



GIDEON **Judges 6:1–18**

MIDIANITE OPPRESSION (6:1–6)

- the people turned back to idolatry after Barak and Deborah died (6:1a; cf. 2:11; 3:7; 10:6)
- so God removed Israel's protection (cf. Num 14:9) and this fourth oppression lasted for 7 years (6:1b)
- the Midianites, Amalekites, and sons of the east invaded the central region in the territory of Manasseh and Issachar (6:1–10:5)
- Gideon was from the tribe of Manasseh (6:15) and lived in the town of Ophrah (6:11, 24; 8:27, 32)
- Midianites came from the Arabian desert, probably up Wadi Sirhan east of Amman; Amalekites probably came from the Negeb
- they crossed the Jordan, hit the Plain of Jezreel, and raided as far south and west as Gaza, near the Mediterranean Sea (6:3–4)
- they murdered people at will (8:18–21)
- families fled their homes, farms, and towns and hid in the mountains, in caves, and on the mountain-tops (6:2; cf. Lev 26:6)
- their clean-earth policy left the land ravaged: they are compared to a plague of locusts—swarms of them came soon after the wheat harvest in May and June (6:3, 11)
- they camped in tents and plundered the surrounding area (6:4–5)
- they took Israel's food, sheep, oxen, and donkeys for themselves (6:4)
- camels enabled them to move quickly over great distances for several days without water—their advantage (6:5)
- people hid their food supplies (6:11)
- the raids came every year and soon left Israel desperate for food (6:6; cf. Lev 26:5, 10)
- the most threatened areas were the rich, fertile plains, such as the Plain of Jezreel (6:33)
- up to the twentieth century bedouin Arabs came up the Wadi of Jezreel and Wadi Sherrar to ravage the same area (Thomson)

ISRAEL CRIES FOR DELIVERANCE (6:7)

- God was faithful to the Covenant and delivered his people every time they cried out (3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6–7; 10:10–16; Neh 9:26–31)

- God delivered Israel 13 times over 350 years—showing the love, patience, forgiveness, and grace of God (cf. Judg 2:1c)

GOD SENDS A PROPHET (6:8–10)

- sending an unnamed prophet to rebuke Israel suggests their apostasy has reached its lowest point yet: apparently no prophets were sent before deliverance from the previous three oppressions (but see Neh 9:26)
- a prophet is sent because Israel needs to know why they have been oppressed before God delivers them: "the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian" (6:1b) because they "have not listened to My voice" (6:10b)
- this unnamed prophet reminds Israel of God's grace—the Exodus from Egypt and the Conquest of Canaan (6:8b–9), repeats God's prohibition of idolatry (6:10a; cf. Deut 6:13–15), and levels God's accusation of disobedience to the Sinaitic Covenant (6:10b)—a risky proposition for a prophet (Neh 9:26)
- their suffering is cursing for disobedience to the Covenant (= first cycle of discipline, Lev 26:14–17; cf. Deut 28:15, 29–34, 48)
- their suffering was a result of disobedience and idolatry—"you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But you have not listened to My voice" (6:10b)
- they wanted to escape from their circumstances but God wanted them to reflect on their circumstances: holiness is more important than deliverance, peace, and prosperity
- the purpose of discipline is to wake us up and bring us back to God
- discipline was the only way God could preserve his rule and his fledgling Kingdom

GIDEON'S CALL Judges 6:11–18

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

- the Angel of the LORD appears 20 times in the Book of Judges and 80 times in the Old Testament
- he is Jehovah (Gen 16:7–13; 22:15–18; Judg 6:11–23; cf. Lev 26:44–45 with Judg 2:1–5) and God (Exod 3:1–6; Zech 12:8)
- he is also called the Angel of God (Judg 6:20; 13:6, 9) and is identified as God (Gen 31:11–13; Judg 13:8–22) and Jehovah (Exod 13:21 with 14:19; Judg 13:23)
- he is also distinct from Jehovah—another person of the Trinity (Gen 16:11; cf. Exod 23:20; Num 20:16; 22:31; Zech 1:12–16)

- he is the second person of the Trinity—the preincarnate Christ: (1) *the visible God*: God the Son appears in bodily form in both the Old and New Testaments, (2) *disappearance*: the Angel of the LORD no longer appears after the incarnation of Jesus, (3) *similar function*: both the Angel of the LORD and Jesus Christ were sent by God the Father to reveal truth and lead, defend, and judge Israel, (4) *process of elimination*: the Angel of the LORD cannot be the first or third person of the Trinity (John 1:18)
- he is a messenger from heaven—a foreshadowing of his coming in the flesh (Gen 21:17; 22:11, 15; Judg 13:20; 1 Chron 21:16)
- a study of the Angel of the LORD reveals the preincarnate work of Christ for his people: (1) comforts and assures Hagar (Gen 16:7–13), (2) helps Hagar (21:14–19), (3) stops the sacrifice of Isaac (22:9–12), (4) blesses Abraham (22:15–18), (5) makes a man successful in his endeavor (24:7, 40), (6) calls Moses (Exod 3:2–10) and Gideon (Judg 6:11–14), (7) leads Israel in the wilderness and to the promised land (Exod 23:20–23; Judg 2:1), (8) warns Balaam (Num 22:22–35) and Israel (Judg 2:1–5), (9) reveals the birth and call of Samson (Judg 13:2–23), (10) punishes sin (1 Chr 21:9–30), (11) protects and delivers the righteous (Psa 34:7), (12) protects Judah (2 Kings 19:35), (13) feeds Elijah in the wilderness (1 Kings 19:4–8), (14) gives a prophecy to Elijah (2 Kings 1:2–4), (15) gives guidance to Jacob (Gen 31:11–13) and to Elijah (2 Kings 1:15–16), and (16) has authority over angels who patrol the earth (Zech 1:8–11)—God the Son was very active in the Old Testament
- the Angel of the LORD exercises the prerogatives of God and is the most frequent theophany in the Old Testament

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARS TO GIDEON (6:11–13)

- Gideon was about 30 years old when the Angel of the LORD appeared to him (cf. Judg 8:20)
- he was beating out wheat in a winepress for safety instead of with animals on a threshing floor (vineyards are in hidden wadis or on wooded hills whereas threshing floors are in open country on hills to catch the wind to winnow grain)
- many hidden grain pits were found in excavations at Kiriath-sepher (1926–1928) dating to the period of the Judges
- the promise "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior!" indicates Gideon was not a Baal worshiper like his father (cf. 6:25–27)
- his cynicism shows his ignorance of covenant curses and the need for the prophet's message in 6:8–10 (cf. Isa 59:1–2)

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD'S CALL AND GIDEON'S EXCUSE (6:14-16)

- God calls Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites (6:14) but Gideon feels inadequate and makes excuses (6:15)
- God promises a second time to be with him and promises him victory over the Midianites (6:16)—these promises require faith
- God is with you means God is a friend who goes wherever you go (Josh 1:9) and helps in everything you do (Gen 21:22; 39:3)
- all he needs to be successful will be provided by God—he may not be adequate but God is adequate (cf. Exod 3:10-12)

GIDEON'S REQUEST FOR A SIGN (6:17-18)

- he asks for a sign or miracle to be certain his call is from God and that this messenger is from God or is God Himself (6:17)
- but first he wants to bring an offering to the Angel: it will take time to butcher a kid and bake unleavened bread (6:18)
- the sign takes place in 6:19-24: the Angel of the LORD supernaturally consumes Gideon's offering with fire in the vineyard