

Sunday School Lesson
Judges 6:1 - 40
 by Lorin L. Cranford
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Deliverance in spite of



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God's ways of working with His people are fascinating to observe. As the Deuteronomic historians interpreted the past, the predictable cycle of sin - punishment - repentance - divine deliverance shapes the understanding of history during the time of Gideon (6:1-8:28). This much we have come to anticipate from the two previous studies in the book of Judges (chapters 3 - 5). But each successive study uncovers distinctives and unique angles in God's dealings with the Israelites. For us as readers, this unpredictable aspect helps generate sustained interest in reading all the stories of the judges. What is God going to have to do next? Who will become the heroic figure of deliverance? How will it be accomplished?



The story of Gideon has its own very unique aspects. For one thing, Gideon's story (6:1-8:28) is in part also the story of his son Abimelech (8:32-9:57). Gideon's death (8:29-31) serves as a transition from father to son in the narrative. The dramatic downward plunge morally and religiously of Israel under Abimelech stands as a part of Gideon's legacy as a father. Gideon's hesitancy and insistence on God proving His promises beforehand also stands as a distinctive of this story. The sending of an unnamed prophet to rebuke Israel before calling Gideon is different. The manner of deliverance used by God with the small number of Israelite soldiers is not found elsewhere.

How cautious we must be when we claim God will do a thing a certain, predictable way!

I Context

The beginning [study of Ehud](#), Judges 3:12-30, provides the foundational background material. This will be summarized here and expanded only as is needed for the story of Gideon.



a. Historical

External History. Coming into finalized written expression during the Babylonian exile of the Hebrew people in the sixth century BCE, the book of Judges represents one segment of the Jewish scribes to retrace the history of the Israelite people

from the Exodus to the destruction of the southern kingdom in the 580s BCE. This almost 500 year history was understood to contain essential spiritual dynamics that led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, in spite of all the promises that God

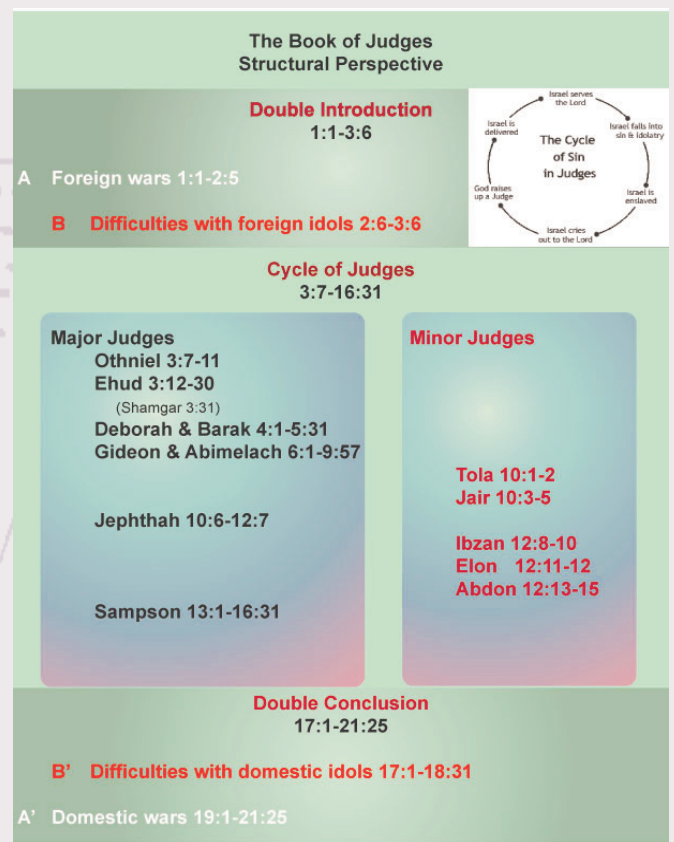
had made to Abraham regarding his descendants. Comprehending the spiritual dimension of this past would both explain why the nation was in shambles and these Israelite descendants were living as captives of the Babylonians in a strange land. And it would provide the key to know how to avoid such a disaster in the future.

These scribes looked to the written work done initially by their predecessors during the reforms of King Josiah (cf. 2 Kings 22 - 23). Through this material along with innumerable collections of court histories, oral traditions etc., the period from Joshua to Samuel was stitched together in a way to underscore the gradual deterioration of God's people after the high point achieved by Joshua. A sustained bright point would not resurface until the last of the judges came on the scene, Samuel. And he would lay the foundation for the united kingdom, which would stand as the absolute high point of Israelite history. It would become the model for future generations to look to in efforts to rebuild the Jewish nation.

The scribal reading of the history revolved around this fourfold pattern of occurrence: sin - punishment - repentance - deliverance. This provided the lens through which to explore the past in order to discover the way to stay under God's blessings and to avoid His wrath.

Their work became the foundation for looking at the people of God in the Old Testament. Even the other historical analysis of this same general period, that of the chronicler in 1 - 2 Chronicles, stands in heavy dependence on this Deuteronomistic history in Joshua through 2 Kings. This theological principle itself grows out of the Mt. Sinai revelation of the Torah by Moses to the people, especially as it is contained in the book of Deuteronomy. God is both holy and compassionate. He yearns for close fellowship with His covenant people. Thus He has high expectations for them, and is not tolerant of their rebellion against His demands. Covenant is obligation. The Exodus solidified that covenant and placed the children of Abraham under both God's loving care and disciplinary authority.

The period of the judges covers about a century and a half, appx. 1200 - 1025 BCE. In the cycle of six "major" judges, Gideon stands as the fourth one. Thus his story takes place sometime between 1150 and 1100 BCE. Because of the overlapping chronological nature of the stories of the judges, one can't pin down precise time frames on a calendar. But approximations generally are sufficient to understanding the background of each story.



Internal History. The place markers inside the Gideon story are numerous. Some are well known while others are obscure and hard to locate. Gideon came from the tribe of Manasseh. Judges 6:11 identifies Gideon as the son of Joash the Abiezrite. In Joshua 17:2, Abiezer was the head of a clan and a descendant of Joseph's son, Manasseh. He was one of the clan leaders of the tribe of Manasseh to receive a distribution of land from Joshua.

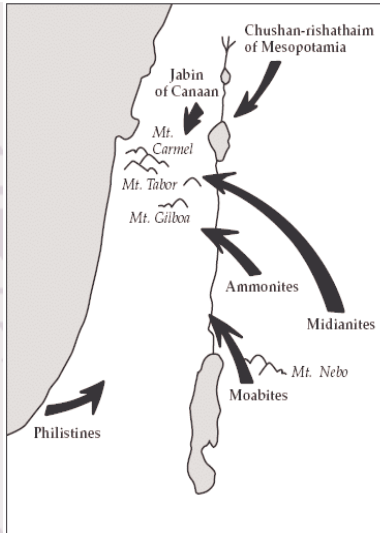
The tribe was located in the central region between the Sea of Galilee in the north and the Dead Sea in the south. At this point in time, they were mainly positioned on the west side of the Jordan just north of the area occupied by Ephraim. The primary oppressors were the Midianites who lived in the transjordan region south of the Moabites. These were a semi-nomadic group of people who fought the Isra-



elites during the Exodus as Moses led them up the east side of the Dead Sea (Num. 25:16-18; 31:1-54). G.M. Landes ("Midian," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) provides this summation:

According to biblical tradition, Midian was one of the sons of KETURAH, Abraham's third wife (Gen. 25:2; 1 Chr. 1:32). Through their eponymous ancestor, the Midianites are thus acknowledged to have traced their origin from the father of the Hebrews, thereby tacitly implying kinship with the Hebrews themselves. Geographically, however, the territories assigned to Midian and Israel were clearly separate, for while Abraham was still living, he is said to have sent away the "sons of his concubines," among whom Midian was reckoned, "eastward to the east country" (Gen. 25: 6); and at the beginning of the eleventh century B.C. we find the Midianites still associated with the People of the East (see EAST, PEOPLE OF THE; Judg. 6:3, 33; 7:12)--i.e., in the Syro-Arabian Desert. The territory over which the nomadic Midianites wandered, however, never seems to have had clearly demarked boundaries. Moreover, its limits appear to have fluctuated considerably at different periods....

The Midianite invasion. Ca. 1100 B.C. the first known camel nomads irrupted into Palestine in the form of a Midianite razzia. As far as we now know, the Midianites were among the first to make effective use of the recently domesticated CAMEL, thereby increasing considerably their nomadic mobility and swift striking power. Surging forth from the Wadi Sirhan to the Hauran, the initial impact of the Midianite invasion caused consternation in W Palestine, forcing the Israelites to seek refuge in the hill country, while the ruthless invaders, abetted by the Amalekites and the People of the East, penetrated as far as Gaza, pillaging both crops and cattle for a period of seven years (Judg. 6:1-6). These devastating raids were finally repulsed by Gideon, with the help of men of Ephraim who captured two of the Midianite princes, Oreb and Zeeb (Judg. 7:24-25). Gideon pursued a remnant of the fleeing nomads across the Jordan as far as their original habitat at Karkor in the Wadi Sirhan (8:10), where he captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and dispersed their armies (vs. 12). The war with Midian in the days of Hadad king of Edom, who is said to have defeated Midian in the country of Moab (Gen. 36:35; 1 Chr. 1:46), should be reckoned as a part of this movement. In any event, the Midianites were thoroughly routed, never again to threaten the peace and stability of Palestine (Judg. 8:28). Gideon's decisive victory was to be long remembered



both by the prophets and by the psalmist (Ps. 83:9, 11--H 83:10, 12; Isa. 9:4; 10:26; 60:6; Hab. 3:7).

Joining them were the Amalekites who lived on the southern fringes of Palestine and had a bitter hostility toward the Israelites reaching back to the Exodus as well (cf. Exod. 17:8-15; Num. 13:19; Judges 1:16).

Landes ("Amalek," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) also summarizes the relation of the Amalekites to the Israelites:

Hostilities between Amalek and Israel began during the thirteenth century when the Amalekites attacked the Israelites coming out from Egypt at Rephidim (Exod. 17:8-9). Probably they were seeking to defend Kadesh from Israelite occupation, in order to protect their caravan routes linking Arabia and Egypt. The Deuteronomist informs us that the Amalekites took advantage of the weariness of the Hebrews by ruthlessly cutting down those who lagged behind (Deut. 25:17-19). Because of Amalek's merciless behavior, a special enmity developed between the two peoples, resulting in the former's being made an exception to the law of holy war (Deut. 20:10-18; 25:19; see WAR, IDEAS OF). Nowhere in biblical tradition do we find Amalek and Israel on friendly terms, and throughout their history Israel preserved the memory of how Amalek had tried to oppose their entrance into Palestine (Judg. 10:12; 1 Sam. 15:2)....

The first well-attested appearance of the Amalekites in Transjordan is during the early period of the judges, when they seem to assume a mercenary role in conjunction with the semisedentary Moabites and Ammonites. Eglon king of Moab had organized a coalition against Israel which invaded W Palestine as far as the CITY OF PALMS (Judg. 3:13). During this period of Moabite harassment of Israel an Amalekite enclave may have become established in the land of Ephraim near Pirathon (12:15). The MT of Judg. 5:14 (cf. KJV) would seem to relate Amalek and Ephraim, but the text is so obscure that no definite conclusion can be drawn (cf. RSV).

The Amalekites appear at the beginning of the eleventh century B.C. in company with the Midianites in the first known camel-nomad razzia to invade and pillage the settled agricultural communities of W Palestine (Judg. 6:3, 33; 7:12; see CAMEL). Although Gideon was finally able to disperse this menace to Israelite sedentary life, the Amalekites remained a constant threat to Israelite security, even after stronger political authority had been established.

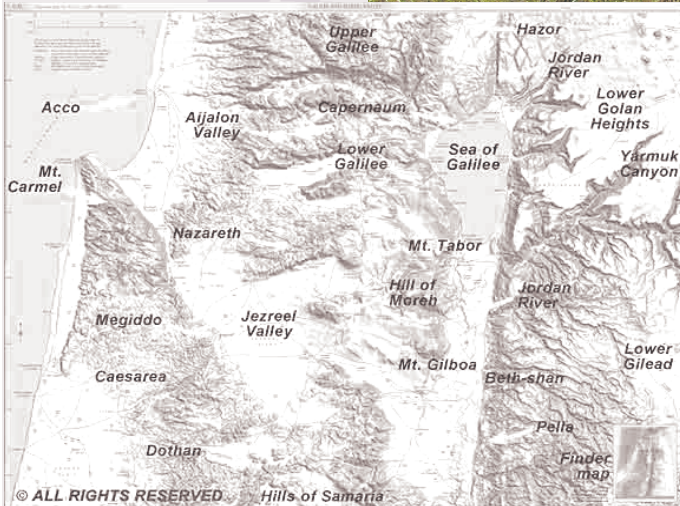
The "action" of the Gideon story, the battle described in chapter 7, took place in the Valley of

Jezreel near the hill of Moreh. The pictures and maps on this page help to visually identify this region. The region is rich in OT history and significance, as (“Jezreel,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) points out:

The OT name of the entire valley which separates Galilee from Samaria. The W portion of this valley is now referred to as ESDRAELON (Ἐσδρηλών) by some authors, while the name Jezreel is restricted to the E part of the valley.* That the valley is divided into two parts is clear from a study of a map



Looking across the Valley of Jezreel to the hill of Moreh



of Palestine. The W section is roughly shaped like a right triangle, with the base running N and S along the W slopes of the Hill of Moreh and Mount Gilboa, the apex touching the Plain of Acco, and the hypotenuse stretching along the N slopes of the Carmel Range. This area included the Valley of Megiddon (see MEGIDDON, VALLEY OF). It slopes gently from SE to NW; a slight rise, which runs from E to W through the center of the valley, forces the River Kishon (see KISHON) to the N part of this plain. The smaller E section of the valley begins at the pass between Moreh and Gilboa, and terminates abruptly at the Jordan Rift. It slopes from NW to SE and is drained by the River Jalud, which flows eastward along the narrow valley floor. Fig. JEZ 22.

The Valley of Jezreel is a geological fault basin. It is covered with alluvium and receives an abundance of water, which makes it one of the most fertile areas of Pales-

tine. A probable allusion to its fertility is contained in Hos. 2:22--H 2:24. It is also the major corridor through the rugged hills of Palestine and, as a result, is interlaced with routes from the Mediterranean on the W, to Beth-shan, the Jordan Valley, and the Transjordanian Plateau on the E; and from the hill country and Egypt on the S, to Galilee, Syria, and Phoenicia on the N.

From early times, the Valley of Jezreel was inhabited by Canaanites. At the time of the Conquest the Canaanites in the valley were militarily strong--their equipment included iron chariots--with the result that Ephraim and Manasseh were unable to dispossess them (Josh. 17:16). Like the Plain of Megiddo, it was the scene of many battles. During the period of the judges, Gideon and the N tribes defeated a coalition of Midianites, Amalekites, and Bne Qedem ("people of the East") who were encamped in the valley (Judg. 6:33-7:23). From here was issued the news of the death of Saul and his sons, including Jonathan, in battle with the Philistines on neighboring Mount Gilboa II Sam. 4:4). In the ensuing struggle for the throne between Saul's son Ish-bosheth and David,



Jezreel was among the areas of Israel which were briefly ruled by Ishbosheth II Sam. 2:9). According to Hos. 1:5, the valley was to be the place where Yahweh

would break Israel's might, as fitting punishment for the murders which had been committed nearby in the town of Jezreel, during the revolution of Jehu.

The last space marker to be examined is Gideon's home at Ophrah. Identifying precise location of this village is difficult. W.H. Morton ("Ophrah," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) describes the problems:

A town in the Cis-Jordan territory of Manasseh, distinguished from others of like name as the one belonging to the clan of Abiezer (Judg. 6:11, 15, 24; 8:32; cf. Josh. 17:2; 1 Chr. 7:18). It was Gideon's home where he both experienced the oppression of the Midianites and received the divine commission to deliver Israel from it (Judg. 6:11, 14). Here, also, he built an altar to the Lord and destroyed the local idolatrous installations (vss. 24-27). From the spoil of his triumph over Midian he made a golden ephod for Ophrah, which became an apostatizing snare both to Israel and to his own family (8:27). Here Gideon died and was buried in the family sepulchre (vs. 32); and here Abimelech, ambitious to be king, slew seventy of his brothers as possible rivals to his claim--only Jotham managed to escape (9:5).

The geographical situation of Ophrah of Abiezer remains

uncertain. The only available clues to its location are the rather general ones associating the Gideon episodes with the Valley of Jezreel, the hill of Moreh, the spring of Harod, and Tabor, plus the impression that the home of Gideon was not far removed from the scene of these activities (Judg. 6:11, 33-35; 7:1; 8:18-19). Several rather widely separated sites have been suggested for its location. Among them may be mentioned et-Taiyibeh, S of Tulkarem; et-Taiyibeh, NW of Beth-shan; Ferata, W of Shechem; Silet ed-Dahr, N of Shechem; and a site NW of Megiddo. No one of them, however, has sufficient evidence in its favor to encourage confidence in its identification with Ophrah.

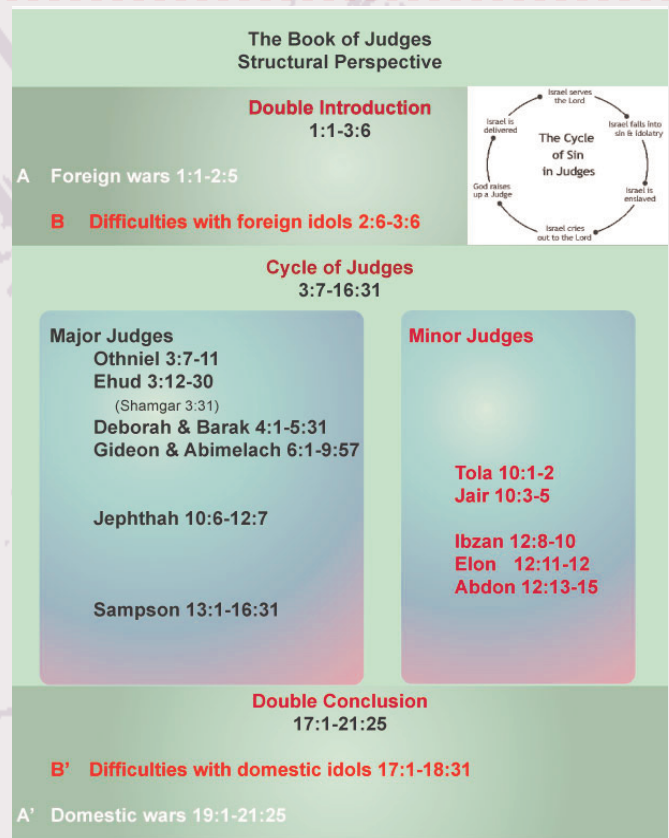
The time markers in the Gideon story are limited. The Midianites raided and pillaged the Israelites for seven years before deliverance came (6:1). The land had rest for 40 years after Gideon defeated them (8:28). Thus the story covers about half a century of time. Between these two markers at the beginning and end of the Gideon story, most time marker's play off actions taking place either at night or during the day time. Night time action was critical to the element of surprise in the battle with the Midianites.

b. Literary

Genre. The literary form of the Gideon story follows the Deuteronomic narrative history pattern using various sources to create a cohesive unity of movement from the beginning to the end of the story. No poetic section is inserted as was in the Deborah story (cf. chap. 5). The narrative is framed by the fourfold retributive theological perspective, and concentrates on the deliverance segment after briefly introducing the first three aspects in 6:1-6.

Although this approach to history differs dramatically from modern principles of history writing, and thus could not be counted as credible history from a strictly modern perspective, it did provide the Babylonian Jewish scribes a way of gleaning important insight from the past to help explain their dilemma in exile and to learn how to avoid such happening again to the covenant people Israel.

For them the past had present value only to the extent that it informed the status of their spiritual relationship with God through the covenant made with Moses. The legal / theological principles established by Moses on Mt. Sinai defined Israel's obligation to that covenant relationship with God. Thus those principles provided the essential grid through which to peer back into the past. Examining the past through such lenses could uncover both the failures and the successes of the Israelites, as well as reveal more



of the character and nature of their God. Such insight was critical for understanding their situation in Babylon.

Literary Setting. The literary context for the

Gideon story has several aspects. Gideon stands as the fourth of the six major judges, as illustrated in the chart on the previous page. The tone of the full story is negative. In spite of his delivering the Israelites, mostly those of the northern tribes and Ephraim, the downward drift religiously and morally of the Israelites picks up speed and moves ever toward the bottom to be reached in the Sampson story.

The structure of the Gideon story is somewhat complex. The traditional markers of “Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord” and “the land had rest...years” exist setting the boundaries at 6:1 and 8:28. The Abimelech story, 8:33-9:57, follows but with different twists. Also, Abimelech is Gideon’s son and proves to be an evil leader of the people. The narrative makes it clear that Gideon’s setting up of the ephod in Ophrah set the tone of idolatry for Abimelech to follow. Consequently, many scholars consider the Gideon and Abimelech stories to be one extended story, rather than two independently separate stories as is the case with all the other judges.

Within the more formal Gideon story, 6:1-8:28, the passage that we’re studying constitutes only the beginning segments. The Gideon cycle unfolds as follows (6:1-8:28):

1. Israel sins.

6.1a The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,

2. God punishes

6.1b and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years.

3. Israel cries out for help

6.6 Thus Israel was greatly impoverished because of Midian; and the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help.

4. God delivers

6.7 When the Israelites cried to the Lord on account of the Midianites, 8 the Lord sent a prophet to the Israelites;

8.28b So the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon

Inside the fourth segment of deliverance, the story

breaks down into a series of “scenes” with action / location shifts:

Scene 1:

6:7-10. The prophet's message to the people

Scene 2: call of Gideon

6:11-18. The angel of the Lord's initial appearance to Gideon

6:19-24. Phase two of angel's appearance to Gideon: worship

6:25-32. Reaction of people to tearing down Baal altars; Gideon's name change

Scene 3: preparation for battle

6:33-35. gathering for battle with Amalekites etc. in Valley of Jezreel

6:36-40. Gideon tests the Lord.

7:1. Preparation for battle

7:2-3. First reduction of army size

7:4-8. Second reduction of army size down to 300 soldiers

7:9-14. Preparations for battle during night.

7:15-18. Battle instructions

Scene 4: the battle

7:19-23. Victory in battle

Scene 5: Mopping up actions

7:24-25. Ephraimites called to help in mop up action

8:1-3. Gideon smoothes over ruffled feathers from Ephraimites

8:4-9. Cities of Succoth and Penuel refuse to help Gideon

8:10-12. Gideon captures Zebah & Zalmunna, Midianite leaders

8:13-17. Gideon destroys these cities after capturing Zebah & Zalmunna,

8:18-21. These two Midianite kings are killed by Gideon

8:22-28. Gideon refuses Israelite request to rule over them; makes mistake in booty collection

8.28b So the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon

8:29-32. Gideon's death

Our study of chapter six, then, will only cover scenes one and two, and the beginning of scene three. One should always keep in mind the “big picture.” The study of a few of its parts has to be done in context, if correct interpretation is achieved.

II. Message

Literary Structure. The above charting out of the entire Gideon story, 6:1-8:28, establishes boundaries for the small units of materials inside chapter six, the focus of our study. As we have already noted, the fourfold retributive theological perspective provides the framing of the Gideon story. And that most of this story concentrates on the fourth deliverance segment, 6:7-8:28.

In order to logically group these segments into a more manageable listing for our study, we will examine chapter six under two headings: 1) the need for deliverance, 6:1-6, and 2) the beginning of deliverance, 6:7-40. The first three aspects of the retributive theological perspective are considered together. The second part will take a look at most of the events leading up to the battle in the Valley of Jezreel.

a Deliverance needed, vv. 1-6

LXX

6'1 καὶ ἐποίησαν οἱ υἱοὶ
Ἰσραηλ τὸ ποιηρὸν ἐνώπιον
κυρίου καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοὺς
κύριος ἐν χειρὶ Μαδιαμ
ἐπτά ἔτη 2 καὶ ἴσχυσεν
χεὶρ Μαδιαμ ἐπὶ Ἰσραηλ καὶ
ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς οἱ υἱοὶ
Ἰσραηλ ἀπὸ προσώπου
Μαδιαμ τὰς τρυμαλιὰς τὰς
ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ τὰ
σπήλαια καὶ τὰ κρεμαστά
3 καὶ ἐγένετο ἂν ἔσπειραν
οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ καὶ ἀνέβαιναν
Μαδιαμ καὶ Ἀμαληκ καὶ οἱ
υἱοὶ ἀνατολῶν
συνανέβαινον αὐτοῖς 4 καὶ
παρενέβαλον εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ
κατέφθειραν τοὺς καρποὺς
αὐτῶν ἕως ἐλθεῖν εἰς Γάζαν
καὶ οὐ κατέλιπον ὑπόστασιν
ζωῆς ἐν τῇ γῆ Ἰσραηλ οὐδὲ
ἐν τοῖς ποιμνίοις ταύρον
καὶ ὄνον 5 ὅτι αὐτοὶ καὶ
αἱ κτήσεις αὐτῶν ἀνέβαινον
καὶ αἱ σκηναὶ αὐτῶν
παρεγίνοντο καθὼς ἀκρίς
εἰς πλῆθος καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ
τοῖς καμήλοις αὐτῶν οὐκ
ἦν ἀριθμὸς καὶ ἤρχοντο εἰς
τὴν γῆν Ἰσραηλ καὶ
διέφθειρον αὐτήν 6 καὶ
ἐπτώχευσεν Ἰσραηλ σφόδρα
ἀπὸ προσώπου Μαδιαμ καὶ
ἐβόησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ πρὸς
κύριον

NASB

1 Then the sons of
Israel did what was evil in
the sight of the LORD;
and the LORD gave
them into the hands of
Midian seven years. 2
The power of Midian pre-
vailed against Israel. Be-
cause of Midian the sons
of Israel made for them-
selves the dens which
were in the mountains
and the caves and the
strongholds. 3 For it was
when Israel had sown,
that the Midianites would
come up with the
Amalekites and the sons
of the east and go against
them. 4 So they would
camp against them and
destroy the produce of
the earth as far as Gaza,
and leave no sustenance
in Israel as well as no
sheep, ox, or donkey. 5
For they would come up
with their livestock and
their tents, they would
come in like locusts for
number, both they and
their camels were innu-
merable; and they came
into the land to devastate
it. 6 So Israel was brought
very low because of Mid-
ian, and the sons of Israel
cried to the LORD.

NRSV

1 The Israelites did
what was evil in the sight
of the Lord, and the Lord
gave them into the hand
of Midian seven years. 2
The hand of Midian pre-
vailed over Israel; and
because of Midian the Is-
raelites provided for
themselves hiding places
in the mountains, caves
and strongholds. 3 For
whenever the Israelites
put in seed, the Midianites
and the Amalekites and
the people of the east
would come up against
them. 4 They would en-
camp against them and
destroy the produce of
the land, as far as the
neighborhood of Gaza,
and leave no sustenance
in Israel, and no sheep or
ox or donkey. 5 For they
and their livestock would
come up, and they would
even bring their tents, as
thick as locusts; neither
they nor their camels
could be counted; so they
wasted the land as they
came in. 6 Thus Israel
was greatly impoverished
because of Midian; and
the Israelites cried out to
the Lord for help.

NLT

1 Again the Israelites
did what was evil in the
LORD's sight. So the
LORD handed them over
to the Midianites for
seven years. 2 The Midi-
anites were so cruel that
the Israelites fled to the
mountains, where they
made hiding places for
themselves in caves and
dens. 3 Whenever the Is-
raelites planted their
crops, marauders from
Midian, Amalek, and the
people of the east would
attack Israel, 4 camping in
the land and destroying
crops as far away as
Gaza. They left the Isra-
elites with nothing to eat,
taking all the sheep, oxen,
and donkeys. 5 These
enemy hordes, coming
with their cattle and tents
as thick as locusts, ar-
rived on droves of cam-
els too numerous to
count. And they stayed
until the land was stripped
bare. 6 So Israel was re-
duced to starvation by the
Midianites. Then the Isra-
elites cried out to the
LORD for help.

Notes:

As noted above, these verses contain the first three principles of the fourfold retributive theological perspective:

1. Israel sins.

6.1a The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,

2. God punishes

6.1b and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years.

3. Israel cries out for help

6.6 Thus Israel was greatly impoverished because of

Midian; and the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help.

1. Israel sins. This formula statement has been used to introduce the previous stories and depends upon in prologue in chapters one and two for the specific details of what constituted “evil in the sight of the Lord.” As we noted in the previous stories, the essence of Israel’s sin was idolatry. They attempted to adopt the polytheistic religious views of the Canaanite people who were not driven out of the land

according to God's command. In their minds, they were not abandoning the worship of God, but were merely adding worship of other local deities to the worship of God. But the Decalogue given on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20 & Deuteronomy 6) had laid down the gauntlet of God OR idolatry. God AND idols was emphatically forbidden. The Israelites' attempt at the latter was abhorrent evil in the eyes of God.

The Gideon story does modify this typical dependence on the prologue details to understand the evil. In 6:10; 8:24-27, 33-35 this evil is explained as:

6:10. I said to you, "I am the Lord your God; you shall not pay reverence to the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live. But you have not given heed to my voice."

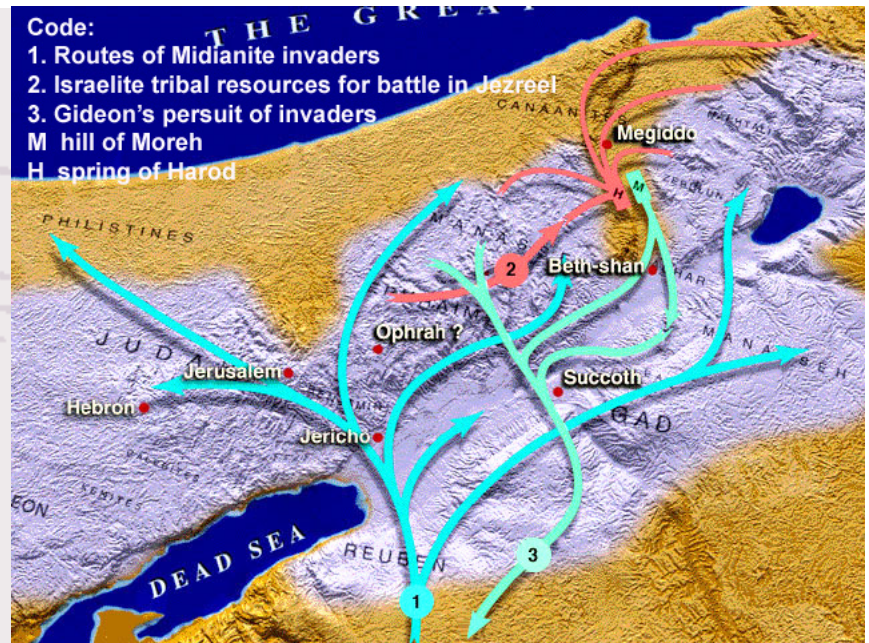
8:25-26. That night the Lord said to him, "Take your father's bull, the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the sacred pole that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of the stronghold here, in proper order; then take the second bull, and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the sacred pole that you shall cut down."

8:30-32. Then the townspeople said to Joash, "Bring out your son, so that he may die, for he has pulled down the altar of Baal and cut down the sacred pole beside it." But Joash said to all who were arrayed against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Or will you defend his cause? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been pulled down." Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he pulled down his altar.

These insertions affirm the general characterization given in the prologue that the Israelites succumbed to the temptation to idolatry. Chapter eight highlights how extensive this was even into Gideon's family itself.

2. God punishes. The depiction of this segment, vv. 1b-6a, has new elements from similar segments in the previous stories:

and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years. The hand of Midian prevailed over Israel; and because of Midian the Israelites provided for themselves hiding places in the mountains, caves and strongholds. For whenever the Israelites put in seed, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the east would come up against them. They would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the land, as far as the neighborhood of Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel, and no sheep or ox or donkey. For they and their livestock



would come up, and they would even bring their tents, as thick as locusts; neither they nor their camels could be counted; so they wasted the land as they came in. Thus Israel was greatly impoverished because of Midian;

With Ehud, the Ammorites invaded the central part of Palestine, set up an occupation army, and exacted tribute taxes from the Israelites. With Deborah, the Canaanites also lived in the same northern Palestine territory and severely oppressed the Israelites by making them virtual slaves. But with the Midianites and their cronies, there came a marauding plundering of central Palestine that left the Israelites impoverished. Denis Olson (*New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach) summarizes:

The defeat of the Canaanite army left a power vacuum in Canaan, which allowed marauding desert tribes from the east to invade the land. Thus the enemy God sends against Israel is the desert peoples of the "Midianites," "Amalekites," and "the people of the east" (v. 3). These roving desert nations were traditional enemies of Israel dating back to the period of Moses and the wilderness (Exod 17:8-16; Num 31:1; Deut 25:17-19). The effects of their attacks against Israel are described in great detail. Their military incursions force Israel to hide and live in mountain caves like cowering animals (v. 2). The desert marauders destroy Israel's crops and steal all their livestock (vv. 3-4). The vast number of Midianites is like a locust plague swarming over the land, causing images of the plagues of Egypt to sweep across the mind's eye (Exodus 7:1-13). This time, however, it is Israel who suffers God's torments. Israel's economic devastation is immense (v. 6).

3. Israel cries out for help. Quite understandably the Israelites finally realize that only God can rescue them from this horrible predicament. As in the past, they cry out to God for His deliverance.

In reading these beginning verses, one is tempted to say in despair, “Here we go again! Why can’t these people learn anything from their past?” The tendency of the Israelites to reflect the paganism of the surrounding world more than the character of their God seems irresistible. When they entered the Promised Land they quickly came to be both “in the world and of the world” rather than “in the world but not of the world.” Of course, this was partially due to not keeping God’s initial command to completely purge the land of these pagan people and their idolatrous religious practices. Partial obedience to God never succeeds. Instead, it leaves the door open for all kinds of problems down the road.

Additionally, the chosen people of God found the temptation too great once they occupied the land. What temptation? To adopt the enticing religious practices of their pagan neighbors. Some of this was driven through intermarriage with Canaanite women. This lay behind some of the problems inside Gideon’s own family. The horrible rush to Baalism by his son Abimelech came about in part because his mother

was a Canaanite woman who infected her son with her pagan religious heritage. The appeal of Baalism to base human instincts, e.g., with its sacred prostitution practices, offered a religious of convenience. This stood in stark contrast to the stringent demands for holy living by the God of Moses and the Torah.

As you have read these verses, have you heard echoes of similar patterns among Christians in our day? The allure of the surrounding world to shape us in its mold remains powerful. Our culture’s huge emphasis on being “successful” tempts us to compromise our religious commitment to find a convenient Christian faith without great demands for living righteously before our God. Add to that the observation that we Americans seem to be less able to look back into our own past and learn any meaningful spiritual lessons from it. Our western way of doing history has indeed stripped us of the ability to see God’s hand at work in our world. To be sure, TV preachers all over the place claim such ability. But none possesses much legitimate insight here.

b. Beginnings of deliverance, vv. 7-40

Notes:

Because of the length of this pericope, the scripture texts will be displayed under the subunits of material. As noted under [Literary Setting](#), 6:7-40 covers the beginning segments of the Deliverance phase:

Scene 1:

6:7-10. The prophet’s message to the people

Scene 2: call of Gideon

6:11-18. The angel of the Lord’s initial appearance to Gideon

6:19-24. Phase two of angel’s appearance to Gideon: worship

6:25-32. Reaction of people to tearing down Baal altars; Gideon’s name change

Scene 3: preparation for battle

6:33-35. gathering for battle with Amalekites etc. in Valley of Jezreel

6:36-40. Gideon tests the Lord.

7:1. Preparation for battle

7:2-3. First reduction of army size

7:4-8. Second reduction of army size down to 300 soldiers

7:9-14. Preparations for battle during night.

7:15-18. Battle instructions

Unlike the previous stories, the initiation of divine deliverance doesn’t begin with the calling of the judge to deliver the Israelites. Instead, an unnamed prophet is set to deliver a message of rebuke to the people. Then, subsequently God calls Gideon through an angel being sent. Again, Gideon’s story is different from the other judges. Unlike the previous three judges, he doesn’t immediately get up to carry out God’s directives. Rather, there is hesitation and timidity that requires repeated assurances from God. What we are observing in this is the deterioration of the situation among the Israelites. The people seem “hell bent” on rebelling against God. But now God has trouble finding quality leaders through whom He can work to deliver the people from foreign oppression. This pattern will continue on a downward plunge through the very end with Sampson.

The amazing aspect of this to me is that God bothered to mess with the people at all. Humanly speaking, such a sorry mess would prompt one to walk away and let things totally collapse into a deserved

destruction.

Scene 1:

6:7-10. The prophet's message to the people

LXX

7 ἀπὸ προσώπου
Μαδιαμ 8 καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν
κύριος ἄνδρα προφήτην
πρὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραηλ καὶ
εἶπεν αὐτοῖς τάδε λέγει
κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ ἐγὼ
εἶμι ὃς ἀνήγαγον ὑμᾶς ἐκ
γῆς Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐξήγαγον
ὑμᾶς ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας ὑμῶν
9 καὶ ἐρρυσάμην ὑμᾶς
ἐκ χειρὸς Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐκ
χειρὸς πάντων τῶν
θλιβόντων ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐξέβαλον
αὐτοὺς ἐκ προσώπου ὑμῶν
καὶ ἔδωκα ὑμῖν τὴν γῆν
αὐτῶν 10 καὶ εἶπα ὑμῖν
ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν οὐ
φοβηθήσεσθε τοὺς θεοὺς τοῦ
Ἀμορραίου ἐν οἷς ὑμεῖς
καθήσεσθε ἐν τῇ γῇ αὐτῶν
καὶ οὐκ εἰσηκούσατε τῆς
φωνῆς μου

NASB

7 Now it came about
when the sons of Israel
cried to the LORD on ac-
count of Midian, 8 that the
LORD sent a prophet to
the sons of Israel, and he
said to them, "Thus says
the LORD, the God of Is-
rael, 'It was I who brought
you up from Egypt and
brought you out from the
house of slavery. 9 'I deli-
vered you from the
hands of the Egyptians
and from the hands of all
your oppressors, and dis-
possessed them before
you and gave you their
land, 10 and I said to you,
"I am the LORD your
God; you shall not fear the
gods of the Amorites in
whose land you live. But
you have not obeyed
Me.'"

NRSV

7 When the Israelites
cried to the Lord on ac-
count of the Midianites, 8
the Lord sent a prophet
to the Israelites; and he
said to them, "Thus says
the Lord, the God of Is-
rael: I led you up from
Egypt, and brought you
out of the house of sla-
very; 9 and I delivered you
from the hand of the
Egyptians, and from the
hand of all who op-
pressed you, and drove
them out before you, and
gave you their land; 10
and I said to you, "I am
the Lord your God; you
shall not pay reverence to
the gods of the Amorites,
in whose land you live.'
But you have not given
heed to my voice."

NLT

7 When they cried out
to the LORD because of
Midian, 8 the LORD sent
a prophet to the Israelites.
He said, "This is what the
LORD, the God of Israel,
says: I brought you up out
of slavery in Egypt 9 and
rescued you from the
Egyptians and from all
who oppressed you. I
drove out your enemies
and gave you their land.
10 I told you, 'I am the
LORD your God. You
must not worship the
gods of the Amorites, in
whose land you now live.'
But you have not listened
to me."

Notes:

Dennis Olsen (Judges, *New Interpreters Bible*, iPreach) summarizes this pericope well:

On the heels of this cry [to the Lord], the reader has come to expect God's swift appointment of a judge or deliverer (3:9, 15). In 4:3-4, God had worked through a woman prophet named Deborah to guide Israel's general Barak to victory. Now in 6:7-8, God again raises up a prophet. But this prophet has a mission different from that of Deborah, who immediately called up Israel's army to fight. This unnamed prophet rebukes Israel, reminding the people that their cry of distress is not to be taken as an automatic guarantee of God's gracious response. The prophet rehearses God's past faithfulness in liberating Israel from Egypt and bringing them to the land of Canaan (vv. 8-9). The single most important obligation Israel had in its relationship with this faithful God was exclusive loyalty to the Lord and the worship of no other gods (v. 10). But God concludes in the words of the anonymous prophet, "You have not given heed to my voice." There is something of a narrative pause here, and we wonder as readers whether God has reached the limits of divine patience. Will God decide at this point not to send a judge to deliver Israel as God had done in the past?

God chose to not use this prophet as His deliverer. Instead, his role was to express divine anger at the people for their evil ways.

The abrupt ending of the speech has left many wondering whether or not parts of the speech got cut off in the process of manuscript copying. Older commentators usually assume this to be the case. Some uncertainty does exist over these verses since the very early Dead Sea scroll with commentary on Judges (4QJudg) does not contain 6:7-10 as a part of the text of Judges.

Also, the content of the angel's speech here is very close to that of the angel in 2:1-5. But in that speech the consequences of disobedience are spelled out, unlike here. Thus, the Deuteronomic editors have linked the Gideon story back to the prologue with the stern warning from God being repeated here as a reflection of what was anticipated at the outset. This harkening back to 2:1-5 may well explain the abbreviated version of the angel's speech in 6:7-10. The consequences of disobedience were

obvious by the time of Gideon.

Scene 2: call of Gideon

6:11-18. The angel of the Lord's initial appearance to Gideon

6:19-24. Phase two of angel's appearance to Gideon: worship

6:25-32. Reaction of people to tearing down Baal altars; Gideon's name change

LXX

11 καὶ ἦλθεν ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ ἐκάθισεν ὑπὸ τὴν τερέμινθον τὴν ἐν Εφραθα τὴν Ἰωας πατρός τοῦ Εσδρι καὶ Γεδεων υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ῥαβδίζων σίτον ἐν ληνῷ εἰς ἐκφυγεῖν ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ Μαδιαμ 12 καὶ ὤφθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτόν κύριος μετὰ σοῦ ἰσχυρὸς τῶν δυνάμεων 13 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν Γεδεων ἐν ἐμοὶ κύριέ μου καὶ εἰ ἔστιν κύριος μεθ' ἡμῶν εἰς τί εὗρεν ἡμᾶς τὰ κακὰ ταῦτα καὶ ποῦ ἐστιν πάντα τὰ θαυμάσια αὐτοῦ ἃ διηγήσατο ἡμῖν οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν λέγοντες μὴ οὐχὶ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἀνήγαγεν ἡμᾶς κύριος καὶ νῦν ἐξέρριψεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡμᾶς ἐν χειρὶ Μαδιαμ 14 καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ εἶπεν πορεύου ἐν ἰσχύι σου ταύτῃ καὶ σώσεις τὸν Ἰσραηλ ἐκ χειρὸς Μαδιαμ ἰδοὺ ἐξαπέστειλά σε 15 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν Γεδεων ἐν ἐμοὶ κύριέ μου ἐν τίνι σώσω τὸν Ἰσραηλ ἰδοὺ ἡ χιλιὰς μου ἠσθένησεν ἐν Μανασση καὶ ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ μικρότερος ἐν οἴκῳ πατρός μου 16 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου κύριος ἔσται μετὰ σοῦ καὶ πατάξεις τὴν Μαδιαμ ὡσεὶ ἄνδρα ἓνα 17 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν Γεδεων εἰ δὲ εὗρον ἔλεος ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου καὶ ποιήσεις μοι σήμερον πᾶν ὃ τι ἐλάλησας μετ' ἐμοῦ 18 μὴ χωρισθῆς ἐντεῦθεν ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν με πρὸς σέ καὶ ἐξοίσω τὴν θυσίαν καὶ θήσω ἐνώπιόν σου καὶ εἶπεν ἐγὼ εἰμι καθίσομαι ἕως τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι σε 19 καὶ Γεδεων εἰσηλθεν καὶ ἐποίησεν ἔριφον αἰγῶν καὶ οἰφι ἀλεύρου ἄζυμα καὶ τὰ κρέα ἔθηκεν ἐν τῷ κοφίῳ καὶ τὸν ζῶμὸν ἔβαλεν ἐν τῇ χύτρᾳ καὶ ἐξήμεκεν αὐτὰ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὴν τερέμινθον

NASB

11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior." 13 Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." 14 The LORD looked at him and said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" 15 He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." 16 But the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man." 17 So Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. 18 "Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You." And He said, "I will remain until you return." 19 Then Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour; he put the

NRSV

11 Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior." 13 Gideon answered him, "But sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, "Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" But now the Lord has cast us off, and given us into the hand of Midian." 14 Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you." 15 He responded, "But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." 16 The Lord said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike down the Midianites, every one of them." 17 Then he said to him, "If now I have found favor with you, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. 18 Do not depart from here until I come to you, and bring out my present, and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay until you return." 19 So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and

NLT

11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat beneath the oak tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash had been threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, "Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!" 13 "Sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn't they say, 'The LORD brought us up out of Egypt'? But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites." 14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go with the strength you have and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!" 15 "But Lord," Gideon replied, "how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!" 16 The LORD said to him, "I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man." 17 Gideon replied, "If you are truly going to help me, show me a sign to prove that it is really the LORD speaking to me. 18 Don't go away until I come back and bring my offering to you." The LORD answered, "I will stay here until you return." 19 Gideon hurried home. He cooked a young goat, and with half a bushel of flour he baked some bread with-

καὶ προσήγγισεν 20 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ λαβὲ τὰ κρέα καὶ τὰ ἄζυμα καὶ θές πρὸς τὴν πέτραν ἐκείνην καὶ τὸν ζωμὸν ἐχόμενα ἔκχεε καὶ ἐποίησεν οὕτως 21 καὶ ἐξέτεινεν ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου τῆς ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἤψατο τῶν κρεῶν καὶ τῶν ἀζύμων καὶ ἀνέβη πῦρ ἐκ τῆς πέτρας καὶ κατέφαγεν τὰ κρέα καὶ τοὺς ἀζύμους καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐπορεύθη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ 22 καὶ εἶδεν Γεδων ὅτι ἄγγελος κυρίου οὕτως ἔστιν καὶ εἶπεν Γεδων ἂ ἀ κύριέ μου κύριε ὅτι εἶδον ἄγγελον κυρίου πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον 23 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ κύριος εἰρήμη σοι μὴ φοβοῦ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃς 24 καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν ἐκεῖ Γεδων θυσιαστήριον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἐπεκάλεσεν αὐτῷ εἰρήμη κυρίου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης ἔτι αὐτοῦ ὄντος ἐν Εφραθα πατρὸς τοῦ Εσορι

25 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ κύριος λαβὲ τὸν μόσχον τὸν ταῦρον ὅς ἐστιν τῷ πατρὶ σου καὶ μόσχον δεύτερον ἑπταετῆ καὶ καθελείς τὸ θυσιαστήριον τοῦ Βααλ ὃ ἐστιν τῷ πατρὶ σου καὶ τὸ ἄλλος τὸ ἐπ' αὐτὸ ὀλεθρεύσεις 26 καὶ οἰκοδομήσεις θυσιαστήριον κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου ἐπὶ κορυφῇ τοῦ Μαουεκ τούτου ἐν τῇ παρατάξει καὶ λήμμη τὸν μόσχον τὸν δεύτερον καὶ ἀνοίσεις ὀλοκαύτωμα ἐν τοῖς ξύλοις τοῦ ἄλλους οὗ ἐξολεθρεύσεις 27 καὶ ἔλαβεν Γεδων δέκα ἄνδρας ἀπὸ τῶν δούλων ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐποίησεν ὃν τρόπον ἐλάλησεν πρὸς αὐτὸν κύριος καὶ ἐγενήθη ὡς ἐφοβήθη τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας τῆς πόλεως τοῦ ποιῆσαι ἡμέρας καὶ ἐποίησεν νυκτός 28 καὶ ὄρθρισαν οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως τὸ πρῶν καὶ ἰδοὺ καθήρητο τὸ θυσιαστήριον τοῦ Βααλ καὶ τὸ ἄλλος τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῷ ὠλέθρευτο καὶ εἶδαν τὸν μόσχον τὸν δεύτερον ὃν ἀνήμεγκεν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ ὠκοδομημένον

meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought {them} out to him under the oak and presented *them*. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. 22 When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." 23 The LORD said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die." 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25 Now on the same night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down." 27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had spoken to him; and because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night. 28 When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the

brought them to him under the oak and presented them. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the Lord reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. 22 Then Gideon perceived that it was the angel of the Lord; and Gideon said, "Help me, Lord God! For I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face." 23 But the Lord said to him, "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die." 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it, The Lord is peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

25 That night the Lord said to him, "Take your father's bull, the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the sacred pole that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of the stronghold here, in proper order; then take the second bull, and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the sacred pole that you shall cut down." 27 So Gideon took ten of his servants, and did as the Lord had told him; but because he was too afraid of his family and the townspeople to do it by day, he did it by night. 28 When the townspeople rose early in the morning, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the sacred pole beside it was cut down, and the sec-

out yeast. Then, carrying the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, he brought them out and presented them to the angel, who was under the oak tree. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Place the meat and the unleavened bread on this rock, and pour the broth over it." And Gideon did as he was told. 21 Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and bread with the staff in his hand, and fire flamed up from the rock and consumed all he had brought. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. 22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he cried out, "Sovereign LORD, I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" 23 "It is all right," the LORD replied. "Do not be afraid. You will not die." 24 And Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and named it "The LORD Is Peace." The altar remains in Ophrah in the land of the clan of Abiezer to this day.

25 That night the LORD said to Gideon, "Take the second best bull from your father's herd, the one that is seven years old. Pull down your father's altar to Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole standing beside it. 26 Then build an altar to the LORD your God here on this hill, laying the stones carefully. Sacrifice the bull as a burnt offering on the altar, using as fuel the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down." 27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD had commanded. But he did it at night because he was afraid of the other members of his father's household and the people of the town. He knew what would happen if they found out who had done it. 28 Early the next

29 καὶ εἶπεν ἀνὴρ πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ τίς ἐποίησεν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο καὶ ἐπεζήτησαν καὶ ἠρεύνησαν καὶ ἔγνωσαν ὅτι Γεδεων υἱὸς Ἰωας ἐποίησεν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο 30 καὶ εἶπον οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως πρὸς Ἰωας ἐξένεγκε τὸν υἱόν σου καὶ ἀποθανέτω ὅτι καθείλεν τὸ θυσιαστήριον τοῦ Βααλ καὶ ὅτι ὠλέθρευσε τὸ ἄλσος τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῶ 31 καὶ εἶπεν Ἰωας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν πᾶσιν οἱ ἐπανέστησαν αὐτῷ μὴ ὑμεῖς νῦν δικάζεσθε ὑπὲρ τοῦ Βααλ ἢ ὑμεῖς σώσετε αὐτόν ὃς ἐὰν δικασθῆται αὐτῷ θανατωθήτω ἕως πρωῒ εἰ θεός ἐστιν δικαζέσθω αὐτῷ ὅτι καθείλεν τὸ θυσιαστήριον αὐτοῦ 32 καὶ ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ Ἰαρβααλ λέγων δικασάσθω ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ Βααλ ὅτι καθηρέθη τὸ θυσιαστήριον αὐτοῦ

altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built. 29 They said to one another, "Who did this thing?" And when they searched about and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash did this thing." 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it." 31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar." 32 Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he had torn down his altar.

and bull was offered on the altar that had been built. 29 So they said to one another, "Who has done this?" After searching and inquiring, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it." 30 Then the townspeople said to Joash, "Bring out your son, so that he may die, for he has pulled down the altar of Baal and cut down the sacred pole beside it." 31 But Joash said to all who were arrayed against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Or will you defend his cause? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been pulled down." 32 Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he pulled down his altar.

morning, as the people of the town began to stir, someone discovered that the altar of Baal had been knocked down and that the Asherah pole beside it was gone. In their place a new altar had been built, and it had the remains of a sacrifice on it. 29 The people said to each other, "Who did this?" And after asking around and making a careful search, they learned that it was Gideon, the son of Joash. 30 "Bring out your son," they shouted to Joash. "He must die for destroying the altar of Baal and for cutting down the Asherah pole." 31 But Joash shouted to the mob, "Why are you defending Baal? Will you argue his case? Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by morning! If Baal truly is a god, let him defend himself and destroy the one who knocked down his altar!" 32 From then on Gideon was called Jerubbaal, which means "Let Baal defend himself," because he knocked down Baal's altar.

Notes:

The divine calling of Gideon comes through an angel of God who takes up position under "the oak" at Ophrah. This village was the home town of Gideon's father. Although its location isn't certain, it was somewhere in the territory of Manasseh. Most likely the oak tree was a sacred worship place for Baal that the angel took over.

In the first encounter with the angel (vv. 11-18), Gideon tried to argue with the angel about his affirmation that God was with him. Gideon's response was to say that if God was really with them then why had all the trouble happened. The angel ignores his question with a de-

mand that Gideon use his "might" to deliver the Israelites from the Midianites. Gideon protested that he wasn't strong enough to do that. Then God said to Gideon through the angel that the Lord would strengthen him for the task. Gideon then demanded a sign to verify that it was God who was speaking to him.



Gideon went to his home and prepared an offering to present to the angel (vv. 19-24). He brought goat meat, unleavened cakes, and broth to the angel at the oak tree. At the tree the angel instructed Gideon to place the meat and cakes on a rock, then pour the broth over them. When the angel touched them with the tip of his staff, they were immediately consumed by fire. The angel then vanished. Gideon realized that God had spoken to him there. So he built an altar to the Lord on the spot, calling it

“The Lord is peace.” The Deuteronomic editor inserts at this point a fascinating comment (v. 24b): “To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.” Several centuries later this altar was still in place. Unfortunately, it no longer exists.

The next phase (vv. 25-27) was to tear down the altar to Baal and the sacred pole beside it at Ophrah (the Asherah), which belonged to his father. The sacred pole was a worship point for the female goddess, the Asherah. Fear of his father and the townspeople prompted him to do this during the night, rather than in the daylight hours. In place of the altar to Baal, Gideon built an altar to the Lord and used the wood from the sacred pole to make a burnt offering of the meat of a bull to the Lord on the altar as a part of the

night time actions.

The reaction of the townspeople the next morning was severe (vv. 28-32). They found out that Gideon was responsible for the destruction of the altar to Baal, the sacred pole cut down and for the building of a second altar. They demanded that Joash produce his son Gideon for execution. But Joash countered that if Baal were a real god then he could fight his own battles without their help. Anyone attempting to fight for Baal would be killed. As the outgrowth of this, Gideon received a new name, “Jerubbaal.” Thus Gideon, which meant “hacker,” became Jerubbal, which meant “Let Baal contend against him.”

Scene 3: preparation for battle

6:33-35. gathering for battle with Amalekites etc. in Valley of Jezreel

6:36-40. Gideon tests the Lord.

LXX

33 καὶ πᾶσα Μαδιαμ καὶ Αμαληκ καὶ υἱοὶ ἀνατολῶν συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ παρενέβαλον ἐν κοιλάδι Εζερεελ 34 καὶ πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐνεδυνάμωσεν τὸν Γεδεων καὶ ἐσάλπισεν ἐν κερατίνῃ καὶ ἐφοβήθη Αβιεζερ ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ 35 καὶ ἀγγέλους ἀπέστειλεν εἰς πάντα Μανασση καὶ ἐν Ασηρ καὶ ἐν Ζαβουλων καὶ Νεφθαλι καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῶν 36 καὶ εἶπεν Γεδεων πρὸς τὸν θεόν εἰ σὺ σῶξεις ἐν χειρὶ μου τὸν Ἰσραηλ καθὼς ἐλάλησας 37 ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ τίθημι τὸν πόκον τοῦ ἔριου ἐν τῇ ἄλωνι ἐὰν δρόσος γένηται ἐπὶ τὸν πόκον μόνον καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ξηρασία γνώσομαι ὅτι σώσεις ἐν χειρὶ μου τὸν Ἰσραηλ καθὼς ἐλάλησας 38 καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως καὶ ὤρθρισεν τῇ ἐπαύριον καὶ ἐξεπίασεν τὸν πόκον καὶ ἔσταξεν δρόσος ἀπὸ τοῦ πόκου πλήρης λεκάνη ὕδατος 39 καὶ εἶπεν Γεδεων πρὸς τὸν θεόν μὴ

NASB

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the sons of the east assembled themselves; and they crossed over and camped in the valley of Jezreel. 34 So the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him. 35 He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, and they also were called together to follow him; and he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they came up to meet them. 36 Then Gideon said to God, "If You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken, 37 behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken." 38 And it was so. When he arose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he drained the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not let Your an-

NRSV

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the east came together, and crossing the Jordan they encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 But the spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon; and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. 35 He sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them. 36 Then Gideon said to God, "In order to see whether you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said, 37 I am going to lay a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said." 38 And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not let your

NLT

33 Soon afterward the armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east formed an alliance against Israel and crossed the Jordan, camping in the valley of Jezreel. 34 Then the Spirit of the LORD took possession of Gideon. He blew a ram's horn as a call to arms, and the men of the clan of Abiezer came to him. 35 He also sent messengers throughout Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, summoning their warriors, and all of them responded. 36 Then Gideon said to God, "If you are truly going to use me to rescue Israel as you promised, 37 prove it to me in this way. I will put some wool on the threshing floor tonight. If the fleece is wet with dew in the morning but the ground is dry, then I will know that you are going to help me rescue Israel as you promised." 38 And it happened just that way. When Gideon got up the next morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung out a whole bowlful of water. 39 Then Gideon said

δὴ ὀργισθήτω ὁ θυμός σου ἐν ἐμοί καὶ λαλήσω ἔτι ἅπαξ πειράσω δὲ καὶ γε ἔτι ἅπαξ ἐν τῷ πόκῳ καὶ γενέσθω ἡ ξηρασία ἐπὶ τὸν πόκον μόνον καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν γενηθήτω δρόσος 40 καὶ ἐποίησεν οὕτως ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ καὶ ἐγένετο ξηρασία ἐπὶ τὸν πόκον μόνον καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐγενήθη δρόσος

Notes:

The text provides no hint at whether the gathering of the Midianites, Amakites and others was in response to Gideon’s action of tearing down the Baal altar. Probably, it was just one more of their marauding raids into central Palestine in order to plunder the Israelites.

They gathered in the Valley of Jezreel. Gideon, under the empowering of God’s spirit, assembled his fellow clansmen, the Abiezreites, for battle against these forces. Also, messengers were sent to the rest of the tribe of Manasseh, along with the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali. The call went out to the Israelites in northern Palestine to assemble for battle with these enemies gathered in the valley of Jezreel.



The last segment in chapter six, vv. 36-40, describes Gideon’s testing of God again. Again, a two stage test took place. First, Gideon placed a fleece of wool on the threshing floor with the request that dew appear on it while the ground around it remained dry. God obliged him. Next, Gideon asked for the reverse situation to happen the following night. And God once more did as Gideon had asked.

Chapter seven continues the preparations for battle with the eventual reduction of the Israelite army down to 300 men. Then under cover of night, they attacked the enemy camp and threw them into confusion. Then the other soldiers were re-called to battle and the larger Israelite army drove their enemies out of Palestine. Additionally, the tribe of Ephraim was called into the mopping up action as well. By the time Gideon’s army was finished the Midianites were shattered.

Gideon (7:22-28) refused the request to become ruler over these Israelites, opting instead to return home to Ophrah. His fatal mistake was in making the “ephod” out of some 43 pounds of gold. This be-

ger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me make a test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground." 40 God did so that night; for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground.

anger burn against me, let me speak one more time; let me, please, make trial with the fleece just once more; let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew." 40 And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

to God, "Please don't be angry with me, but let me make one more request. This time let the fleece remain dry while the ground around it is wet with dew." 40 So that night God did as Gideon asked. The fleece was dry in the morning, but the ground was covered with dew.



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came an idol that the Israelites began worshipping, and eventually led to another disaster for the people.

Gideon’s fleece is often used as a positive way for determining God’s will. But examined in the context, this action expresses doubt and distrust of God more than anything else. God accommodated Gideon’s lack of faith, but Gideon hardly stands as a positive example of any worthwhile trait. To the contrary, his story becomes an example of how God has to use weak and inept people on occasion in order to accomplish His will. The story also illustrates that although weak leaders may accomplish momentary success, it will not last and their deficiencies only lay a foundation for even greater trouble down the road.

LXX

6¹ καὶ ἐποίησαν οἱ υἱοὶ
 Ἰσραηλ τὸ ποιηρὸν ἐνώπιον
 κυρίου καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοὺς
 κύριος ἐν χειρὶ Μαδιαμ
 ἑπτὰ ἔτη 2 καὶ ἴσχυσεν
 χεὶρ Μαδιαμ ἐπὶ Ἰσραηλ καὶ
 ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς οἱ υἱοὶ
 Ἰσραηλ ἀπὸ προσώπου
 Μαδιαμ τὰς τρυμαλιὰς τὰς
 ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ τὰ
 σπήλαια καὶ τὰ κρεμαστά
 3 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐὰν ἔσπειραν
 οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ καὶ ἀνέβαιναν
 Μαδιαμ καὶ Ἀμαληκ καὶ οἱ
 υἱοὶ ἀνατολῶν
 συνανέβαινον αὐτοῖς 4 καὶ
 παρενέβαλον εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ
 κατέφθειραν τοὺς καρποὺς
 αὐτῶν ἕως ἐλθεῖν εἰς Γάζαν
 καὶ οὐ κατέλιπον ὑπόστασιν
 ζωῆς ἐν τῇ γῆ Ἰσραηλ οὐδὲ
 ἐν τοῖς ποιμνίοις ταύρων
 καὶ ὄνον 5 ὅτι αὐτοὶ καὶ
 αἱ κτήσεις αὐτῶν ἀνέβαινον
 καὶ αἱ σκηναὶ αὐτῶν
 παρεγίνοντο καθὼς ἀκρίς
 εἰς πλῆθος καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ
 τοῖς καμήλοις αὐτῶν οὐκ
 ἦν ἀριθμὸς καὶ ἤρχοντο εἰς
 τὴν γῆν Ἰσραηλ καὶ
 διέφθειρον αὐτήν 6 καὶ
 ἐπτώχευσεν Ἰσραηλ σφόδρα
 ἀπὸ προσώπου Μαδιαμ καὶ
 ἐβόησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ πρὸς
 κύριον

7 ἀπὸ προσώπου
 Μαδιαμ 8 καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν
 κύριος ἄνδρα προφήτην
 πρὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραηλ καὶ
 εἶπεν αὐτοῖς τάδε λέγει
 κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ ἐγὼ
 εἰμι ὃς ἀνήγαγον ὑμᾶς ἐκ
 γῆς Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐξήγαγον
 ὑμᾶς ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας ὑμῶν
 9 καὶ ἐρρυσάμην ὑμᾶς
 ἐκ χειρὸς Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐκ
 χειρὸς πάντων τῶν
 θλιβόντων ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐξέβαλον
 αὐτοὺς ἐκ προσώπου ὑμῶν
 καὶ ἔδωκα ὑμῖν τὴν γῆν
 αὐτῶν 10 καὶ εἶπα ὑμῖν

NASB

1 Then the sons of
 Israel did what was evil in
 the sight of the LORD;
 and the LORD gave
 them into the hands of
 Midian seven years. 2
 The power of Midian pre-
 vailed against Israel. Be-
 cause of Midian the sons
 of Israel made for them-
 selves the dens which
 were in the mountains
 and the caves and the
 strongholds. 3 For it was
 when Israel had sown,
 that the Midianites would
 come up with the
 Amalekites and the sons
 of the east and go against
 them. 4 So they would
 camp against them and
 destroy the produce of
 the earth as far as Gaza,
 and leave no sustenance
 in Israel as well as no
 sheep, ox, or donkey. 5
 For they would come up
 with their livestock and
 their tents, they would
 come in like locusts for
 number, both they and
 their camels were innu-
 merable; and they came
 into the land to devastate
 it. 6 So Israel was brought
 very low because of Mid-
 ian, and the sons of Israel
 cried to the LORD.

7 Now it came about
 when the sons of Israel
 cried to the LORD on ac-
 count of Midian, 8 that the
 LORD sent a prophet to
 the sons of Israel, and he
 said to them, "Thus says
 the LORD, the God of Is-
 rael, 'It was I who brought
 you up from Egypt and
 brought you out from the
 house of slavery. 9 'I de-
 livered you from the

NRSV

1 The Israelites did
 what was evil in the sight
 of the Lord, and the Lord
 gave them into the hand
 of Midian seven years. 2
 The hand of Midian pre-
 vailed over Israel; and
 because of Midian the Is-
 raelites provided for
 themselves hiding
 places in the mountains,
 caves and strongholds. 3
 For whenever the Israel-
 ites put in seed, the Midi-
 anites and the Amalekites
 and the people of the
 east would come up
 against them. 4 They
 would encamp against
 them and destroy the pro-
 duce of the land, as far
 as the neighborhood of
 Gaza, and leave no sus-
 tenance in Israel, and no
 sheep or ox or donkey. 5
 For they and their live-
 stock would come up,
 and they would even bring
 their tents, as thick as lo-
 custs; neither they nor
 their camels could be
 counted; so they wasted
 the land as they came in.
 6 Thus Israel was greatly
 impoverished because of
 Midian; and the Israelites
 cried out to the Lord for
 help.

7 When the Israelites
 cried to the Lord on ac-
 count of the Midianites, 8
 the Lord sent a prophet
 to the Israelites; and he
 said to them, "Thus says
 the Lord, the God of Is-
 rael: I led you up from
 Egypt, and brought you
 out of the house of sla-
 very; 9 and I delivered you
 from the hand of the
 Egyptians, and from the

NLT

1 Again the Israelites
 did what was evil in the
 LORD's sight. So the
 LORD handed them over
 to the Midianites for
 seven years. 2 The Midi-
 anites were so cruel that
 the Israelites fled to the
 mountains, where they
 made hiding places for
 themselves in caves and
 dens. 3 Whenever the Is-
 raelites planted their
 crops, marauders from
 Midian, Amalek, and the
 people of the east would
 attack Israel, 4 camping
 in the land and destroy-
 ing crops as far away as
 Gaza. They left the Isra-
 elites with nothing to eat,
 taking all the sheep, oxen,
 and donkeys. 5 These
 enemy hordes, coming
 with their cattle and tents
 as thick as locusts, ar-
 rived on droves of cam-
 els too numerous to
 count. And they stayed
 until the land was stripped
 bare. 6 So Israel was re-
 duced to starvation by the
 Midianites. Then the Is-
 raelites cried out to the
 LORD for help.

7 When they cried out
 to the LORD because of
 Midian, 8 the LORD sent
 a prophet to the Israelites.
 He said, "This is what the
 LORD, the God of Israel,
 says: I brought you up out
 of slavery in Egypt 9 and
 rescued you from the
 Egyptians and from all
 who oppressed you. I
 drove out your enemies
 and gave you their land.
 10 I told you, 'I am the
 LORD your God. You
 must not worship the

ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν οὐ φοβηθήσεσθε τοὺς θεοὺς τοῦ Ἀμορραίου ἐν οἷς ὑμεῖς καθήσεσθε ἐν τῇ γῆ αὐτῶν καὶ οὐκ εἰσηκούσατε τῆς φωνῆς μου

11 καὶ ἦλθεν ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ ἐκάθισεν ὑπὸ τὴν τερέμινθον τὴν ἐν Εφραθα τὴν Ἰωας πατρὸς τοῦ Εσδρι καὶ Γεδεων υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ῥαβδίζων σίτον ἐν ληνῶ εἰς ἐκφυγεῖν ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ Μαδιαμ 12 καὶ ὤφθη αὐτῶ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν κύριος μετὰ σοῦ ἰσχυρὸς τῶν δυνάμεων 13 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν Γεδεων ἐν ἐμοὶ κύριέ μου καὶ εἰ ἔστιν κύριος μεθ' ἡμῶν εἰς τί εὐρεν ἡμᾶς τὰ κακὰ ταῦτα καὶ ποῦ ἐστὶν πάντα τὰ θαυμάσια αὐτοῦ ἃ διηγῆσαντο ἡμῖν οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν λέγοντες μὴ οὐχὶ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἀνήγαγεν ἡμᾶς κύριος καὶ νῦν ἐξέριψεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡμᾶς ἐν χειρὶ Μαδιαμ 14 καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ εἶπεν πορεύου ἐν ἰσχύι σου ταῦτη καὶ σώσεις τὸν Ἰσραηλ ἐκ χειρὸς Μαδιαμ ἰδοὺ ἐξαπέστειλά σε 15 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν Γεδεων ἐν ἐμοὶ κύριέ μου ἐν τίνι σώσω τὸν Ἰσραηλ ἰδοὺ ἡ χιλιάς μου ἠσθένησεν ἐν Μανασση καὶ ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ μικρότερος ἐν οἴκῳ πατρὸς μου 16 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου κύριος ἔσται μετὰ σοῦ καὶ πατάξεις τὴν Μαδιαμ ὡσεὶ ἄνδρα ἓνα 17 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν Γεδεων εἰ δὲ εὕρον ἕλεος ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου καὶ ποιήσεις μοι σήμερον πᾶν ὃ τι ἐλάλησας μετ' ἐμοῦ 18 μὴ χωρισθῆ

hands of the Egyptians and from the hands of all your oppressors, and dispossessed them before you and gave you their land, 10 and I said to you, "I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But you have not obeyed Me."¹¹

11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior." 13 Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian." 14 The LORD looked at him and said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" 15 He said to him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." 16 But the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Mid-

hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you, and gave you their land; 10 and I said to you, "I am the Lord your God; you shall not pay reverence to the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not given heed to my voice."

11 Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior." 13 Gideon answered him, "But sir, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, "Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has cast us off, and given us into the hand of Midian." 14 Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you." 15 He responded, "But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." 16 The Lord said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike down the Midianites, every one of them." 17 Then he said to him, "If now I have found

gods of the Amorites, in whose land you now live.' But you have not listened to me."

11 Then the angel of the LORD came and sat beneath the oak tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash had been threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, "Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!" 13 "Sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn't they say, 'The LORD brought us up out of Egypt'? But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites." 14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go with the strength you have and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!" 15 "But Lord," Gideon replied, "how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!" 16 The LORD said to him, "I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man." 17 Gideon replied, "If you are truly going to help me, show me a sign to prove that it is really the LORD speaking to me. 18 Don't go away until I come back

ς ἐντεῦθεν ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν με πρὸς σέ καὶ ἐξοίσω τὴν θυσίαν καὶ θήσω ἐνώπιόν σου καὶ εἶπεν ἐγὼ εἰμι καθύμῳ ἕως τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι σε 19 καὶ Γεδεων εἰσήλθεν καὶ ἐποίησεν ἔριφον αἰγῶν καὶ οἰφι ἀλεύρου ἄζυμα καὶ τὰ κρέα ἔθηκεν ἐν τῷ κοφίνῳ καὶ τὸν ζωμὸν ἔβαλεν ἐν τῇ χύτρᾳ καὶ ἐξήνεγκεν αὐτὰ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὴν τερέμινθον καὶ προσήγγισεν 20 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ λαβὲ τὰ κρέα καὶ τὰ ἄζυμα καὶ θές πρὸς τὴν πέτραν ἐκείνην καὶ τὸν ζωμὸν ἐχόμενα ἔκχεε καὶ ἐποίησεν οὕτως 21 καὶ ἐξέτεινεν ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου τῆς ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἦψατο τῶν κρεῶν καὶ τῶν ἀζύμων καὶ ἀνέβη πῦρ ἐκ τῆς πέτρας καὶ κατέφαγεν τὰ κρέα καὶ τοὺς ἀζύμους καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐπορεύθη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ 22 καὶ εἶδεν Γεδεων ὅτι ἄγγελος κυρίου οὗτός ἐστιν καὶ εἶπεν Γεδεων ἂ ἂ κύριέ μου κύριε ὅτι εἶδον ἄγγελον κυρίου πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον 23 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ κύριος εἰρήνη σοι μὴ φοβοῦ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνης 24 καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν ἐκεῖ Γεδεων θυσιαστήριον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἐπεκάλεσεν αὐτῷ εἰρήνη κυρίου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης ἔτι αὐτοῦ ὄντος ἐν Εφραθα πατρὸς τοῦ Εσδρι 25 καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ κύριος λαβὲ τὸν μόσχον τὸν ταῦρον ὃς ἐστὶν τῷ πατρὶ σου καὶ μόσχον δεύτερον ἐπταετῆ καὶ καθελείς τὸ θυσιαστήριον τοῦ Βααλ ὃ ἐστὶν τῷ πατρὶ σου καὶ τὸ ἄλσος τὸ ἐπ'

ian as one man." 17 So Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. 18 "Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You." And He said, "I will remain until you return." 19 Then Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour; he put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought {them} out to him under the oak and presented them. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. 22 When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." 23 The LORD said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die." 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the

favor with you, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. 18 Do not depart from here until I come to you, and bring out my present, and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay until you return." 19 So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the oak and presented them. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the Lord reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. 22 Then Gideon perceived that it was the angel of the Lord; and Gideon said, "Help me, Lord God! For I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face." 23 But the Lord said to him, "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die." 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it, The Lord is peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

25 That night the Lord said to him, "Take your

and bring my offering to you." The LORD answered, "I will stay here until you return." 19 Gideon hurried home. He cooked a young goat, and with half a bushel of flour he baked some bread without yeast. Then, carrying the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, he brought them out and presented them to the angel, who was under the oak tree. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Place the meat and the unleavened bread on this rock, and pour the broth over it." And Gideon did as he was told. 21 Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and bread with the staff in his hand, and fire flamed up from the rock and consumed all he had brought. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. 22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he cried out, "Sovereign LORD, I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" 23 "It is all right," the LORD replied. "Do not be afraid. You will not die." 24 And Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and named it "The LORD Is Peace." The altar remains in Ophrah in the land of the clan of Abiezer to this day.

25 That night the LORD said to Gideon, "Take the second best bull from your father's herd, the one that is seven years old. Pull down your father's altar to Baal, and cut down the Asherah

αὐτὸ ὀλεθρεύσεις 26 καὶ οἰκοδομήσεις θυσιαστήριον κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου ἐπὶ κορυφῆν τοῦ Μαουεκ τούτου ἐν τῇ παρατάξει καὶ λήμψῃ τὸν μόσχον τὸν δεύτερον καὶ ἀνοίσεις ὀλοκαύτωμα ἐν τοῖς ξύλοις τοῦ ἄλλους οὐ ἐξολεθρεύσεις 27 καὶ ἔλαβεν Γεδεων δέκα ἄνδρας ἀπὸ τῶν δούλων ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐποίησεν ὄν τρόπον ἐλάλησεν πρὸς αὐτὸν κύριος καὶ ἐγενήθη ὡς ἐφοβήθη τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας τῆς πόλεως τοῦ ποιῆσαι ἡμέρας καὶ ἐποίησεν νυκτός 28 καὶ ὄρθρισαν οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως τὸ πρῶν καὶ ἰδοὺ καθήρητο τὸ θυσιαστήριον τοῦ Βααλ καὶ τὸ ἄλλος τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῷ ὠλέθρευτο καὶ εἶδαν τὸν μόσχον τὸν δεύτερον ὄν ἀνήνεγκεν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ ὀκοδομημένον 29 καὶ εἶπεν ἀνὴρ πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ τίς ἐποίησεν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο καὶ ἐπεζήτησαν καὶ ἠρεύνησαν καὶ ἔγνωσαν ὅτι Γεδεων υἱὸς Ἰωας ἐποίησεν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο 30 καὶ εἶπον οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως πρὸς Ἰωας ἐξένεγκε τὸν υἱόν σου καὶ ἀποθανέτω ὅτι καθεῖλεν τὸ θυσιαστήριον τοῦ Βααλ καὶ ὅτι ὠλέθρευσε τὸ ἄλλος τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῷ 31 καὶ εἶπεν Ἰωας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν πᾶσιν οἱ ἐπανεστησαν αὐτῷ μὴ ὑμεῖς νῦν δικάζεσθε ὑπὲρ τοῦ Βααλ ἢ ὑμεῖς σώσετε αὐτόν ὃς ἐὰν δικάσῃται αὐτῷ θανατωθήτω ἕως πρῶν εἰ θεὸς ἐστὶν δικαζέσθω αὐτῷ ὅτι καθεῖλεν τὸ θυσιαστήριον αὐτοῦ 32 καὶ ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ Ἰαρβααλ λέγων

Abiezrites.

25 Now on the same night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down." 27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had spoken to him; and because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night. 28 When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built. 29 They said to one another, "Who did this thing?" And when they searched about and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash did this thing." 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it." 31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for

father's bull, the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the sacred pole that is beside it; 26 and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of the stronghold here, in proper order; then take the second bull, and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the sacred pole that you shall cut down." 27 So Gideon took ten of his servants, and did as the Lord had told him; but because he was too afraid of his family and the townspeople to do it by day, he did it by night. 28 When the townspeople rose early in the morning, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the sacred pole beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built. 29 So they said to one another, "Who has done this?" After searching and inquiring, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it." 30 Then the townspeople said to Joash, "Bring out your son, so that he may die, for he has pulled down the altar of Baal and cut down the sacred pole beside it." 31 But Joash said to all who were arrayed against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Or will you defend his cause? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been pulled down."

pole standing beside it. 26 Then build an altar to the LORD your God here on this hill, laying the stones carefully. Sacrifice the bull as a burnt offering on the altar, using as fuel the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down." 27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD had commanded. But he did it at night because he was afraid of the other members of his father's household and the people of the town. He knew what would happen if they found out who had done it. 28 Early the next morning, as the people of the town began to stir, someone discovered that the altar of Baal had been knocked down and that the Asherah pole beside it was gone. In their place a new altar had been built, and it had the remains of a sacrifice on it. 29 The people said to each other, "Who did this?" And after asking around and making a careful search, they learned that it was Gideon, the son of Joash. 30 "Bring out your son," they shouted to Joash. "He must die for destroying the altar of Baal and for cutting down the Asherah pole." 31 But Joash shouted to the mob, "Why are you defending Baal? Will you argue his case? Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by morning! If Baal truly is a god, let him defend himself and destroy the one who knocked down his altar!"

δικασάσθω ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ Βααλ
ὅτι καθηρέθη τὸ
θυσιαστήριον αὐτοῦ

33 καὶ πᾶσα Μαδιαμ
καὶ Αμαληκ καὶ υἱοὶ
ἀνατολῶν συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ
τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ παρενέβαλον
ἐν κοιλάδι Εζερεελ 34 καὶ
πνεῦμα κυρίου
ἐνεδυνάμωσεν τὸν Γεδεων
καὶ ἐσάλπισεν ἐν κερατίνῃ
καὶ ἐφοβήθη Αβιεζερ ὀπίσω
αὐτοῦ 35 καὶ ἀγγέλους
ἀπέστειλεν εἰς πάντα
Μαναση καὶ ἐν Ασηρ καὶ
ἐν Ζαβουλων καὶ Νεφθαλι
καὶ ἀνέβη εἰς συνάντησιν
αὐτῶν 36 καὶ εἶπεν
Γεδεων πρὸς τὸν θεόν εἰ
σύ σῶσεις ἐν χειρὶ μου τὸν
Ισραηλ καθὼς ἐλάλησας 37
ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ τίθημι τὸν πόκον
τοῦ ἐρίου ἐν τῇ ἄλωνι ἐὰν
δρόσος γένηται ἐπὶ τὸν
πόκον μόνον καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν
τὴν γῆν ξηρασία γινώσεται
ὅτι σῶσεις ἐν χειρὶ μου τὸν
Ισραηλ καθὼς ἐλάλησας 38
καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως καὶ
ῶρθρισε τῇ ἐπαύριον καὶ
ἐξεπίασεν τὸν πόκον καὶ
ἔσταξεν δρόσος ἀπὸ τοῦ
πόκου πλήρης λεκάνη ὕδατος
39 καὶ εἶπεν Γεδεων πρὸς
τὸν θεόν μὴ δὴ ὀργισθῆτω
ὁ θυμὸς σου ἐν ἐμοί καὶ
λαλήσω ἔτι ἅπαξ πειράσω
δὲ καὶ γε ἔτι ἅπαξ ἐν τῷ
πόκῳ καὶ γενέσθω ἡ ξηρασία
ἐπὶ τὸν πόκον μόνον καὶ
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν γεινηθῆτω
δρόσος 40 καὶ ἐποίησεν
οὕτως ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ
ἐκείνῃ καὶ ἐγένετο ξηρασία
ἐπὶ τὸν πόκον μόνον καὶ
ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐγενήθη
δρόσος

Baal, or will you deliver
him? Whoever will plead
for him shall be put to
death by morning. If he is
a god, let him contend for
himself, because some-
one has torn down his al-
tar." 32 Therefore on that
day he named him
Jerubbaal, that is to say,
"Let Baal contend against
him," because he had
torn down his altar.

33 Then all the Midi-
anites and the Amalekites
and the sons of the east
assembled themselves;
and they crossed over
and camped in the valley
of Jezreel. 34 So the
Spirit of the LORD came
upon Gideon; and he
blew a trumpet, and the
Abiezrites were called to-
gether to follow him. 35
He sent messengers
throughout Manasseh,
and they also were called
together to follow him; and
he sent messengers to
Asher, Zebulun, and
Naphtali, and they came
up to meet them. 36 Then
Gideon said to God, "If
You will deliver Israel
through me, as You have
spoken, 37 behold, I will
put a fleece of wool on the
threshing floor. If there is
dew on the fleece only,
and it is dry on all the
ground, then I will know
that You will deliver Israel
through me, as You have
spoken." 38 And it was so.
When he arose early the
next morning and
squeezed the fleece, he
drained the dew from the
fleece, a bowl full of wa-
ter. 39 Then Gideon said

32 Therefore on that day
Gideon was called
Jerubbaal, that is to say,
"Let Baal contend against
him," because he pulled
down his altar.

33 Then all the Midi-
anites and the Amalekites
and the people of the east
came together, and
crossing the Jordan they
encamped in the Valley of
Jezreel. 34 But the spirit
of the Lord took posses-
sion of Gideon; and he
sounded the trumpet, and
the Abiezrites were called
out to follow him. 35 He
sent messengers
throughout all Manasseh,
and they too were called
out to follow him. He also
sent messengers to
Asher, Zebulun, and
Naphtali, and they went up
to meet them. 36 Then
Gideon said to God, "In
order to see whether you
will deliver Israel by my
hand, as you have said,
37 I am going to lay a
fleece of wool on the
threshing floor; if there is
dew on the fleece alone,
and it is dry on all the
ground, then I shall know
that you will deliver Israel
by my hand, as you have
said." 38 And it was so.
When he rose early next
morning and squeezed
the fleece, he wrung
enough dew from the
fleece to fill a bowl with
water. 39 Then Gideon
said to God, "Do not let
your anger burn against
me, let me speak one
more time; let me, please,
make trial with the fleece
just once more; let it be

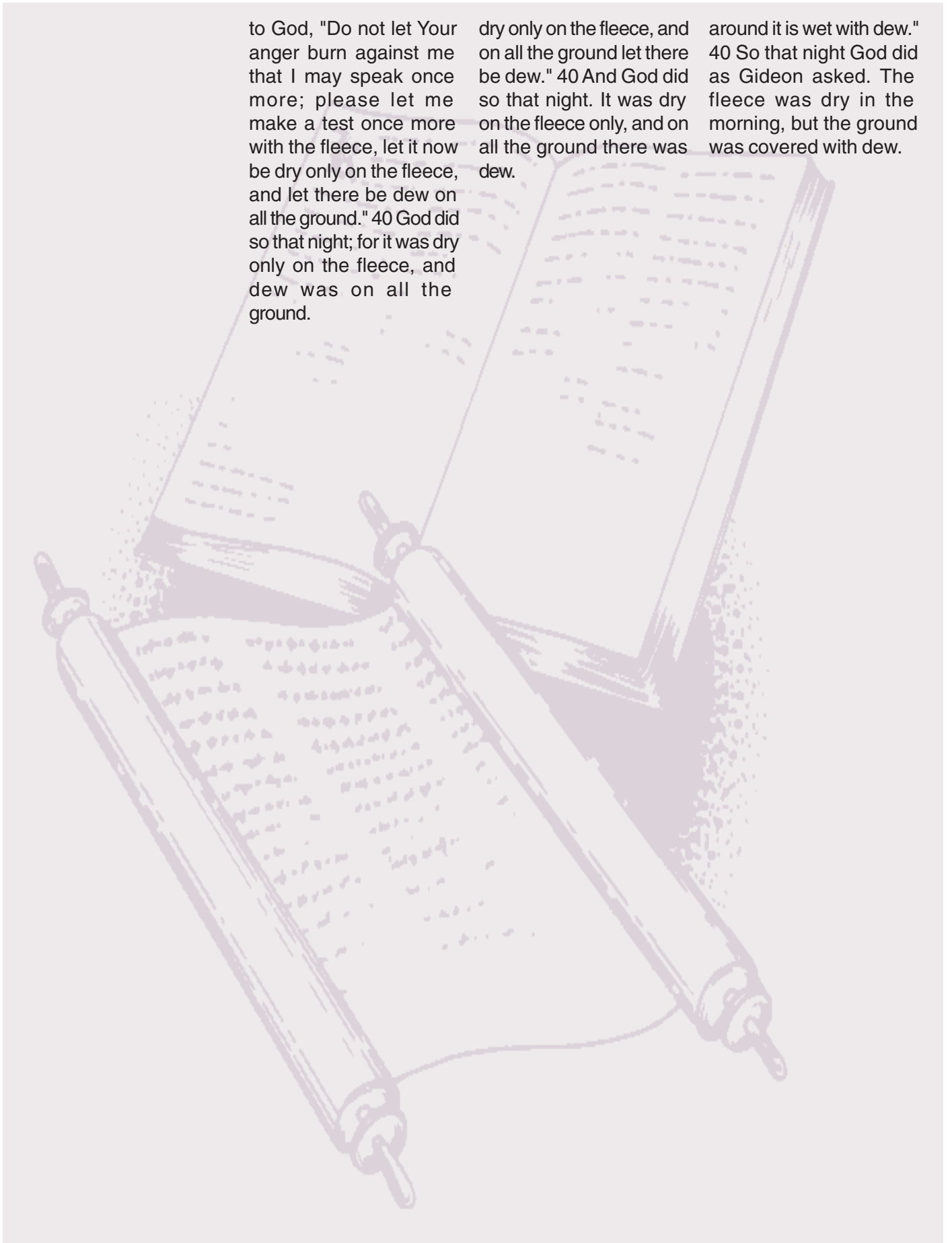
32 From then on Gideon
was called Jerubbaal,
which means "Let Baal
defend himself," because
he knocked down Baal's
altar.

33 Soon afterward
the armies of Midian,
Amalek, and the people
of the east formed an alli-
ance against Israel and
crossed the Jordan,
camping in the valley of
Jezreel. 34 Then the Spirit
of the LORD took pos-
session of Gideon. He
blew a ram's horn as a
call to arms, and the men
of the clan of Abiezer
came to him. 35 He also
sent messengers
throughout Manasseh,
Asher, Zebulun, and
Naphtali, summoning
their warriors, and all of
them responded. 36 Then
Gideon said to God, "If
you are truly going to use
me to rescue Israel as
you promised, 37 prove it
to me in this way. I will put
some wool on the thresh-
ing floor tonight. If the
fleece is wet with dew in
the morning but the
ground is dry, then I will
know that you are going
to help me rescue Israel
as you promised." 38 And
it happened just that way.
When Gideon got up the
next morning, he
squeezed the fleece and
wrung out a whole bowl-
ful of water. 39 Then
Gideon said to God,
"Please don't be angry
with me, but let me make
one more request. This
time let the fleece remain
dry while the ground

to God, "Do not let Your anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me make a test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground." 40 God did so that night; for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground.

dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew." 40 And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

around it is wet with dew." 40 So that night God did as Gideon asked. The fleece was dry in the morning, but the ground was covered with dew.



Judges 6:1 - 7:1

61 סגדט תתו ויעשו בני־ישראל הרע בעיני יהוה ויתנם יהוה ביד־מדין שבע שנים:2 ותעז יד־מדין על־ישראל מפני מדין עשו להם| בני ישראל את־המנהרות אשר בהרים ואת־המפרות ואת־המצודות:

3 והיה אסזרע ישראל ועלה מדין ועמלק ובני־קדם ועלו עלי:

4 ויחנו עליהם וישחיתו את־יבול הארץ עד־בואף עזה ולא־ישאירו מחיה בישראל ושה ושור וחמור:

5 כי הם ומקניהם יעלו ואהליהם (יבאו) [ובאון כד־ארבה לרב ולהם ולגמליהם אין מספר ויבאו בארץ לשחתה:

6 וידל ישראל מאד מפני מדין ויזעקו בני־ישראל א־ל־יהוה: פ

7 ויהי כ־זעקו בני־ישראל א־ל־יהוה על אדות מדין:

8 וישלח יהוה איש נביא אל־בני ישראל ויאמר להם כה־אמר יהוה| אלהי ישראל אנכי העליתי אתכם

ממצרים ואציא אתכם מבית עבדים:

9 ואצל אתכם מיד מצרים ומיד כ־ל־לחציכם ואגרש

אותם מפניכם ואתנה לכם את־ארצם:

10 ואמרה לכם אני יהוה אלהיכם לא תיראו את־אלהי

האמרי אשר אתם יושבים בארצם ולא שמעתם בקולי: פ

11 ויבא מלאך יהוה וישב תחת האלה אשר בעפרה אשר

ליואש אבי העזרי ונדעון בנו חבט חטים בגת להניס

מפני מדין:

12 וירא אליו מלאך יהוה ויאמר אליו יהוה עמך גבור

החול:

13 ויאמר אליו נדעון בני אדני ויש יהוה עמנו ולמה

מצאתנו כ־ל־זאת ואיה כ־ל־נפלאותיו אשר ספרו־לנו

אבותינו לאמר הלא ממצרים העלנו יהוה ועתה נטשנו

יהוה ויתננו בכף־מדין:

14 ויפן אליו יהוה ויאמר לך בכחך זה והושעת

את־ישראל מכף מדין הלא שלחתיד:

15 ויאמר אליו בני אדני במה אושיע את־ישראל הנה

אלפי הדל במנשה ואנכי הצעיר בבית אבי:

16 ויאמר אליו יהוה כי אהיה עמך והפית את־מדין כאיש

אחד:

17 ויאמר אליו אסנא מצאתי חן בעיניך ועשית לי אות

שאתה מדבר עמי:

18 אל־נא תמש מזה עד־באי אליך והצאתי את־מנחתי

והנחתי לפניך ויאמר אנכי אשב עד שובך:

19 וַגִּדְעוֹן בָּא וַיַּעַשׂ גִּדְרֵעִזִים וְאִיפְתַּח־קִמּוֹחַ מִצֹּת הַבָּשָׂר שָׁם
בְּסֶל וְהִמְרִק שָׁם בַּפְּרוֹר וַיּוֹצֵא אֵלָיו אֶל־תַּחַת הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּגַּשׁ:

20 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מִלֶּאֱךָ הָאֱלֹהִים קַח אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר וְאֶת־הַמִּצֹּת
וְהַנַּח אֶל־הַסֶּלַע הַלֵּז וְאֶת־הִמְרִק שְׁפוֹךְ וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן:

21 וַיִּשְׁלַח מִלֶּאֱךָ יְהוָה אֶת־קֶצֶה הַמִּשְׁעָנָה אֲשֶׁר בִּידוֹ וַיִּגַּע
בַּבָּשָׂר וּבַמִּצֹּת וַתַּעַל הָאֵשׁ מִן־הַצֹּר וַתֹּאכַל אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר
וְאֶת־הַמִּצֹּת וּמִלֶּאֱךָ יְהוָה הִלֵּךְ מִעֵינָיו:

22 וַיֵּרָא גִדְעוֹן כִּי־מִלֶּאֱךָ יְהוָה הוּא ס וַיֹּאמֶר גִּדְעוֹן אֵהָה
אֲדַגֵּי יְהוָה כִּי־עַל־כֵּן רָאִיתִי מִלֶּאֱךָ יְהוָה פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים:

23 וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יְהוָה שְׁלוֹם לָךְ אֶל־תִּירָא לֹא תָמוּת:

24 וַיִּבֶן שָׁם גִּדְעוֹן מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה וַיִּקְרָא־לוֹ יְהוָה שְׁלוֹם עַד
הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עוֹרְנוֹ בְּעַפְרַת אָבִי הָעוֹרִי: פ

25 וַיְהִי בַלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יְהוָה קַח אֶת־פְּרֵה־הַשּׁוֹר
אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיךָ וּפַר הַשְּׁנִי שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים וְהַרְסֵת אֶת־מִזְבַּח
הַבַּעַל אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיךָ וְאֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרָה אֲשֶׁר־עָלָיו תַּכְרֹת:

26 וּבִנְיַת מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל רֹאשׁ הַמַּעְזֵז הַזֶּה
בַּמַּעְרָכָה וּלְקַחֵת אֶת־הַפָּר הַשְּׁנִי וְהַעֲלִית עוֹלָה בַּעֲצֵי
הָאֲשֵׁרָה אֲשֶׁר תַּכְרֹת:

27 וַיִּקַּח גִּדְעוֹן עֶשְׂרֵה אָנָשִׁים מִעַבְדָּיו וַיַּעַשׂ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר יָרָא אֶת־בֵּית אָבִיו וְאֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר
מַעֲשׂוֹת יוֹמָם וַיַּעַשׂ לַיְלָה:

28 וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר בַּבֹּקֶר וְהָיָה נִתְּן מִזְבַּח הַבַּעַל
וְהָאֲשֵׁרָה אֲשֶׁר־עָלָיו כָּרְתָה וְאֵת הַפָּר הַשְּׁנִי הָעֹלָה
עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַבְּנוּי:

29 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ מִי עָשָׂה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַיִּדְרָשׁוּ
וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ גִדְעוֹן בֶּן־יֹאָשׁ עָשָׂה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה:

30 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר אֶל־יֹאָשׁ הוֹצֵא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ וְיָמַת כִּי
נִתְּן אֶת־מִזְבַּח הַבַּעַל וְכִי כָרַת הָאֲשֵׁרָה אֲשֶׁר־עָלָיו:

31 וַיֹּאמֶר יֹאָשׁ לְכָל אֲשֶׁר־עָמְדוּ עָלָיו הֵאֲתֶם! תְּרִיבוּן
לַבַּעַל אִם־אַתֶּם תּוֹשִׁיעוֹן אוֹתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יָרִיב לוֹ יָמַת

עַד־הַבֹּקֶר אִם־אֱלֹהִים הוּא יָרִיב לוֹ כִּי נִתְּן אֶת־מִזְבְּחוֹ:

32 וַיִּקְרָא־לוֹ בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא יִרְבַּעַל לֵאמֹר יָרִיב בּוֹ הַבַּעַל כִּי
נִתְּן אֶת־מִזְבְּחוֹ: פ

33 וְכַל־מִדְּוָן וְעַמְלֵק וּבְנֵי־קָדָם נֶאֱסְפוּ יַחְדָּו וַיַּעֲבְרוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ
בְּעַמְק יִזְרְעֵאל:

34 וְרוּחַ יְהוָה לָבְשָׂה אֶת־גִּדְעוֹן וַיִּתְקַע בַּשּׁוֹפָר וַיִּזְעַק
אָבִיעֶזֶר אַחֲרָיו:

35 וּמִלֶּאֱכִים שָׁלַח בְּכָל־מְנַשֶּׁה וַיִּזְעַק גַּם־הוּא אַחֲרָיו
וּמִלֶּאֱכִים שָׁלַח בְּאֲשֶׁר וּבַזְּבוּלֹן וּבְנַפְתָּלִי וַיַּעֲלוּ לְקִרְיַת־חֵם:

36 וַיֹּאמֶר גִּדְעוֹן אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אִם־יִשְׁפָּךְ מוֹשִׁיעַ בְּיָדִי
אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

37 הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מוֹצִיג אֶת־גִּזְזַת הַצִּמְרֵךְ בְּגֵרֶן אִם טַל יִהְיֶה
עַל־הַגִּזָּה לְבִדָּה וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ חֶרֶב וַיִּדְעָתִי כִּי־תוֹשִׁיעַ
בְּיָדִי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

38 וַיְהִי־כֵן וַיִּשְׁכַּם מִמַּחֲרַת וַיִּזַּר אֶת־הַגִּזָּה וַיִּמְזַן טַל
מִן־הַגִּזָּה מְלֹא הַסֶּפֶל מֵיּוֹם:

39 וַיֹּאמֶר גִּדְעוֹן אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲלֵי־יָחַר אִפְּךָ בִּי וְאֶדְבָּרָה
אִךְ הַפֶּעַם אֲנֹסָה נְאֻמְךָ הַפֶּעַם בְּגִזָּה יִהְיֶנָּה חֶרֶב
אֶל־הַגִּזָּה לְבִדָּה וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ יִהְיֶה־טַל:

40 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים כֵּן בַּלַּיְלָה תְּהוּא וַיְהִי־חֶרֶב אֶל־הַגִּזָּה
לְבִדָּה וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הָיָה טַל: פ

