

## **230118-4 Judges 6, The Fifth Judge, Gideon Proves the LORD—CThurman**

Israel has suffered under the oppressive regime of the Canaanite king, Jabin who dwelt at Hazor. The captain of his army was Sisera. Sisera was stationed at a place called Harosheth of the Gentiles. This place is located on the southwest corner of Zebulun's lot, where Issachar is to the east and Manasseh to the south. At this time Deborah, a prophetess, judged, Israel. Evidently the LORD prophesied through her to Barak that he should fight against Jabin's forces but he did not. So she sent and called for him, reminding him of this. But he said he would not go unless she went with him. To this she agrees but tells him that this battle will not be for his honor. Sisera would fall at the hands of a woman. So as Israel's forced defeated the Canaanites Sisera fled by foot and, being there was peace between Jabin and the house of Heber, he turned in to Jael's tent for refuge. While here Sisera fell into a deep sleep. And as he slept Jael, Heber's wife went in quietly with a hammer and a tent stake and drove it through his temples fastening his head to the earth. So, on that day God *subdued* Jabin, the king of the Canaanites and the land had rest for forty years.

The next three chapters (6-8) are related to the time of the next judge, Gideon. Here the LORD calls Gideon to deliver Israel and Gideon proves the LORD in two ways. First, he proves the authenticity of the message-bearer. And second, he prove the genuineness of the commission.

### **Chapter 6**

***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.***

Again, the simple statement says everything we need to know: *the children ... did evil.*

***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.***

*dens*, only this once in the Hebrew, מְנַהֲרוֹת, min-hah-rōth, a fem. pl. noun; the masc. noun נַהַר, nah-har, tss. *river, stream*; so מְנַהֲרוֹת, min-hah-rōth, likely carries the idea of the clefts of the rocks.

*caves*, מְעָרָה, m'[g]ah-rah, a fem. noun tss. *cave, hold, den*.

*strong holds*, מְצָד, m'tzad, a masc. noun tss. *a hold, a strong hold, a castle, a munition, a fort*. So, a defensible or fortified position.

The Midianites, perhaps a marauding band of the children of Abraham through Keturah. (cf. Ge.25.1, 2) These the sons of Jacob sold Joseph their brother to the Midianite merchantmen which they carried him down into Egypt for a slave. (Gen.37.28) I don't know if this is the same people of Moses' wife, Zipporah. There are Midianites that joined with Moab to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel to commit fornication. And here they are, marauding bands of malicious tent-dwellers devouring the land. And Israel's state was desperate.

*Heb 11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

**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;**  
him (Israel)

**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.**  
food

*increase*, יְבוּל, y'vool, a masc. noun also tss. *fruit*.

*destroyed*, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb שָׁחַת, shah-chath, tss. *to corrupt, to marr, to spill, to perish, to destroy*, **Jud.6.4, 5; 20.21, 25, 35, 42.**

sustenance, מִיָּחַיָּה, mich-yah, a fem. noun tss. *to preserve life, quick, sustenance, victuals, reviving.*

**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.**

cattle, מִקְנֵה, miq-neh, a masc. noun also tss. *possession, horses, beasts, and refers to 'livestock.'*

grasshoppers, אַרְבֵּה, ar-beh, a masc. noun also tss. *locusts.*

מִפְּנֵי, Ge.7.7

**6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites;**  
very emptied, dried up from the face (Ge.3.8)

*impoverished*, Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of the verb דָּלַל, dah-lal, also tss. *to dry up, to bring low, not equal, to be emptied, to be made thin.*

**and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.**

So the chastening of the LORD worked to turn them away from idolatry and to the LORD once again.

**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;**

**9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and**  
your oppressors (to this day)

*oppressed*, of the Hebrew verb לָחַץ, lah-chatz, tss. *to oppress, to hold fast, to afflict, to crush, to force, to thrust. Jud.1.34, Qal fut.,*

***And ... forced, Jud.4.3, Qal part. oppressed, Jud.2.18, Qal part, that oppressed & 6.9, that oppressed you.***

***and gave you their land;***

(Not the land of Egypt, but the land of Canaan)

***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.***

listened to

***11 ¶ And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that [pertained] unto Joash the Abiezrite:***

So, Joash was of that part of the tribe of Manasseh that settled on the west side of the Jordan River, in Canaan. To be an Abiezrite is to be a child of Abiezer. Abiezer, also known by the name Jeezer (cf. Nu.26.30), was one of six children of Gilead to settle west of the Jordan River. These sons and their families of Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hopher, and Shemida received their land allotments on the west side of the Jordan River.

*Jos 17:2 There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of **Abiezer** (margin, Jeezer), and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hopher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.*

Remember that it was Machir and his son Gilead that received the land of Bashan on the east side of the Jordan River. (cf. Nu.26.29; 32.39, 40; Deu.3.15; Jos.13.31; 17.1) There must have been others sons of Gilead not included among these named in Jos.17.2. (cf. 1Chr.7.16-18) These have what is called the land of Gilead.

***Ophrah, that [pertained] unto Joash the Abiezrite*** – is not the same city of this name that is in the lot of the tribe of Benjamin. (cf. Jos.18.21, 23) This Ophrah belongs to Joash, the city of the Abiezrites. It is located in the

heart of Manasseh and called Arruboth (or see Arrebeh), between Migdol and Dotham.

**and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.**            beat out

*Gideon*, גִּדְעוֹן, *Gid-[g]ōhn*, Robert Young, meaning *hewer, feller*, i.e., great warrior; Alexander Cruden, he that bruises or breaks; or cutting off iniquity; ISBE, *cutter down, feller, or hewer*.

*threshed*, Qal part. of the verb טָבַח, *chah-vat*, also tss. *to beat, to beat out*.

*to hide it*, Hiphil (causative act.) infin. of the verb נָס, *noos*, also tss. *to flee, to abate, to flee away, to hide*.

The **fifth judge** of Israel, Gideon. Here is a man of conviction. Here is a man that suffered along with Israel the chastening hand of the LORD for their continued idolatrous practices, yet he was faithful to the God of Israel. He was of such strong conviction for the true worship of God that he would throw down his own father's altar to Baal, which act seems to convert his father consider the unreality of the god Baal.

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

*mighty man*, the adj. גִּבּוֹר, *g'boor*, also tss. *mighty one, champion, valiant man, strong, giant*.

*valour*, חַיִּל, *chah-yil*, a masc. noun also tss. *wealth, activity, army, host, able, valiantly, goods, war, substance, virtuous, strength, power*.

The angel of the Lord appears to be the Lord Jesus Himself. (v.14) God called a man of conviction. He didn't call an ambivalent man. Gideon knew what he believed and he stood firm. There was no doubt in Gideon's mind

about this. God isn't going to call a man into service that doesn't know where he stands. God calls on men that have a conviction for the truth of His word.

**13 And Gideon said unto him,**

(Undoubtedly not realizing that it was the LORD speaking to him.)

מָצָא

**Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us?**

found

**and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of,**  
wonderful works recounted to us

*miracles*, Niphal (simple pass.) part. of the verb פָּלַח, pah-lah, also tss. *to be marvellous, to be too hard, to be a wonder, to be wonderful works, to be things to high, to perform.*

*told ... of*, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the verb סָפַר, sah-phar, also tss. *to reckon, to count, to number, to tell, to declare, to account.*

**saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now**

(Gideon cont.)

**the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.**

abandoned

*hath forsaken*, Qal pret. of the verb נָטַח, also tss. *to suffer, to lie still, to leave, to leave off, to fall, and so 'to abandon.'*

**14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might,**

proceed

'*This thy might*' is not his own strength, but in the strength he has because the Lord is with him. v.12, *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.*

**and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?**

*save*, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb יִשַׁע, yah-sha[g], also tss. *to be save, to help, to defend, to deliver, to avenge, to preserve, to rescue.*

**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.**

youngest

*poor*, לָלוֹ, an adj. also tss. *needy, weak.*

*least*, יָצֵעַר, tzah-[g]eer, an adj. also tss. *youngest, younger, small.*

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

*smite*, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb נָכַח, nah-kah, also tss. *to punish, kill, strike, to beat, to give stripes.*

**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.**

*talkest*, Piel (intensive act.) part. of the verb דַּבַּר, dah-bar, also tss. *to speak, to pronounce, to commune, to command, to bid, etc.*

The first proof Gideon puts before his unrevealed guest. He proves the authenticity of the message-bearer. You know, people can say anything and do. What they say could be true or it could be a lie. The message bearer is giving a very important message to Gideon. Gideon needs to be assured that the message-bearer is the LORD's instrument or not.

For him to put his life on the line he must be sure that the message is heaven-sent. So it is for us too.

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

*depart*, Qal fut. of the verb מוּשׁ, moosh, also tss. *to remove, to take away, to go back.*

*bring forth*, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb יָצָה, ysh-tzah, also tss. *to go forth, to proceed, to go out, to go abroad, to depart, to issue out, etc.*

*present*, מִנְחָה, min-chah, a fem. noun also tss. *an offering, a meat offering, a gift, an oblation.*

יָשָׁב, yah-shav                      שׁוּב, shoov

**and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.**

abide                                      return

What patience the LORD has for His own! The Lord waited for Gideon to prepare things which a good host should bring for a visitor that carried the message of the LORD.

*Heb 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

**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.**

brought it near

*broth*, מֶרֶק, mah-raq, a masc. noun; three times in the OT and tss. *broth* (Jud.6.19 (twice), Is.65.4).

*presented*, נָגַשׁ, nah-gash, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb נָגַשׁ, nah-gash, also tss. *to come near, to approach, to draw near, to give place, to overtake, to bring.*



**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.**

rock, סֶלַע, seh-la[g], a masc. sing noun, also tss. stone, ragged rock, Sela, strong hold.

**21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand,**

staff, מִשְׁעָנָה, mish-[g]eh-neth, a fem. noun tss. staff (sing.), staves (plural).

**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.**

from his sight, eyes

**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.**

The same fear of the LORD that struck Samson's father in Jud. 13.22.

*Jud.13.22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.*

**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:**

(The LORD of Peace)

The LORD confirmed to Gideon the authenticity of the message-bearer. It was the LORD Himself. What peace this must have brought to Gideon.

**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**

*throw down*, Qal pret. of the verb הָרַס, hah-ras, also tss. *to destroy, to break down, to ruin, to overthrow, to pluck down, to pull down, to break down.*

***that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it:***

It sounds like Gideon would use the strength of these two bulls to pull down his father's altar to Baal.

רָאשׁ

***26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock,***

*rock*, מַעֲזִיב, mah-gōhz, a masc. noun also tss. *strength, fortress, fort.*

***in the ordered place, and take the second bullock,***

(that is seven years old)

***and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.***

*ordered place*, מַעְרָכָה, mah-[g]<sup>a</sup>-rah-kah, a fem. noun, also tss. *in order, rank.*

***27 Then Gideon took ten men of his 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,***  
had been smashed

*was cast down*, Pual (intensive act.) pret. of the verb נָתַץ, nah-thatz, also tss. *to break down, to throw down, to break out, to destroy, to overthrow, to beat down.* (Jud.6.30, 31, 32; 8.17, Qal pret.; 2.2; 8.9; 9.45, Qal fut; 6.28, Pual pret.)

***and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built.***

The second bull of seven years had been gendered and raised during the time of the Midianites oppression. It will be offered for a burnt offering to the LORD, not to Baal. The offering up of this bull of seven years marks the beginning of the end for the Midianites' reign of terror over the Israelites. They will NEVER do this again.

*Jud 8:28 Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.*

As a matter of fact their defeat will be cited as an expected of the end of all of Israel's enemies. (cf. Ps. 83.9) Even the prophet Isaiah marks this occasion of the fall of the Midianites. (cf. Is.9.4) Again, this seven year old bull marks the beginning of the end for the Midianites.

**29 And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing?  
his neighbor, friend**

**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  
has smashed**

**cut down the grove that was by it.**

**31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal?**

*plead, Qal fut. of the verb רָיַב, reev, also tss. to strive, to complain, to content, to debate, to rebuke.*

**will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death**

*will ye save, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb יָשַׁע, yah-sha[g], also tss. to be safe, to help, to defend, to deliver, to avenge, to preserve, etc.*

**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**  
Joash, Gideon's father

**plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.**

In other words, let Baal defend himself if he is truly a god.

**33 ¶ Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east**

**אָסַף** **חָנָה**  
**were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.**  
assembled camped

The valley of Jezreel appears to be the border for Issachar to the north and Manasseh to the south. To this place now Gideon will draw near with his hosts.

**34 But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet;**  
**שׁוֹפָר, shō-phar**  
clothed

*came upon, Qal pret. of the verb לָבַשׁ, lah-vash, also tss. to put on, to clothed with, to apparel, to array.*

**and Abiezer was gathered after him.**  
(the family of) aka, Jeezer (cf. Nu.26.30)

*was gathered, Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of the verb יָצַק, zah-[g]aq, also tss. to cry (Jud. 3.9, 15; 6.6, 7; 10.10, 14; 12.2), to cry out,; to gather together (Jud. 4.13; 6.34, 35; 18.22); to come with such a company (Jud. 18.23), to call (Jud. 4.10).*

In other words, that branch of the tribe of Manasseh, the Abiezerites (Jeezerites) came after Gideon to the area of the Valley of Jezreel.

**35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh;**

From where he is in Ophrah, to all the rest of the tribe of Manasseh on the west side of the Jordan River: to the families of Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hopher, and Shemida. (cf. v.11)

**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.**

The tribe of Zebulun to the south of Asher where the host of Sisera were destroyed along the River Kishon. (cf. Jud.5.13, 21)

The tribe of Naphtali lay along the western border of Asher and the northeast border of Zebulun. But for the tribe of Issachar the entire northern territory, on both sides of the Jordan River, has assembled to Gideon.

Now Gideon would prove the LORD a second time. Here he proves the commission. Is the LORD really sending him to be a deliverer for Israel from the hands of the Midianites? For anyone to act confidently in the name of the LORD he must know that the LORD has sent him.

אֱלֹהִים

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

As a proof that the LORD had in fact brought him the message of deliverance we remember that the angel of the LORD had disappeared from before the eyes of Gideon. ...*departed out of his sight.* (v.22)

*Jud 6:17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.*

But now, though it was stated earlier by the LORD (*Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man ... [v.16]*) He would ask for a proof that the LORD would deliver Israel by his hand from the Midianites.

He has a force of 32,000 men assembled around him.

**37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the**  
set threshingfloor

*will put*, Hiphil (causative act.) part. of the verb יָצַג, yah-tzag, also tss. *to stay, to leave, to establish, to make, to set*.

*fleece*, גִּזְזָה, giz-zah, a fem. noun always tss. *fleece*; derived from the verb גָּזַז, gah-zaz, *to shear, to poll, to cut off, to shave, to cut down, to be sheepshearers*.

*floor*, רֵנוֹן, rōh-ren, a masc. noun also tss. *threshingfloor, barnfloor, barn, floor, corn, a void place*.

*dew*, the masc noun טַל, tal, is always tss. *dew*.

**fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside,**

*dry*, the adj. בְּחָרֵב, chah-rehv, also tss. *waste, desolate*.

**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**  
closed (folded?)

**fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.**  
out from

*thrust ... together*, of the verb זָרַז, zoor, also tss. *to close, to crush*.

*wringed*, of the verb מָצָח, mah-tzah, also tss. *to suck, to wring out*.

*bowl*, סֵפֶל, seyh-phel, a masc. noun only twice in the OT; see Jud.5.25, *dish*.

**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 me prove, Piel (intensive act.) fut. of the verb נִסָּה, nah-sah, tss. to tempt, to prove, to assay, to adventure, to try; Jud.2.11, Piel infin., I may prove; 3.1, 4, to prove; 6.39, Piel fut, let me prove.*

**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.**

Gideon received his answer. He proved that the LORD truly commissioned him to be the deliverer of Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Gideon didn't need to know that this conflict was going to be anything but conventional. The LORD revealed all that he needed to know so that he might have faith in God.

We walk by faith, not by sight. (cf. 2Co.5.7) Like Gideon we don't need to know all the details about everything. But the Lord has revealed enough so that we might trust Him through the things that we don't know. At the moment all Gideon needed to know was that he's going to win. What more do we need to know? We are on the winning side, though it might not appear so. This conflict in which Gideon and we find ourselves is such that when it is won the LORD will receive the glory and not men.

Two things in this lesson we considered. First, Gideon proved the LORD in two ways. He proved the authenticity of the message-bearer. He needed to know that the one carrying this message was in fact delivering a 'thus saith the LORD.' And, he proved that this commission for him to deliver Israel was from the LORD. As a matter of fact he discovered that came straight from LORD Himself. And second, the seven-year old bull marked the beginning of the end of the Midianites. This marauding band of tent-dwellers would never rise up against Israel again.

Mesopotamian oppression (v.8)	8 years (ch.3)
Othniel peace (v.11)	40
Moab's oppression (v.14)	18

## *The Book of Judges*

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Ehud's peace (v.30)	80	
Shamgar (unknown)	---	
Canaanite's oppression	20	(ch.4)
Deborah's peace	40	
<u>Midian oppression</u>	<u>7</u>	
Total	213 years	

Note: Caleb was 85 when he went to battle against Hebron and took it, killing the three sons of Anak, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi. (cf. Nu.13.22; Jos.14.10; 15.14; Jud.1.10)