gideon, or Jerubbaal

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.”
Judges 6:12

“Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.”
Judges 6:27

“When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.”
Judges 7:18

“And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.”
Judges 8:23

Introduction:

1. Old Testament events are for our instruction and warning (Romans 15:4; I Cor 10:6-13; Heb 11:2).
2. These stories should be told and retold for the benefit and faith of our children (Ps 78:1-8; Joel 1:3).
3. This is real history – the story of His dealings with men – that will promote faith-based living.

INTRODUCTION (6:1-10)

- A. These three chapters about Gideon are during the 450 years of judges over Israel (Acts 13:19-20).
- B. Before Gideon’s call to battle, it was the turn of the Midianites to punish Israel for their sins (6:1).
- C. The Midianites had oppressed Israel for seven years, which is an important fact for later (6:1,25).
- D. When you backslide away from the Lord, He will bring a chastening scourge on you (Heb 12:4-17).
- E. These wicked people were to be annihilated for their seducing women (Num 25:1-9,16-18; 31:1-18).
- F. If you do not utterly destroy tempting enemies in your life, they will come back later to haunt you.
- G. Midian horribly persecuted Israel by destroying their necessary agricultural produce (Judges 6:2-6).
- H. Whenever you are in trouble, even if for your own sins, there is one thing to do – call on the LORD.
- I. The LORD sent a prophet to Israel to remind them that the situation was their own fault (6:7-10).
- J. Rather than resent such rebukes, as fools and scorners do, repent and beg the Lord for mercy!

CALL OF GIDEON (6:11-24)

- A. Here we have the record of God meeting and speaking with Gideon personally to prepare him.
- B. Gideon shows diligence, valor, and wisdom by threshing wheat secretly for his family (6:11).
- C. The LORD appears as an angel and commends his valor, but Gideon is not impressed (6:12-16).
 1. Gideon is not aware it is an angel; he probably perceives him to be a prophet of God.
 2. He immediately rebuffs the personal commendation with questions of God’s faithfulness.
 3. When told to personally go in the strength of the LORD, he fearfully or modestly replied.
- D. Gideon shows his first serious lack of faith by asking for a miraculous sign from the angel (6:17-24).
 1. He knew he had a divine messenger of some sort, but he wanted a sign of confirmation (6:17).
 2. He seeks to entertain his visitor by showing hospitality and preparing him a meal (6:18-19).
 3. The angel surprises him with the power of his staff on the meal and then disappears (6:20-21).
 4. Gideon becomes fearful at the presence of the angel of the LORD and cries out (6:22).
 5. The Hebrew name – Jehovah-shalom – the LORD give peace – was very appropriate!

FIRST TEST OF GIDEON (6:25-32)

- A. God tells Gideon to throw down his father’s altar to Baal, cut down the grove, and build an altar.
- B. He used his father’s second bullock for the sacrifice, a seven-year-old bullock dating the oppression.

- C. Because he feared his family and the men of his city, he did his operation covertly at night.
- D. Gideon's father is awesome in ridiculing Baal to the men of the city: "Let Baal plead for himself."
- E. He said, If anyone is going to die, let it be him stupid enough to plead for a helpless god."
- F. He renames his son Jerubbaal, meaning let Baal plead, which indicates quite a change in Joash.

FEAR OF GIDEON (6:33-40).

- A. Though God had promised to be with him to defeat the Midianites, things went from bad to worse.
- B. However, the Spirit of the LORD moved Gideon to call forth an army from the neighboring tribes.
- C. But when he saw his army, it was only 32,000 against the 135,000 of the Midianites (7:3; 8:10).
- D. Though God had promised to be with him and the Spirit was moving him, he still had some fear.
- E. The LORD humors Gideon by allowing him two tests to confirm the Lord's blessing on his army.
- F. Putting out a fleece is an unnecessary and faithless approach to God's word (II Peter 1:19).

SECOND TEST OF GIDEON (7:1-8)

- A. In spite of his intimidation with 32,000 on his side, the LORD thins the army down to 10,000!
- B. If the LORD is with you, who cares about the odds? Unfavorable odds are positive (I Sam 14:6).
- C. To the degree you trust in human supports, the Lord may have to reduce or eliminate them!
- D. To truly build the faith of Gideon and help him overcome fear, the Lord takes the army down to 300!

CONFIRMATION OF GIDEON (7:9-18)

- A. Instead of Gideon asking for a fourth sign or confirmation, God offers it to him in mercy (7:9-18).
- B. God mercifully saw Gideon's fear and intrepidity, and Gideon took him up on his gracious offer.
- C. The size of the Midianite army is an example of inspired hyperbole – exaggeration to make a point.
- D. Gideon worshipped the Lord after hearing the dream and gets his host of 300 men ready for battle.
- E. Now with total confidence, he plans to expose his army of 300 to an army of 135,000 by the Spirit!

SUCCESS OF GIDEON (7:19-25)

- A. When the LORD makes the odds impossibly against you, be ready to see the salvation of God.
- B. God won the victory as the 300 men stood still shouting, blasting trumpets, and holding torches.
- C. If you woke up with trumpets and lights coming from all over in a foreign country, you would run!
- D. The LORD, as in many other cases, overrules their minds and leads them to kill each other viciously.
- E. The rest of Israel, the 9,700 and the 22,000, joined in to help with mop-up operations.
- F. Oreb and Zeeb had places named for their execution, which the historian confirms as being accurate.

WISDOM OF GIDEON (8:1-3)

- A. When confronted by Ephraim for not being invited to the battle, Gideon defuses with soft words.
- B. Here is marvelous wisdom that Solomon espoused as being part of prudent understanding (Pr 15:1).
- C. If someone is angry, even if in authority, a gentle response is the best (Eccl 10:4; Pr 16:14; 25:15).

JUSTICE OF GIDEON (8:4-21)

- A. He asked for help from the men of Succoth for his famished troops and was mocked foolishly.
- B. He asked for help from the men of Penuel for his famished troops and was also mocked by them.
- C. He was not content with a great victory – he wanted total victory; he wanted them all dead!
- D. After he captured the two kings, he came back and seriously punished the elders of the two cities.
- E. Here is a great combination – gracious wisdom in answering Ephraim and fury in punishing Succoth.
- F. When his son did not have the courage to kill two men, Gideon gladly did the better job for him.
- G. We have the two kings begging for Gideon to do it, lest the child take a while at the project!
- H. You should understand Psalm 83:11 and other places better by Oreb, Zeeb, Zalmunna, and Zeba.

WEAKNESS OF GIDEON (8:22-35)

- A. When Israel asked him to be a permanent judge, he showed humility by rejecting the request.
- B. He showed His fear of God and the true character of a leader by acknowledging the LORD first!
- C. He took the Midianite spoil and made a commemorative ephod, which Israel began to worship.
 - 1. An ephod, a garment with front and back tied at the shoulders and waist, was for the high priest.
 - 2. We must not ever let success cloud our judgment as to proper worship (II Chron 26:16; 32:25).
 - 3. God continued to give Gideon peace, but that does not alter Scripture condemning his ephod.
- D. He foolishly took many wives and concubines and had 70 sons by these various women.
- E. Israel did not remember this lesson or the family of Gideon, as they turned again to false gods.

Conclusion:

- 1. Whatever you think about Gideon, you must remember that God placed him in the Hall of Faith (Heb 11:32).
- 2. You can be a mighty man of valor and be commended for your faith, even if weak and fearful at times.
- 3. While God is merciful and understands our weaknesses, we need not always test His word. Believe Him!
- 4. If the odds are stacked against you, do not fear! With the LORD Jehovah on your side, you will surely win!
- 5. God alone is to be worshipped, not the things related to God's worship (Jer 7:1-15; Matt 23:16-22).
- 6. Will you faithfully obey God to the very end? Or will you be as Solomon, Jehu, Gideon, Demas, and others?