

Judges 6

Judges 6.1-6

V1 – The cycle began again – the Israelites went into apostasy

-**What group oppressed them this time?** The Midianites

-The Midianites were the descendants of Abraham and Keturah (*Gen. 25.2-4*)

-**They had mistreated God's people many times:**

1. *Gen. 37.28* – They had bought Joseph and took him to Egypt to sell as a slave

2. *Num. 22.4-7* – They had sent Balaam to curse the Israelites

-*Num. 31.8-11* – The Israelites had slaughtered the 5 kings of Midian

V2 – **How bad did the oppression become?** The Israelites had to move to caves

V3 – **What else did the Midianites do?** They destroyed the crops of the Israelites (with assistance from the Amalekites)

V4 – They would destroy all the crops

-**What else?** They did not leave any animals for the Israelites

V5 – **How does the Bible describe the Midianites?** Like locusts

-**What animal did they use?** Camels

-According to W. F. Albright (a famous Bible archaeologist), this was the first organized camel attack known in human history

V6 – **What did the Israelites do?** They cried out to God for help (same old story again)

Judges 6.7-10

V7-8 – **What did God do?** He sent a prophet to the Israelites

-**The message of the prophet?** I (God) brought you out of Egypt and out of slavery

V9 – **Message?** I (God) gave you the land of Canaan

V10 – **Message?** The Israelites had not obeyed God

Judges 6.11-18

V11 – **What town did the angel go to?** Ophrah (in the territory of Manasseh, west of the Jordan River)

-**What was Gideon Judge #5 doing?** He was sifting the wheat in an old wine press

-**Why sift wheat in a wine press?** He was hidden from the Midianites

V12 – **Message of the angel?** Gideon, the Lord is with you

V 13 – Answer of Gideon? If God is with us, then why are we suffering?
-"What about all the miracles our fathers told us about...?" – Typical human reaction
-Whenever there is a problem, blame it on God
-People never look at themselves as the cause of the problem

V 14 – How is the angel identified? The Lord
-Where else have we seen the "angel of the Lord"? – He spoke to Joshua in *Joshua 5.13-15*
-This Angel also spoke to Abraham and Sarah (*Gen. 18*)
-The message of the Angel? I will be with you and will deliver the Israelites

V 15 – The excuses of Gideon? His family was the poorest in Manasseh, and he was the youngest son in the family
-This sounds like excuses that Moses made to God

V 16 – Reply? The Lord will be with you

V 17 – What did Gideon ask for? A sign

V 18 – What did Gideon want to do? Go and get an offering for God
-It was beginning to dawn on him that he was speaking to God (actually Christ)

Judges 6.19-24

V 19 – What offering did Gideon make? Lamb and bread

V 20 – What did the angel command Gideon to do? Put meat and bread on the rock, and pour out the broth

V 21 – What did the angel do? Touched the end of the staff to the meat, and fire destroyed the offering
-Then the angel disappeared

V 22 – Gideon was amazed at this

V 23 – Message of the angel? Relax – you are not going to die
There was a belief that a person saw an angel just before death:
-*Gen. 16.13* – Hagar saw an angel
-*Gen. 32.30* – Jacob wrestled with an angel
-*Exod. 20.19* – Israelites after Moses was given the Ten Commandments
-*Exod. 33.20* – No-one could see God's face and live
-*Judges 13.22* – Parents of Samson
-*Isaiah 6.5* – Vision of the Lord

V 24 – Response of Gideon? He built an altar there; still there at the time of the writing of the book of *Judges*

Judges 6.25-27

V 25 – What did God tell Gideon to do that night? Pull down his father's statues of Baal and Asherah

-Incredible – Gideon's own father was worshipping idols; notice how far Israel had fallen

V 26 – Then what was Gideon to do? Build an altar to God on the spot

V 27 – Who helped Gideon? 10 servants of the family (he was not as poor as he had claimed)

-**When did Gideon do this?** At night

-**Why?** Afraid – God had to build up the courage of Gideon

Judges 6.28-32

V 28 – Next morning – everyone could see that the two pagan statues had been torn down

V 29 – Attitude of the people? "Who could have done something like this?"

-**Answer?** Gideon (with 10 men helping, word had gotten around)

V 30 – Punishment for desecrating the altar of Baal? Death

V 31 – Reply of Gideon's father? "Why does Baal need someone to defend him – if he is a god, he should be able to defend himself"

-Sounds like the reasoning of the prophet Elijah with the prophets of Baal

-Excellent reasoning from Gideon's father

V 32 – Gideon's father changed Gideon's name to Jerubaal = "Let Baal contend"

See *Beacon Bible Commentary, II, 138c* for more background information

Judges 6.33-35

V 33 – Who invaded Israel? Midianites and Amalekites (probably for their annual plunder of Israel)

-**Where did they camp?** Valley of Jezreel (in territory of Issachar)

V 34 – What did Gideon do? Became clothed with the Holy Spirit, blew the trumpet, and called the people together

V 35 – Which tribes were going to help him? Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali

Judges 6.36-40

V 36-37 – What did Gideon want? Another sign from God

-**The sign?** Woolen fleece on floor – dew on fleece only

V 38 – **Next morning?** He drained a bowl-full of water out of the fleece

V 39 – **Another test?** Fleece dry, and ground wet with dew

V 40 – **Result?** The fleece was dry, and the ground was wet.

Notice: Gideon was having trouble believing that God was really going to use him for this job

Lessons from this chapter:

1. We have to be careful about trying to determine the will of God in our lives.

-If some insurmountable object comes before us, rather than get upset, let us consider the possibility that this is God's will

-We are not to test God (*Matt. 4.7*)

2. Gideon considered himself unimportant in God's sight – but God had chosen to use him.

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