

God's Providence in God's People

Contra Costa Gospel Church
Adult Sunday School

THE JUDGES (Part 4)

Ehud is a left-handed assassin. Deborah is a woman (gasp!). The judges so far have not been the poster children that would make future generations of Israelites proud. We now come to Gideon. What's his problem?

Gideon

- 1) The story of Gideon begins with the setup in 6:1-10. Read this passage and consider, according to the author, what is the main way in which Midian oppressed the Israelites in this time?
- 2) Threshing wheat is the process of loosening the edible part of wheat from the surrounding chaff, which is inedible. In ancient times this was accomplished by beating the wheat against a stone again and again, causing the edible part to release from the wheat stalk and drop to the ground while the chaff is blown away by the wind (see Psalm 1:4). Obviously, for this to work, the more wind the better. In Judges 6:11, why was Gideon threshing his wheat in a winepress, which would have been in a sunken, depressed area relative to the surroundings? Presumably the wind would have been greatest at higher places, such as on a hill.

What does that tell us about Gideon, at least in the eyes of the author? In other words, how is Gideon "introduced" to the scene?

- 3) In 6:12, the angel of the Lord addresses Gideon this way: "The Lord is with you, *mighty warrior*." Based on our understanding of Gideon's wheat threshing in Question 2, how should we understand this greeting?
- 4) In 6:13-24, we read about the dialogue between Gideon and the angel of the Lord. Where do you see other instances of Gideon being less than heroic in this dialogue?

- 5) Gideon was commanded to do two tasks, which are written about in the rest of Judges 6 (vv. 25-40). The first was to destroy the idol shrines in his father's house (vv. 25-32). The second was to gather the forces of Israel and lead them into battle against the Midianite raiders (vv. 33-40). Both of these tasks were commanded by the angel of the Lord, who proved His identity in vv. 21-23. Did the fact that God explicitly directed Gideon to do these two things do anything to alleviate his fears? Why or why not?
- 6) Gideon and his forces defeat the Midianites in Judges 7. Read Judges 7:1-8. Why do you think the Lord whittles down Gideon's forces from 32,000 to 300?
- 7) In Judges 7:9-15, the Lord commands Gideon to go down to the Midianite camp to eavesdrop of their conversations. Why does the Lord command this?

What can we say about the character of the Lord because of this?

- 8) In Judges 8, it seems as though Gideon overcomes his fears and has now become a capable leader who is strong and decisive. Now, fear is a characteristic not of him, but of his son (see 8:19-20). Perhaps now he would be suitable to be a good leader...

However, the point of the book is for the author to show the insufficiencies of each of these judges to be the leader of Israel and to encourage his readers to long for a good and honorable king, one that would be forthcoming. Read Judges 8:22-27. Why does the author include this section? How does this section aide his purpose in writing this book?