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# Judges 6

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## Judges 6:1–40

## Gideon Gives New Definition to Testing the Lord

### Outline of Chapter 6:

- Vv. 1–6 **Israel is oppressed by Midian**
- Vv. 7–10 **God sends a prophet to Israel**
- Vv. 11–23 **Jesus Christ, as the Angel of Jehovah, speaks face to face with Gideon**
- Vv. 24–27 **Gideon obeys God and tears down the artifacts of idolatry**
- Vv. 28–32 **The men of the city approach Gideon's father and demand the execution of Gideon**
- Vv. 33–35 **Gideon rallies the Israelite forces against Midian**
- Vv. 36–40 **Gideon tests the Lord one more time**

**Introduction:** With Judges chapter 6, we begin a rather lengthy and continuous narrative which appears to run all the way through Judges 12. This does not mean that these seven chapters were all authored by the same person (although that is certainly a possibility), but my thinking is that, like the book of Genesis, one generation picked up where the previous generation left off, giving these chapters a greater continuity than we have had so far. These seven chapters will cover several generations of Israel.

Also with Judges 6, we begin a series of three chapters which center around Gideon, whose life and exploits are covered in greater detail than that of any other judge, apart from Samson. In this chapter, the Angel of Jehovah, Who is Jesus Christ, comes to Gideon and Gideon asks for sign after sign. Gideon is a man with very little trust in God and less in himself. He believes God can deliver him and Israel; he's just not 100% absolutely certain that this is God with Whom he speaks. So Gideon will ask several times for reassurance before he commits himself to anything. Most theologians berate Gideon for his lack of faith, but you must bear in mind that he did not have the entire Bible to depend upon. His spiritual growth was very likely stunted. As under the thumb of the Midianites, he did not see light at the end of the tunnel—he could not visualize his freedom, let alone him leading Israel to freedom. He just had a very tough time believing that God would choose him to do a job like deliver Israel. He was a nobody—in fact, the youngest in a family of nobodies. He certainly berated himself as much as any theologian berated him. However, the writer of Hebrews sets him forth as an example of faith among the judges, naming him, Barak, Samson and Jephthah (Heb. 11:32). Because of God's grace, it does not matter how you see yourself and it does not matter how others see you. In fact, those who end up being great heroes of faith are often those who have a keen sense and distinct understanding of their own unimportance. **Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed so that he does not fall** (1 Cor. 10:12). Lack of self-esteem can be the key to understanding and appreciating grace.

Both McGee and Thieme shine when it comes to dealing with narrative. Both men brought the Bible and the men of the Bible alive to me; therefore, I will be liberally quoting directly from McGee throughout this chapter. However, before I do, let me give you some real world application. Very few of God's people in this dispensation are required to sit down and study the Bible for themselves. This is one of the many mistakes made by Protestant ministers. Their heritage is in self-study and rebellion, so they require their congregation to personally study God's Word. However, they do so, not as a tip of the hat to their heritage, but rather as a matter of laziness. It is difficult to get into God's Word and to exegete it day-in and day-out. This is the primary job of the pastor of a church. It is his job to teach you God's Word. Some of you will be moved to study the Bible as well on your own time, but the bulk of your growth will come from a man who speaks to you and explains God's Word to you. Recall what Luke wrote when our Lord after He had arisen from the dead, explained what was in the Bible to many of His disciples. **And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"** (Luke 24:32). And later when he spoke to His other disciples. **Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."** Then He opened their minds

to understand the Scriptures and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah [the Christ] should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day and that a changing of the mind for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:44–47). I say this because if you are reading this study which I have done, there is a good possibility that what you ought to be doing is listening to J. Vernon McGee on the radio (check Thru the Bible radio via your browser or via a search engine to find their web site and on it will be the times of his broadcast). Others of you might want to hie it on over to Berachah Church’s web site and order tapes of Bob Thieme (stick with the late 60’s and early 70’s). This is the way God designed for the majority of us to learn during the Church Age. What I have accomplished in the few studies which I have done over the past few years could not have been done apart from the hundreds of hours that I sat with my butt parked in a chair listening to Thieme explain God’s Word. This is the way that 99% of you should be learning God’s Word. Why I have placed these studies on the web? Frankly, I can only speculate. I know that this is the time and the place and so I have done so. I don’t know if this will someday be utilized we individual pastors or whether I will teach from these studies myself.

Speaking of McGee; he gives us an idea as to the history of the middle east at that time: *Now we know that at this particular time in history, Egypt as weak, very weak. It had been a world power, but it was weak because the Pharaohs who were then in office were weak men. Also there were internal problems and troubles. As a result, this nation was losing it grip upon its colonies. The nomadic tribes to the east of the Dead Sea and to the south of the Dead Sea began to push in. They pushed in because there was a drought in their land. They had experienced it there for several years. So these nomadic tribes of the desert began to encroach upon the territory of Israel. The Midianites and the Amalekites were among the Bedouins of the desert who came into the land.*<sup>1</sup>

In the Hebrew, *Gideon* is gid<sup>e</sup> ʿōwn (גִּדְעוֹן) [pronounced gid<sup>e</sup>-OWN or gidê-GOHN], and it is taken from the verb gâda ʿ (גָּדַעַ) [pronounced gaw-DAH], which means *to cut down, to cut in two*. Verb = Strong’s #1438 BDB #154. Proper noun = Strong’s #1439 BDB #154. This poses an interesting question. Gideon will be known in this chapter for cutting down the asherah, a wooden altar to Ashtaroah. Was his name simply a coincidence or was his name given him after the fact as this is how he was remembered? Actually, it is probably neither, as he will be given the name Jerub-baal later on in this chapter. God chose Gideon because God appears to love irony. His name meant *to cut down*, so the first thing that God will have him do is to cut down something—the asherah.

Gideon is somewhat of a departure from the men of God who preceded him in this book of Judges, as Keil and Delitzsch explain: *The Spirit of Jehovah had come upon Othniel, so that he smote the enemy in the power of God (ch. 3:10). Ehud had put to death the hostile king by stratagem, and then destroyed his army; and Barak had received the command of the Lord, through the prophetess Deborah, to deliver His people from the dominion of their foes, and had carried out the command with her assistance. But Gideon was called to be the deliverer of Israel through an appearance of the angel of the Lord, to show to him and to all Israel, that Jehovah, the God of the fathers, was still near at hand to His people, and could work miracles as in the days of old, if Israel would only adhere to Him and keep His covenant. The call of Gideon took place in two revelations from God. First of all the Lord appeared to him in the visible form of an angel, in which He had already made himself known to the patriarchs, and summoned him in the strength of God to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Midianites (v. 11–24). He then commanded him, in a dream of the night, to throw down his father’s altar of Baal, and to offer a burnt-offering to Jehovah his God upon an altar erected for that purpose (v. 25–32) in the first revelation the Lord acknowledged Gideon; in the second, He summoned Gideon to acknowledge Him as his God.*<sup>2</sup>

Because of what Gideon says to the Angel of God, I had always pictured him as a part of this large, extended, but poor and pretty much powerless family. However, as I exegeted this chapter, it became apparent that that was not really the case. Gideon actually came from a wealthy, influential and powerful family. In fact, it is likely that his father was the top man in his hometown of Ophrah. There are times that you have to read between the lines.

Now and again I will be hard on Gideon, as he is sometimes a bit thick. God will take him from being a scared nobody to the leader of northern Israel in the space of a few weeks, and yet he will ask God to do this stupid thing

<sup>1</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 240.

with dew and a fleece. In other words, he will miss the great which God has done on his behalf and he will ask for God to do some parlor trick. The writer of Hebrews does point out that Gideon was one of the great heroes of faith. In Heb. 11, he names various heroes of faith in the first six books of the Bible, surprisingly enough, does not mention Joshua, and then lists several believers whom he could not discuss in detail—and Gideon finds himself listed in this group of great believers. **And what more can I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who, by faith, conquered kingdoms, performed righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight** [here, the writer is thinking of Gideon, among others] (Heb. 11:32–34). Suffice to say that Gideon was a product of grace—a weak, insecure frightened little man, whom God took and caused him to lead Israel against Midian and their other enemies from the east.

McGee gives us perhaps the greatest overall insight in his own, folksy sort of way: *Gideon...is on of the most interesting judges, although not the most outstanding. In reality none of the judges were great. They were little people, and inadequate. Each one had some aberration in his life. Each one of them had a glaring fault, and sometimes that fault was the very reason God chose them and used them.*

The NIV Study Bible gives us insight in the placement of this portion of the book of Judges: *The Gideon and Abimelech narratives are a literary unit and constitute the center account of the judges. They are bracketed by the stories of Deborah (from Ephraim, a son of Joseph; west of the Jordan) and Jephthah (from Manasseh, the other son of Joseph; east of the Jordan)—which in turn are bracketed by the stories of the heroes Ehud (from Benjamin) and Samson (from Dan). In this center narrative, the crucial issues for the period of the Judges are emphasized; the worship of Baal, and the Lord's kingship over his covenant people Israel.*<sup>3</sup>

In order for these chapters to fall into nice little chunks, Judges 6–8 have been split into three chapters. However, there is really no reason for that. This is one smooth narrative which should be taken as one contiguous whole. This chapter breaks down as follows: (1) Israel goes through her cycle again—she commits adultery against Jesus Christ and erects and worships idols instead. God allows Midian to rise up against Israel and place Israel under Midian's control for seven years. (2) McGee summarizes this next portion as follows: *here goes Israel again, whining and complaining. But God is gracious and good. A prophet came and told them way they were in their present condition. They cried out to God, and God in mercy sent them another judge.*<sup>4</sup> (3) In vv. 11–23, we have what is known as a Theophany—an Old Testament manifestation of God to man. Jesus Christ, the revealed member of the godhead, comes and speaks to Gideon. Gideon will first share his own homespun philosophy about God and Israel until he realizes that he may be speaking face-to-face with God. He tests our Lord in this section. (4) Gideon then obeys God and tears down the idols which were on his family's property. The fact that it takes ten men and the fact that these are servants to Gideon, indicates that Gideon was not poor and that these idols which were torn down were not simply personal idols of Gideon's extended family. (5) Some of the city folk are rather put out by this destruction of the idols and come to Gideon's father to demand the person of Gideon so that they may execute him. Joash, who has allowed these idols to stand on his property (he is likely the magistrate of the city), stands up to these men and stands up for what Gideon did. (6) Gideon, apparently without ever realizing the divine power that pertains to what he is doing, summons the other tribes of Israel to rally around him, and they all respond in the affirmative. (7) Finally, before going up against Midian, Gideon finds himself needing to test the Lord one more time. Make that two more times.

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<sup>3</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 338.

<sup>4</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 147.

## Israel Is Oppressed by Midian

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

**And so did sons of Israel the evil in eyes of Y<sup>e</sup>howah. And so gave them Y<sup>e</sup>howah into a hand of Midian seven years.**

Judges  
6:1

**Then the sons of Israel did evil in the eyes of Y<sup>e</sup>howah. Therefore, Y<sup>e</sup>howah gave them into the hand of Midian [for] seven years.**

**Because the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of Jehovah, He therefore placed them under the power of the Midianites for seven years.**

You may find this hard to believe, but like you, it is tough for me to plough through a half dozen Hebrew words in any given verse. Then putting them together and taking into consideration syntax—it's tough on the brain. In this verse, we have very little that we need to look at. It wouldn't hurt to stop and notice an old friend of ours, the Qal imperfect of *ʿâsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793.

We have the beginning of the cycle again. Israel goes from under control and blessing to the worship of foreign gods. God gave them into the hands of Midian. The key is simply this: Israel would choose to serve the gods of the Midianites, so God, therefore, placed them under the control of the Midianites. If Israel chose to serve the gods of the Midianites, then they might as well serve the Midianites themselves. It's a neat bit of you reap what you sow. Out in the real world, we have situations where we, for instance, chase after money. In circumstances like that—particularly when the person involved is a believer—that person is placed in slavery to money.

We covered the **Doctrine of the Midianites** in Num. 31:2,<sup>5</sup> but, briefly, Abraham had several sons by his third wife, and one of them was Midian. He sent his sons toward the east and Midian settled on the other side of the Gulf of Aqaba, southeast of the Land of Promise. When Moses fled Egypt after killing the Egyptian taskmaster, he went to Midian and married the daughter of a priest of Midian. His relationship with his father-in-law, as you will recall, was much better than his relationship with his Midianite wife.<sup>6</sup> The Midianites were, like many of the peoples from that area, nomadic, and we do not have any archeological sites to go to for extra-Biblical information. Our best guess here is that they occupied an area in northern Israel over very close to Israel at this time.<sup>7</sup> From the third verse in this chapter, it appears as though they were the primary military force over Israel, but their rule was not absolute or exclusive. They appeared to get into a habit of attacking various areas of Israel for their food. The Midianites were not a very numerous people so they could not, by themselves, stand up to Israel. In fact, in Num. 31, the Midianites were almost wiped out entirely by Israel. Obviously, there were Midianites elsewhere and these were the ones who were making the attacks upon Israel. These remaining Midianites did combine forces with other nearby predatory bedouin peoples who were also at enmity with Israel in order to subjugate them. As a combined force, these tribes from the east were extremely numerous (Judges 7:12).

**And so prevailed a hand of Midian over Israel. From faces of Midian made for themselves sons of Israel the dens which [are in] the mountains and the caves and the strongholds.**

Judges  
6:2

**So the hand of Midian prevailed over Israel. Because of Midian, the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens which [are in] the mountains; and [also] the caves and the strongholds.**

<sup>5</sup> The Midianites play a significant role in the life of the Israelites in the book of Numbers.

<sup>6</sup> Jethro was likely a Kenite by birth who lived in Midian, and was therefore called a Midianite. This could also account for his different names. I once closed a property with a Jack and Shirley Wu; I doubt that their names were really Jack and Shirley; however, they very likely took upon themselves Americanized names. After years of teaching, I can pronounce a lot of different names, but there are still some that I have a difficult time wrapping my lips around.

<sup>7</sup> They did not necessarily reside in this area in previous centuries, although it appears as though they may have occupied that general area during the time of Num. 22–24, 31.

**Because of Midian's control over Israel, the Israelites constructed hiding places in the mountains, as well as caves and other strongholds.**

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of 'âzaz (אָזַז) [pronounced *gaw-ZAHZ*], and it means *to be strong, to prevail*. This verb was found for the first time in Judges 3:10 and is mostly found in poetical writing (Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah and Ecclesiastes). The only other narrative passage where we find this word is Dan. 11:12. Strong's #5810 BDB #738. The subject of the verb is *a hand of Midian*.

Then we have one of the true oddities of narrative Scripture: a sentence which does not begin with a conjunction. What we have is the *mîn* preposition, which usually means *from* (Strong's #4480 BDB #577) and the masculine plural construct of the noun *pânîym* (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*], which means *faces* (usually referring to one face, however). Strong's #6440 BDB #815. Together, they generally mean *from before your face, out from before your face*. However, together, they also mean *of the cause*, whether near or remote, and can therefore be rendered *because of, because that*.

The Israelites utilized and/or constructed three things. The first is the feminine plural of a noun which occurs only here, and therefore its meaning is known primarily by context. Various translators suggest *dens* (NASB, Owen), *flowings* (Young), *shelters* (NIV), *hollows*. BDB suggests that we think of a cave with light coming down into it (as the word is very similar to the verb for *shine, beam* (Strong's #5102 BDB #626). Barnes suggests that these are hiding places cut out by the torrents, and obviously not useable during the rainy season. Keil and Delitzsch reject the translation *light holes* or *holes with openings to the light*, but agree with Barnes that these are more mountain ravines hollowed out by the torrents. Strong's #4492 BDB #626. These are *in the mountains*. The next word is the feminine plural noun *m'ârâh* (מְאָרָה) [pronounced *m'-gaw-RAW*], and it means *caves*, and is primarily used as a place to temporarily stay or as a refuge. Strong's #4631 BDB #792. The third thing which they constructed was the feminine plural noun *m'âtsâd* (מְאָסָד) [pronounced *m'-TSAWD*], which means *stronghold*. Strong's #4679 BDB #844. These are all preceded by definite articles because they were well known to the author as the caves, strongholds and dens which were made at this time and continued in existence for a long time afterwards. Keil and Delitzsch go into some detail here: *The words "they made them" are not at variance with the fact that there are many natural caves to be found in the limestone mountains of Palestine. For, on the one hand, they do not affirm that all the caves to be found in the land were made by the Israelites at that time; and, on the other hand, הַשֵּׂדֶה does not preclude the use of natural caves as places of refuge, since it not only denotes the digging and making of caves, but also the adaptation of natural caves to the purpose referred to, i.e., the enlargement of them, or whatever was required to make them habitable.*<sup>8</sup> The Israelites not only had to travel along the back routes in the previous chapter, but here they built a rather intricate system of places to hide. My thinking, because of the next verse, is this is not necessarily where they hid themselves, but where they hid a lot of their produce.

These caves and other hiding places did not just fade into obscurity. When Israel faces the Philistines in I Sam. 13, these places, as well as others, will be utilized once again: **When the men of Israel saw that they were in a tough situation (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits** (I Sam. 13:6). In the end times, man will again seek caves and holes to hide from God's wrath: **And men will go into caves of the rocks, and into holes of the ground before the terror of Jehovah, and before the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble** (Isa. 2:19). In the book of Isaiah, we have a verse which appears to be a theme verse for the book of Judges: **O Jehovah, they sought You in distress; they could only whisper a prayer. Your discipline was upon them** (Isa. 26:16).

**And he was if sowed Israel and came a Midianite and an Amalekite and sons of east and rise up against them.**

Judges  
6:3

**And it was if Israel sowed, then Midian, Amalek and sons of the east would rise up against them.**

**And it came to pass that whenever Israel planted and harvested, then the Midianites, Amalekites and/or various other peoples from the east would exert their control over Israel.**

<sup>8</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, pp. 238–239.

You will recall from the previous chapter that it was possible that the Amalekites lived among the tribe of Ephraim (Judges 5:14). The Amalekites were a nomadic people who lived primarily in the desert just east of Moab and Ammon. However, as we have discovered, being nomadic peoples, where the previous generation lived did not determine where the next generation would live. Knowing that Israel enjoyed agricultural prosperity and knowing that they could coalesce with other peoples also antagonistic toward Israel caused them to join in.<sup>9</sup>

In any case, Israel dug into the land and became very agricultural. This was the first time that they owned their own land. For this reason, their enthusiasm for farming would still be strong. Furthermore, there is something about working with the land, working with the soil, and depending upon God's grace for the produce that some find not only appealing, but a driving force in their lives. This was Israel—however, they were not able to keep any of what they harvested.

Their enemies from the east, rather than adopt the same strategy, attacked Israel whenever they needed food. That last verb is the Qal perfect of *ʿâlâh* (עָלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means *to go p ascend, to rise*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. What follows the verb is the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *gahl*] and it means, primarily, *upon, against, above*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. Now, not only did Israel's enemies take from her produce in order to feed themselves, but they apparently destroyed additional produce that they did not need and caused havoc to Israel's herds as well.

**And so they encamped against them and so they destroyed produce of the land as far as a neighborhood of Gaza and would not leave sustenance in Israel—and sheep, and ox and ass.**

Judges  
6:4

**Therefore, they [the Arab tribes] encamped against them [the Israelites] and destroyed the produce of the land as far as the area of Gaza; furthermore, they did not leave [any] sustenance in Israel—[as well as] sheep, oxen and donkeys..**

**In fact, the Arab tribes would attack Israel and they destroyed the Israel's produce all the way to Gaza, not leaving them even basic sustenance; they even destroyed much of their sheep, oxen and donkeys.**

The first verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *chânah* (חָנָה) [pronounced *khaw-NAW*] properly means *to incline*; it is used primarily *to pitch a tent, to encamp*. When followed by the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *a*], it means *to encamp against someone else*. That is, when Israel bivouacked right there outside the town, this was clearly an act of aggression. Strong's #2583 BDB #333.

What these nomadic peoples from the east would then do is the Hiphil imperfect of *shâchath* (שָׁחַת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to cause one to go to ruin, to spoil, to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy*. Strong's #7843 BDB #1007. What they destroyed was the masculine singular substantive *y<sup>eb</sup>vûl* (יְבוּל) [pronounced *y<sup>eb</sup>VOOL*], which means *produce from the land*. Strong's #2981 BDB #385. Since these are invaders out from the east, what we have is continued attacks all across Israel. Gaza is along the southern coast of Israel, so the reasonable guess is that we are now dealing with southern Israel. Either that, or the invaders are coming across the Jordan and going as far southwest as Gaza.<sup>10</sup> Or, the invaders are living in the land of Israel and they have moved that far south in their advance. It appears as though they entered in by crossing the Jordan, but swept across much of the land leaving their devastation as they went.

What they would not do is the Hiphil imperfect of *shâ`ar* (שָׂאָר) [pronounced *shaw-AHR*] which means, *to let remain, to leave over, to leave behind*. Strong's #7604 BDB #983. What they did not allow to remain was the

<sup>9</sup> As you may recall from Gen. 25, Abraham took on another wife after Sarah (this was not necessarily in obedience to God's will; it was simply what he did) and the children from Abraham and his second wife (as well as the child from Abraham's dalliance with Sarah's personal servant) produced tribes of people who were generally antagonistic toward Israel, despite the fact that God did bless them and gave them land on which to live.

<sup>10</sup> This is what Keil and Delitzsch suggest in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 239.

feminine singular of *mîch<sup>e</sup>yâh* (חַיָּה) [pronounced *mee-kh'YAWH*], which means *life, living, sustenance, life-sustenance, survival*. Strong's #4241 BDB #313. It is one thing to rob a farmer of his produce and to steal some of his animals; however, these raids left Israel without any food or sustenance. These people from the east were both stealing the golden eggs and killing the goose that laid them. They did not even allow Israel her own cattle. God promised that Israel would endure such things in the land if they did not obey Him. “But if you do not obey Me and you do not carry out all these commandments...I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; furthermore, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up.” (Lev. 5:14, 16).<sup>11</sup> Moses reiterated these warnings a month before Israel was to go into the land: “You ox will be slaughtered before you eyes, but you will not eat of it; your donkey will be torn away from you, and it will not be restored to you; your sheep will be given to your enemies, and you will have no one to deliver you...Moreover, it will eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed, who also leaves you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the increase of your herd or the young of your flock until they have caused you to perish.” (Deut. 28:31, 51).<sup>12</sup>

**For they [even they] and their cattle came up and their tents; they came as a sufficiency of locusts to an abundance; and to them and to their camels not countable. And so they came into the land to waste her.**

Judges  
6:5

**For they and their cattle came up and their tents; they came as a sufficiency of locusts to an abundance; and to them and to their camels, innumerable. And so they came into the land to waste it.**

**For they in their tents and their cattle swept across the land seemingly like locusts in number. They entered into the land of Israel only to waste it.**

Like many verses, the meaning is discernable, but the translation is tough. Therefore, let's see what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came like locusts for multitude; both they and their camels could not be counted; so they wasted the land as they entered it.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...for they with their cattle used to come up with their tents—yea they used to come like locusts, for multitude, both they and their cattle were without number,—so they came into the land, to lay it waste.
NASB	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 innumerable; and they came into the land to devastate it.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...for they and their cattle come up, with their tents; they come in as the fulness of the locust for multitude, and of them and of their cattle there is no number, and they come into the land to destroy it.

One of the things you might notice is that we have two nouns variously translated *cattle, livestock, and camels*. There are two words here, and it is surprising that Rotherham and Young render both of them *cattle*. The first is the masculine plural of *mîq<sup>e</sup>neh* (מִקְנֵה) [pronounced *mik-NEH*], which means *cattle* (and refers specifically to *sheep, cows and goats*). Strong's #889 BDB #4735. The second word is the masculine plural of *gâmâl* (גָּמָל) [pronounced *gaw-MAWL*], and it means *camel*. Strong's #1581 BDB #168. Although camels have certainly been mentioned throughout Scripture, this is the first time we see them being used in war.

At the very beginning of this verse, we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural personal pronoun; something which is not required with a verb, so therefore gives great emphasis to the pronoun and to what it refers. The fact that they came up with

<sup>11</sup> One of the most remarkable things about Lev. 26 is that God told Israel exactly the discipline that Israel would face in the Land of Promise before Israel even entered into that land.

<sup>12</sup> To be true to context, the latter verse actually does not apply here but to the future attacks upon Israel by the Babylonians and the Assyrians.

their cattle and tents indicated that these peoples from the east moved into Israel. They didn't live on the other side of the Jordan or the Dead Sea and then come over and invade Israel for sport; they came across into the land and then planted themselves where it would be more convenient to attack. Furthermore, this was not just a small group of them. They came *like locusts*; and this is modified by being preceded by the construct of day (יָדַי) [pronounced *dahy*], which means *sufficiency, enough, abundance*. Strong's #1767 BDB #191. *Locusts* is followed by the lâmed preposition and the modifying masculine substantive רֹבַב (רָבַב) [pronounced *roh<sup>b</sup>v*], which means *multitude, abundance, greatness*. Strong's #7230 BDB #913. This gives us: **For they [even they] and their cattle came up and their tents; they came as a sufficiency of locusts to an abundance...** The expression used here is quite interested and exact. Israel was not overrun by these peoples from the east. There were a lot of them and they were like a sufficient number of locusts to a large number of locusts. Furthermore, like an attack from a huge number of locusts, they left devastation in their wake, destroying the lion's share of produce in Israel. The precision of the language here is somewhat tongue-in-cheek from God the Holy Spirit. And over-abundance of locusts was what occurred in Egypt in the plague of the locusts. That was an insufferable number of locusts, a number which totally overwhelmed all of Egypt. In comparison, this is just simply way too many *locusts* (Arabs). The NIV Study Bible notes: *a vivid picture of the marauders who swarmed across the land, leaving it stripped bare*. When Israel went up against them, they were arrayed against Israel in even greater numbers (see Judges 7:12).

Then we have *and to them and to their camels*, which is followed by the negative and the masculine singular noun miç<sup>o</sup>phâr (מִסְפָּאָר) [pronounced *mis<sup>e</sup>-FAWR*] means *number, counted, numerical total*. With the negative, it means *innumerable*. Strong's #4557 BDB #708. So, the number of Arabs who invaded the land was not quite like the number of locusts who swooped down upon Egypt; they were simply innumerable.

The last phrase, *they came into the land to waste her* is also telling, and falls right into line with the previous verse. Some people are farmers because they love the land and its ability to produce sustenance. They respect the land and, if they are aware of the proper methods, will do what they can to preserve it. These Arab peoples cared nothing for the land; they had no reverence or appreciation for it—they simply stole from the Israelites to a point where they Israelites themselves could not survive. And all of this was done without respect to the land or to God.

McGee describes the situation this way: *The Midianites and the Amalekites moved as a disorganized nomadic tribe. They were raiders. They would raid the crops and supplies of others. They generally took their families with them. In fact, they took all that they had with them. They would pitch their tents as they moved along. In this incident, we are not given numbers concerning them because no one in the world would have been able to number them—they were so disorganized. But by sheer numbers, and they were many, they overwhelmed the inhabitants of the land. The children of Israel fled from their homes and lived in caves and dens. There is abundant evidence in the land of Israel today that they lived in caves, especially during the period of the judges.*<sup>13</sup>

**And so was brought Israel low from faces of Midian. And so cried sons of Israel unto Y<sup>e</sup>howah.**

Judges  
6:6

**So, Israel was brought low because of Midian, so the sons of Israel cried to Y<sup>e</sup>howah.**

**As a result, Israel was debilitated by Midian, causing the Israelites to cry out to Jehovah.**

The first verb is the Niphal imperfect of *dâlal* (לָלַד) [pronounced *daw-LAHL*], which means *to hang, to be low, to languish*. In the Niphal (passive) stem, it means *to be brought low*. Strong's #1809 BDB #195. We again have *mîn* + *faces*, which, as we saw earlier, can be translated *because*. As Moses promised in Deut. 28:43: **The alien who is among you will rise above you, higher and higher; but you will go down lower and lower.**

The second verb is the Qal imperfect of *zâ'âq* (צָעַק) [pronounced *zaw-GAHL*], which means *to cry out, to call, to cry*, often used for an utterance of horror, anxiety, alarm, distress, sorrow. Strong's #2199 BDB #277. As always, Israel fell into sin, God disciplined Israel, and Israel cried out to God. As Asaph the psalmist wrote (speaking for God): **Call upon Me in the day of trouble; and I will rescue you, and you will honor Me.** (Psalm 50:15).

<sup>13</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 146.



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## God Sends a Prophet to Israel

And so he was when cried out sons of Israel unto Y<sup>h</sup>owah upon causes of Midian;

Judges  
6:7

Then it was when the sons of Israel cried out to Y<sup>h</sup>owah because of Midian,

Because Israel cried out to Jehovah because of Midian,

Prior to the proper noun *Midian*, we have the feminine plural construct of *ʾôdôth* (אֲדוֹת) [pronounced *oh-DOHTH*], which means *causes, circumstances* (Strong's #182 BDB #15). It is preceded by the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *ah*], and means *upon, beyond, against* (Strong's #5921 BDB #752). Together, they mean *because of, concerning*.

When read incorrectly, v. 6 and 7 seem to be repetitious. The problem is that v. 7 should not be separated from v. 8. It is because of Israel's cry out to God that God sent Israel a prophet.

And so sent Y<sup>h</sup>owah a man a prophet unto sons of Israel and so said he to the m, "Thus says Y<sup>h</sup>owah, God of Israel, 'I [even I] led you [all] up out from Egypt<sup>14</sup>; and so I brought you [all] out from a house of bondages.

Judges  
6:8

So Yehowah sent a man, a prophet, to the sons of Israel, and he said to them, "Thus says Y<sup>h</sup>owah, God of Israel, 'I [even I] led you up out from Egypt; and so I brought you out from the house of bondage.

Jehovah sent to them a prophet, and this prophet said to them, "So speaks Jehovah, the God of Israel, 'I, the very One who led out from your bondage to Egypt,

In this verse, we have the masculine singular noun *nâḇvîy'* (נָבִיא) [pronounced *naw<sup>b</sup>-VEE*], which means *spokesman, speaker, prophet*. Strong's #5030 BDB #611. Up until this point in time, this has been a rare word of Scripture. In fact, this word has been mentioned occasionally in Scripture, with Moses giving a great deal of explanation about of prophet in Deut. 18 (see Deut. 18:15 for the **Doctrine of a Prophet of God**). Moses if, of course, our great example of God raising up a prophet. God raised up Moses to lead the people of Israel; but, more importantly, to be His spokesman, His prophet. We find the type of this in Ex. 7:1, where Moses asks God to allow Aaron to be his *spokesman* (or, *prophet*); and then we have the actual practice of this in Ex. 20, where the people ask Moses to speak for God and not for God to speak directly to them. However, since then, we don't see the phrase, *and God sent to Israel a prophet*. From Deut 18:22 and 34:10, we do not have the Hebrew word for prophet mentioned until now (recall that Deborah was also a *prophet*, but, in the Hebrew, she is called a *prophetess*). This sets up a whole new *modus operandi*. Israel commits acts of evil in God's eyes; God not only disciplines them, but he sends to them a prophet to straighten them out. Keil and Delitzsch comment: *Before helping them, the Lord sent a prophet to reprove the people for not hearkening to the voice of their God, in order that they might reflect, and might recognise in the oppression which crushed them the chastisement of God for their apostasy, and so be brought to sincere repentance and conversion by their remembrance of the former miraculous displays of the grace of God.*<sup>15</sup>

Most briefly, a *prophet* is a man who speaks for God. What he says, in this capacity, must be 100% accurate. Moses said this: "When a prophet speaks in the name of Jehovah, if the thing does not come to pass or come true; that is, the thing which Jehovah has not spoken—that prophet has spoken presumptuously; you will not be afraid of him." (Deut. 18:22). Now, contrast that with any one of these holy roller churches with a minister who claims to also be a prophet of God and predicts the future—that man has spoken presumptuously and he is not a prophet of God. Now, what was the Old Testament solution for this? "But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously

<sup>14</sup> The Septuagint and the Syriac codices read: *out from the land of Egypt*.

<sup>15</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 239.

in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet will die!" (Deut. 18:20). Now, I know that you have been told to obey the little bit of doctrine that you know, before you go out and do anything rash, keep in mind that this was a divine law for the nation Israel while a nation under God. This is not in effect today. DO NOT, repeat, DO NOT, plot the assassination of your minister if he is a false prophet. If he has claimed to speak for God and has given you some prophecy concerning the future, and it hasn't come to pass (and, I guarantee you, all ministers who claim to speak as prophets, in the classic sense, in this Age, are false prophets), then it is time for you, no matter what, to pick up your things and quietly leave that church. Do not ever go back into that church and darken its doors for any reason whatsoever; and do not attempt to lead a rebellion against the pastor. If there is a board of deacons and he is claiming to be a prophet and he has stayed on as a pastor, then you quietly leave the church, do not foment revolution, and do not kill the pastor. In this dispensation, God will deal directly with the false prophets. I apologize; you probably weren't expecting any practical application.

Now, we are not told who the prophet was or to how many people he spoke or where he spoke. A reasonable guess is that this is a summary of dozens of talks all over Israel. In fact, we will hear of him in these short few verses, and then not again until eternity future when we are in the presence of God.

The last verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *yâsâ'* (אָסַף) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means *to go out, to come out*. In the Hiphil, it means *to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. One of the things which I used to ignore and read past as though it were nothing are phrases like this. The prophet comes to the people and says, "Thus speaks Y<sup>e</sup>howah—and I am the God Who yadda yadda yadda." This is more than some meaningless religious phrase. God is identifying Himself to His people. He is not some foreign god; some god to the Moabites who decided to drop by and speak His peace. He is not some generic god in whom all people believe, regardless of race or religion. We have all heard the nonsense that all religions worship the same god, but just call Him by different names. That is not the God of the Bible; that is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; that is not the God Who delivered Israel out of the hands of Egypt. The God of the Bible is a very specific God Who came to the earth one time as a man and Who paid for our sins one time as the God-man. His people were all aware of the exodus and of the great signs and wonders of the exodus—He is this God, and we will see Him identify Himself as such on a regular basis. Furthermore, this is almost a direct quote from Ex. 20:2: "I am Jehovah your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." And despite what He has done for Israel, Israel has turned toward other gods. And the people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah to serve other gods; for Jehovah our God is He Who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondages, and Who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. And Jehovah drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve Jehovah, for He is our God." (Joshua 24:16–18).

**"And so I delivered you out from a hand of Egypt and out from a hand of all your oppressors. And so I drove them out from before your faces and so I am giving to you their land.**

Judges  
6:9

**"Furthermore, I delivered you out from the hand of Egypt and out from the hand of all of your oppressors. And I drove them out from before you and I have given their land to you.**

**"Furthermore, I delivered you out of the hand of Egypt and out from the land of your oppressors. And I drove them out of the land from before you and I have given their land to you.' "**

It is interesting that this prophet actually brings to the table very little by way of new information. In fact, any believer with a little doctrine would be able to relay this kind of information, apart from being able to say, *thus speaks Jehovah your God*. In fact, all that is somewhat new will be found in the next verse.

In this verse, we have four things which God did on behalf of Israel: (1) He delivered them out of the hand of Egypt, to whom the Israelites had been enslaved. (2) He delivered them out from the hand of the peoples who tried to oppress them on their journey across the desert to the Land of Promise. This would include the Amorites from

Num. 21 and the Midianites from Num. 31. (3) The God drove the men of the Land of Promise out from before the faces of Israel; this is the story of the book of Joshua. And, finally, (4) this is the God Who gave Israel the land of the Canaanites, whom He drove out.

Linguistically, there is a connection between #1 and #2; Egypt first oppressed Israel and then they were oppressed as they attempted to cross over the desert. Not only did God deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians, their oppressors, but He delivered them out of the hand of all their Oppressors. Then, not only did God drive out the tribes who opposed Israel as they made their march to the Land of Promise, but He drove out from before their faces the people of the land. And not only did He drive them out of the land, but then He gave their land to the Israelites. Since this is the God Who has done these things in the past, this same God will deliver Israel this day. For this is the God [Who remembered us in our low estate for His grace is everlasting and He has delivered us from our adversaries for His grace is everlasting](#) (Psalm 136:23–24).

**“And so I say to you, “I am Y<sup>e</sup>howah your God; you will not revere gods of the Amorites which you are dwelling in their land and you have not listened in My voice.” ’ ”**

Judges  
6:10

**“Therefore, I am saying to you, “I am Y<sup>e</sup>howah your God. You will not revere the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are dwelling; but you have not listened at My voice.” ’ ”**

**“Therefore, I say this to you: “I am Jehovah your God. You will not revere the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are now living; however, you have not listened to My voice.” ’ ”**

What God said through the prophet was nothing more than a repeat of the first two commandments: [“I am Jehovah your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You will have no other gods before Me. You will not make for yourself an idol nor any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You will not worship them nor will you serve them, for I, Jehovah your God, am a jealous God.”](#) (Ex. 20:2–5a). *Amorites* and *Canaanites* were general names given to the people who still occupied the land of Israel. We find the terms *Amorites* used in this general way in Joshua 24:15, 18. Barnes suggests that, since the Amorites occupied the mountainous areas of Israel, that this was a general designation for the other peoples in the land used when speaking to Israelites who occupied primarily the mountainous areas of Israel.

There were several places where their gods had been glorified in idolatry throughout the land of Israel. Their statues had been put up, people worshipped there, there were ceremonies—they had become a part of the daily life of Israel. No one in Israel felt that they could do anything about this, even if they did reject the worship of the heathen gods. This was a recurrent theme in the life of Israel, unfortunately. In Judges 2:1–2, we read: [Now the angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and He said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and I led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers, and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. And as for you, you will make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land. You will tar down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed Me—what is this that you have done?”](#) Later, in II Kings 17:34–41, we read: [To this day they do according to the earlier customs: they do not fear Jehovah, nor do they follow their statutes nor their ordinances nor the Law, nor the commandments which Jehovah commanded the sons of Jacob, whom He named Israel; with whom Jehovah made a covenant and commanded them saying, “You will not fear other gods, nor will you bow down yourselves to them nor will you serve them nor will you sacrifice to them. But Jehovah, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm, Him you will fear and to Him you will bow yourselves down, and to Him you will sacrifice. And the statutes and the ordinances and the Law and the commandment which He wrote for you, you will observe to do forever; and you will not fear other gods. And the covenant that I made with you, you will not forget, nor will you fear other gods. But Jehovah your god, you will fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.”](#) However, they did not listen but they did according to their earlier custom. So while these nations fears Jehovah, they also served their idols; their children likewise and their grandchildren, as their fathers did, so they do to this day.

The last verb is our old favorite *shâma* <sup>ʿ</sup> (שָׁמַע) [pronounced *shaw-MAH*], which means *to listen, listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, listen and take heed to, listen and take*

*note of, listen and be cognizant of.* Verbs of cognizance are often followed by the bêyth preposition. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033.

And with this verse, we will not hear of this prophet again. He is mentioned in these few short verses and only a taste of his message is given. You may not fully grasp here the importance of this prophet, particularly since very little is said about him. First things first: as Thieme said over and over again, "It is the message, not the man." We never learn the name of this prophet, we know nothing of his origins, we do not know to whom exactly he spoke (although we can hazard a guess based upon which tribes will participate). We don't know what happened to him after this ministry. All we know is that he spoke throughout several areas of Israel and pass along this information that Israel was in disobedience to God through their idolatry and that they were not to revere the heathen gods, but that they were to fear Jehovah their God. What is implied, but not said in these few verses, is that Israel would be victorious over the heathen and their gods who had them under their control. You also need to understand the function of this prophet. Gideon is going to summon men from several different tribes to join him in opposing the Midian coalition. Do you think that he just wandered out to an unplowed field and called for support? God provided the support for Gideon. These men will follow Gideon because the prophet of God shook them up enough for them to get right with their God. This prophet provided them enough guidance to accept what Gideon will do (Gideon will tear down some idols later in this chapter) and they will follow Gideon because of this prophet. This prophet plowed the field and sowed the seed. Gideon will come along and reap the harvest, possibly even oblivious to what has transpired. One of the things which I cannot emphasize enough is the thousands of shoulders that I stand upon when it comes to exegeting God's Word. Apart from the scholarship which has gone before me, I could not produce one-tenth the information that I do (maybe one-hundredth might be more accurate). But what I have not emphasized enough is the plowing and the laying of seed which has been done before me and which will be done before you. We all have some sort of a ministry before God. He has some kind of a plan for our lives and for most of us, this involves a ministry in front of people. Do not ever think that you are the only person our there and that you are the only person that these people see. Do not ever think that you plow the land, lay the seed and then harvest the seed. You are a part of a very large force in an incredible plan which is far more than we could ever hope to grasp. God has prepared the field; we get to participate by going out into that field and harvesting what He has set into motion. God gives us the opportunity to participate in His work. **He then said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."** (Matt. 9:37–38).

One more point of interest is that the people do not go out and take down the altars which had been erected in honor of heathen gods. In fact, the last thing the prophet says, as a quote from God, **"You have not obeyed Me!"** The Israelites would not be incited to obey Him, even at the behest of this prophet. They would allow the idolatry to continue in their land. It would take the action of Gideon later in this chapter to deliver them.

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## Jesus Christ, as the Angel of Jehovah, Speaks Face to Face with Gideon

And so came an Angel of Y<sup>e</sup>howah and He was sitting under the oak which [is] in Ophrah which [is] to Joash the Abiezrite. And Gideon, his son, was beating out wheat in the wine press to hide from faces of Midian.

Judges  
6:11

Then the Angel of Y<sup>e</sup>howah arrived and He was sitting under the oak which [is] in Ophrah, which [belongs] to Joash the Abiezrite. Gideon, his son, was beating out wheat in the wine press to hide from the face of Midian.

Then the Angel of Jehovah arrived and He sat under an oak tree in Ophrah which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. Gideon, his son, was beating out the wheat in the wine press, to escape the notice of the Midianites.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> I lifted this last phrasing from Rotherham who apparently took it from the Polychrome Bible (which Bible I have never heard of before).

It will become clear that here, like most or all the passages where we hear of the Angle of the Lord, that He is Jesus Christ, pre-incarnate. Now Gideon will not recognize this at first, as we will see in the next verse. He simply speaks to this man (as He appears) with respect. However, in v. 16 and 23, it will read, *and he said to Him*. Gideon will recognize Who this man is in v. 22 and call Him *Lord Jehovah*. It's interesting: the prophet does not go to Gideon with what Gideon is to do; God Himself goes to Gideon. Now, this introduces a pattern; God sent His prophet to speak to the people. This was not good enough, so He came Himself.

The relative pronoun is found twice in this verse and often implies the status quo verb *to be*. However, when followed by the lamed preposition, we are then speaking of ownership, hence the insertion of *belongs*. To the writer of this passage (which could be Gideon), the oak is well-known, and referred to as *the oak*. This could indicate that the writer was Gideon or a family member of his. This particular tree would be important to them, although not necessarily to anyone else outside the family.

There appear to be at least two cities named Ophrah. There is the Ophrah that we have looked at back in Joshua 18:23, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. The Ophrah in this passage appears to be in west Manasseh. Since Ephraim sits between west Manasseh and Benjamin, this could not be the same city. We have assumed that the Ophrah in this passage is in Manasseh. The reasoning behind this is: (1) Gideon lived here and the oak under which the Angel of the Lord sat belonged to Joash, Gideon's father (Judges 6:11 8:27); and (2) Gideon's family is the least family in Manasseh (Judges 6:15). It is in this city where Gideon will pull down the altars made to Baal, along with the asherah; and he will erect in their place an altar to God (Judges 6:24). Apparently, Gideon made some ephod or some damn thing out of the gold from the earrings which he took from his enemies and that this ephod was a snare to Gideon and to his household (Judges 8:27). The result of this snare seems to be Judges 9. Gideon was buried in Ophrah (Judges 8:32). Ophrah is mentioned but one more time in I Sam. 13:17, but we do not know which of the two Ophrah's that this was (ZPEB identifies it with Ophrah of Benjamin<sup>17</sup>). Of course, it is possible that this is the Ophrah which belongs to the tribe of Benjamin and that Gideon and his family live there, but there are several factors which indicate that this is a separate Ophrah (for instance, much of the action along with the deaths of Gideon's brothers take place in Manasseh and north of Manasseh (rather than south), which would suggest that we are in Manasseh in this passage.

The Abiezrites came from the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 17:2). Joash came from the family of the Abiezrites and Gideon was his son.

To describe what Gideon is doing, we have the Qal active participle of *châ<sup>b</sup>val* (חַבַּל) [pronounced *khaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHL*], which means *to beat out, pound out*. Strong's #2251 BDB #286. Gideon is separating the wheat from the chaff. However, recall how the Midianites would come by and steal whatever they wanted. Gideon was hungry for some granola and he didn't want someone to come and steal this from him (actually, he was beating out enough wheat for his family). He did not want to be disturbed in his endeavor nor did he want his finished product taken from him, so he did this hiding in the wine press (actually, the *bêyth* preposition, while generally being rendered *in*, denotes proximity, so Gideon may actually be *by* the winepress). Or, as Edersheim much more eloquently put it: *Alike the place and the manner of threshing were quite unusual, and only accounted for by the felt need for secrecy, and the constant apprehension that at an unexpected moment some wild band of Midianites might swoop down upon him.*<sup>18</sup>

McGee explains the situation for us in more detail: *Gideon is not introduced to us as a hero or an outstanding man. Do you know what he is doing? He is threshing wheat by the winepress. Now the winepress is the key to this entire situation. You see, in that day the winepress was always put at the foot of the hill because they brought the grapes down from the vineyard. Naturally, they would carry the heavy grapes downhill; they carried them to the lowest place. In contrast, the threshing floor was always put up on the top of the hill, the highest hill available, in order to catch the wind which would drive the chaff away. Here we find Gideon, down at the bottom of the hill, threshing. Now that would be the place to take the grapes, but that is no place to take your crop in order to do your threshing. Can you see the frustration of this man? Why doesn't he go to the hilltop? Well, he is afraid of the Midianites. He does not want them to see that he is threshing wheat. And you can imagine his frustration. There is no air getting to him*

<sup>17</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 4, p. 541.

<sup>18</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 359.

down there, certainly no wind. So he pitches the grain up into the air. And what happens? Does the chaff blow away? No. It comes down around his neck and gets into his clothes making him very uncomfortable. There he is, trying his best to thresh in a place like that, and all the time rebuking himself for being a coward, afraid to go to the hilltop. I think he looked up there rather longingly and thought, “Do I dare go to the hilltop?” Gideon was having a very frustrating experience, but God was going to use this man. We will see what God used this kind of a man.<sup>19</sup>

**And so appeared unto him an Angel of Y<sup>e</sup>howah. And so He said to him, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah with you, mighty man of the army.”**

Judges  
6:12

**Then the Angel of Y<sup>e</sup>howah appeared to him and said to him, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] with you, mighty man of the army.”**

**Suddenly, the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said, “Jehovah is with you, great and valiant soldier.”**

The first verb is the Niphal imperfect of *râ`âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means *to see*. The Niphal is the passive voice, and it means *to appear*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. What the angel of the Lord says and what Gideon hears are two different things. God says, “Jehovah [is] with you” and Gideon takes it as “Jehovah, [be] with you.” There is no verb, so that has to be inferred. Gideon certainly is not expecting to be visited by God, any more than you or I would be. So he takes these words of Jesus Christ as sort of a religious *hello*. However, these are God's assurances to Gideon. When God spoke to Joshua, He said, “**Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. I will not fail you nor will I forsake you.**” (Joshua 1:5b). We have the same promise from God. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit; we are indwelt by Jesus Christ. God is not going to indwell us and then, somehow, forsake us. This is an impossibility. **Let your character be free from the love of money. Keep on being content with what you have, for He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor will I ever forsake you.”** (Heb. 13:5 Deut. 31:6).

Then Jesus Christ calls him the masculine singular construct of *gibbôwr* (גִּבּוֹר) [pronounced *gib-BOAR*], which means *strong men, mighty men, soldiers*. Strong's #1368 BDB #150. What follows is a definite article and masculine singular of *chayil* (חַיִל) [pronounced *CHAH-yil*] and it means *efficiency, army, strength, valour, power*. Strong's #2428 BDB #298.

There is no army, Gideon is doing as best he can to hide from the Midianites, just trying to put a little food on the table. Rebellion and army are the last two things which have occurred to Gideon at this point. Here's a point of application: once and awhile, the last thing on your mind might be God's plan for you. Several months prior to moving to Houston, it never occurred to me to move to Houston. It was the last thing on my mind. It has resulted in great blessing for me and I know it was definitely God's plan. I cannot imagine my life apart from moving to Houston. But since it was God's plan, I was lucky that I went along with the program. Now don't panic—God does not automatically find the worst thing that you could ever imagine doing and make you do it. However, once and awhile, His plan has a few surprises for us.

McGee: *One of the funniest things the Lord could have called Gideon was a mighty man of valour because he was actually a coward. I think that when Gideon looked up and saw Him and heard Him say, “Thou mighty man of valour,” he looked behind him to see if there wasn't somebody else there, because that term did not apply to him. And then he turned to the angel and said, “Who? Me? Do you mean to call me a mighty man of valour when I am down here at the winepress pitching grain up into the air when I ought to be up yonder on the top of the hill? If I were a mighty man of valour, that is where I would be, not down here. I am nothing in the world but a coward.”*<sup>20</sup>

Now Gideon is not really paying a great deal of attention to what God is saying. In fact, Gideon is only partially hearing Him and really feels that what he must do is first point out how the Lord Jesus Christ is wrong in an important point of doctrine, so that he doesn't fully hear what He said. So, Gideon's mind is already thinking and formulating by the time this second sentence is even spoken. If he heard anything of the last sentence, he passed

<sup>19</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; pp. 147–148.

<sup>20</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 149.

it off possibly as sarcasm. In any case, he is too busy thinking about what he is going to say to really think much about what Jesus Christ has said to him. I am certain that you have had theological discussions like that.

Now, why does God call him a *mighty man of valor*? First of all, God appears to like irony and humor, and speaks occasionally from this perspective. Gideon is hiding from the enemy trying to beat some granola out of some stalks of wheat, and God calls him a *mighty man of valor*. Secondly, God knows the end from the beginning. The future is as conspicuous to Him as the past. He knows that Gideon will be a great soldier and He tells him so.

**And so said unto Him Gideon, “Please, sir, if Y<sup>o</sup>howah [is] with us and why has happened upon us all of this? And where [are] all of His wonderful deeds which are recounted to us our fathers, to say, ‘Did not out of Egypt bring us up Y<sup>o</sup>howah?’ And now forsaken us Y<sup>o</sup>howah and so He has given us into a palm [of a hand] of Midian?”**

Judges  
6:13

**Then Gideon said to Him, “Please, sir, if Y<sup>o</sup>howah is with us, then why has all of this befallen us? And concerning all His wonderful deeds which our fathers have recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not Y<sup>o</sup>howah bring us up out of Egypt?’ And now Y<sup>o</sup>howah has forsaken us and He has given us into the hands of Midian.”**

**Then Gideon spoke to him. “If you please, my dear sir, if Jehovah is actually with us, then why has all of this happened to us? And what about all of these miracles and signs which our fathers have recounted to us, saying ‘Didn’t Jehovah bring us out of Egypt?’ Now it is quite obvious that Jehovah has forsaken us as He has placed us under the power of Midian.”**

In this verse, Gideon needed to explain to Jesus Christ, the Creator of the Universe, just exactly how His theology is flawed. Quite obviously, Gideon does not know to Whom he is speaking, otherwise, he might have backed off a little. The stranger said to Gideon, “**Jehovah is with you.**” So first of all, Gideon needed to take issue with that. He begins with the particle of entreaty, which is *bîy* (בִּי) [pronounced *bee*], which means *please, I pray, excuse me*. It is often used before addressing a superior or in showing respect to a stranger. This word is quite obviously related to the word *bîyn* (בֵּין) [pronounced *bean*], which means *discern, perceive, consider, understand*. (Strong’s #995 BDB #106). Strong’s #994 BDB #106. What Gideon calls our Lord is *ʾādōwn* (אָדוֹן) [pronounced *aw-DOHN*], the word we often know as *adonai*; which means *lord, master, owner, superior, sovereign*. It is a word used of both man and God. It is not necessarily a term referring to *God* exclusively, and can be used as a simple term of respect. Affixed to this is the 1<sup>st</sup> person suffix; which gives us *my lord*. If Gideon were English, he would have said, “*My dear sir.*” Strong’s #113 BDB #10.

The wording is polite, but the implication is *please understand this, please discern this; I am going to explain something to you that you don’t quite have the intelligence to grasp*. Gideon is going to help our Lord understand a rather complex point of doctrine, which is, however, obvious to Gideon.

What we have next is, literally, *and why all of this* with the insertion of the Qal Perfect of *mâtsâ* (מָצָא) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*], which means *to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to befall, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover*. In the Niphal, Gesenius gives the meanings as *to acquire, to be found, to be present, to exist*. Obviously, the meanings given by many translators aren’t quite on target. Strong’s #4672 BDB #592. Literally, this gives us: **And so said unto Him Gideon, “Please, sir, if Y<sup>o</sup>howah [is] with us then why has happened upon us all of this...”** Gideon does not have to explain himself; what has happened is simply this: they are under the thumb of the Midianites. The people of Israel work to provide for their own and the Midianites come along and steal it and destroy the excess. They have suffered 7 years of subjugation to the Midianites, so Gideon questions Jehovah, saying, “If God is with us, then how do you explain what has happened to us?”

After his first question, Gideon will then explain that not only is God not with them, but that God has forsaken Israel and that is obvious to anyone. He then uses the *wâw* conjunction and the adverb *ʾayyêh* (אֵיךְ) [pronounced *ahy-YAY*], which means *where*. Strong’s #346 BDB #32. Implied is the absolute status quo verb *to be*; often the basic verbs are left out when someone is trying to make a rhetorical point. This is followed by the feminine plural of *pâlâ* (פָּלְאוּ) [pronounced *paw-LAW*] which is the Niphal participle of a verb, but acts like a noun. It is reasonably rendered

that which is extraordinary, that which is unusually difficult, wonders, miracles, admirable things. Strong's #6381 BDB #810. Now, Gideon didn't read about these deeds; they had been told to him. That is the Piel Perfect *çâphar* (çâphar) [pronounced *saw-FAHR*], which means, in the Piel, *to recall, to recount, to declare*. Strong's #5608 BDB #707. This is followed by, literally, *to us our fathers to say*. *Our fathers* is the subject of *recount* or *recall*. This means that Gideon has been told by his father who was told by his father who was told by his father about the things which God had done on behalf of Israel—Gideon had heard this so often that he knew the story well. Then we have a summary of what his father would tell him. He begins with an interrogative particle, a negative, and *out from Egypt*. Then we have the verb, which is the Hiphil perfect of *ʿâlâh* (ʿâlâh) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to cause to go up, to lead up, to take up, to bring up*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. With *ʿâlâh* we have the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural suffix, which is translated *us*. Then, like all good Hebrew sentences, we have the subject, which is Y<sup>ehowah</sup>. This is the end of the quote from his ancestors: “Did not Y<sup>ehowah</sup> bring us out from Egypt?” Psalm 44:1: O God, we have heard with our ears. Our fathers have told us the work that You did in their days, in the days of old.

Now Gideon will contrast those stories of the past with the reality of today. He uses a conjunction for contrast, adds the adverb *now*, and then uses the Qal Perfect of *nâṭash* (nâṭash) [pronounced *naw-TAHSH*], which means *to leave, to forsake, to permit*. Strong's #5203 BDB #643. The subject is Y<sup>ehowah</sup>, the personal name for God; the name of the pre-incarnate Christ. Not only has God forsaken Israel, but He has given Israel into the hand of the Midianites. Then we do not have the normal word for *hand* but we have the feminine singular of *kaph* (kaph) [pronounced *kaf*], which means *palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot* and even *bowl*. Strong's #3709 BDB #496. You have heard of the expression, *I've got you in the palm of my hand?* You just did not realize that it was over 3000 years old.

Gideon has thought about these things for a long time. His father and his uncles have all told him about God leading Israel out of Egypt and they heard this from their parents who heard it from their parents, and the eye witnesses to the events are long gone. Gideon knows what has happened in his generation—Israel is under the control of Midian and Midian has made life miserable for Israel. All any idiot needs to do is to look around and see that God has forsaken Israel. Gideon has thought this through many times and speaking to God face-to-face allows him the opportunity of sharing his doctrinal breakthroughs with God. I hope that you get the humor in this, as here he is explaining to God that it is obvious that God has forsaken Israel, and God is standing right in front of him ready to direct Gideon to deliver Israel out from the hand of Midian. Gideon is not a stupid man. He simply considers himself to be a pragmatist. The situation is that God has forsaken Israel—that is obvious because of what is going on in Israel; and, therefore, Gideon is just trying to get along the best that he can. Barnes: *The extreme bitterness of the national sufferings under the Midianite occupation breaks out in Gideon's language. The angel's words, suitable to times of prosperity, seemed to be a mockery, when it was evident the Lord was not with them.*<sup>21</sup>

We studied Psalm 44 back in Leviticus, however, a majority of it is pertinent at this time. Yet You have rejected us and You have brought us into dishonor and You do not go out with our armies. You have caused us to turn back from the adversary and those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves. You have given us as sheep to be eaten and You have scattered us among the nations. You sell Your people cheaply and you have not profited by their sale. You made us a reproach to our neighbors, a scoffing and a derision to those around us. You have made us a byword among the nations and a laughingstock among the peoples. All day long my dishonor is before me and my humiliation has overwhelmed me, because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles and because of the presence of the enemy and the avenger (Psalm 44:9–16).

What Gideon does not grasp is that Israel is in disobedience to God. Israel has tolerated idolatry within her borders and has even joined in the worship of these false gods. Lev. 26 stands even today as a testimony against Israel. And back in Deut. 31:17–18, we read: “Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and I will hide My face from them, and they will be consumed and many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?’ But I will certainly hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods.”

<sup>21</sup> Barnes' Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 431.



And so turned unto him Y<sup>e</sup>howah, and so He said, “Go in your strength this and cause to deliver Israel out from a palm of Midian; have I not sent you?”

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6:14

And so Y<sup>e</sup>howah turned to him and said, “Go in this strength of yours and cause to deliver Israel out from the palm of Midian; have I not sent you?”

Therefore, Jehovah turned to him and said, “God with this strength of yours and cause Israel to be delivered out of the control of Midian—I hereby commission you.”<sup>22</sup>

Let’s just see how some have translated that first phrase:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And Yahweh turned unto him...
NASB	And the looked at [or, turned toward] him...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And Jehovah turneth unto him...

What we have is the Qal imperfect of pânâh (פָּאַחַח) [pronounced paw-NAWH], which means *turn, to turn away from, to toward, to turn one’s face away from, to turn one’s face to*. Since this is related to the face, *look* [at something] would be a reasonable rendering. Strong’s #6437 BDB #815.<sup>23</sup> Owen’s book mistakenly calls the next word a negative with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, but it is actually the preposition *unto* with the suffix.<sup>24</sup> The subject of the verb is Jehovah; not the Angel of Jehovah, but Jehovah. It is through passages like this that we can say without equivocation that the Angel of Jehovah is Jehovah.

Keil and Delitzsch note that it is appropriate to in this verse now speak of the Angel of Jehovah as simply Jehovah; as we have the words “Have I not sent you?” This is a clear indication that Jehovah God is speaking directly to Gideon; there is no intermediary here. Furthermore, you will notice that God pretty much ignores Gideon’s theological argument. After all, his argument that God has turned from Israel does not hold much water when God is standing there, turned toward him, and giving him instructions about delivering Israel. God tells him to go *in* and then has the masculine singular kôwach (כֹּוַחַח) [pronounced KOE-ahkh]—or kôach (כֹּוַחַ) [pronounced KOE-ahkh], which means *strength, power, ability*. Strong’s #3581 BDB #470. This has the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular suffix (referring to Gideon) and is further qualified by the demonstrative adjective. God tells him to “Go in this might of yours...” You see, Gideon has expressed some very clear, strongly-held-to, theological beliefs; God tells him to go with this strength of his, with this conviction of his, with this single-mindedness of his; and deliver Israel out of the hand of Midian. Then God summarily deals with Gideon’s theological views: “Have I not sent you?” “Why the heck are you standing around with a dropped jaw? I have not deserted Israel—that should be obvious because have I not sent YOU? Now, go! Git!” God was just a bit more succinct. This is just as God commanded Joshua: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not tremble or be discouraged for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9).

When God sends someone, that means that God has provided for them the power on which to operate. Recall what God said to Moses at the manifestation of the burning bush. “Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.” (Ex. 3:10). Or God to Ezekiel: “Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people, who have rebelled against Me, they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. And I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children; and you will say to them, ‘Thus speaks Lord Jehovah!’ As for them, whether they listen or not—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.” (Ezek. 2:3b–5). And our Lord to His disciples: “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” (John 20:21).

<sup>22</sup> I took this last phrase from the NRSV.

<sup>23</sup> Owen claims there is a negative in this first phrase, but I think that must be a misprint.

<sup>24</sup> we have the exact same thing in v. 15.

And so he said unto Him, “Please, my Lord, in the how can I deliver Israel? Behold, my thousand: the poor[est] in Manasseh and I the least in a house of my father.”

Judges  
6:15

And so he said to Him, “Please, my Lord, in what way can I deliver Israel? Observe my family: the poorest [and weakest] in Manasseh and I the least in the house of my father.”

Then Gideon said to Jehovah, “Please, my Lord, how can I deliver Israel? My family, for instance, is the poorest and weakest in the tribe of Manasseh and I am the least in the household of my father.”

Gideon still has no clue as to Whom he is speaking to. He is ingratiatingly polite. He begins with the particle of entreaty *bîy* (בִּי) [pronounced *bee*], again, which means *please, I pray, excuse me*. It is a word of polite deference and Gideon was polite. It was obvious to Gideon that this stranger didn't really know what he was talking about, but Gideon would be polite when he set him straight. Strong's #994 BDB #106. Some of you may not grasp what is going on, but that is because Gideon really did not know what was going on. Who this Man was, the air of His authority—it did not really sink into Gideon's psyche. You have to understand that Gideon still has his mind on, *if he says this, then I'll say that*; he is busy formulating arguments and excuses and does not take any time to let the significance of what is happening sink into his brain. Now, obviously after touching on a passage like this, I have to speak to the psycho element: God is not speaking to you and He does not have a mission for you which you will audibly hear from His mouth. God is not calling anyone personally today to start some cult; God is not calling upon you directly to do anything. God came to this earth in the form of a man (He is called *an angel or messenger of God*) occasionally prior to the incarnation and He returned to His disciples in His resurrection body and remained on this earth for several weeks after His crucifixion. However, God does not take the form of a man and come down to earth and He does not speak audibly to people—particularly not to psychos. When our Lord left this earth, when He ascended into heaven, He sent back the third member of the trinity, the Holy Spirit, Whom we all have indwelling in us. Those people who talk the most about the power of the Spirit seem to have the least understanding of the Spirit's power. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is His gift to all of us—every single one of us has the potential to be a Paul or a Moses or a Gideon (although he is not looking too good yet). We have the entire Word of God, which I need to remind you, is more than 3 or 4 dozen verses long.<sup>25</sup> We have a full record of God's interaction with mankind; we have more information on the relationship between God and man than we can even consume in a lifetime. As I type this, I am nearing the age of 50. To me, the greatest thing in the world would be to exegete the entire Bible. However, realistically, that will never happen. My point is that we do not need any more than what God has given us: He has given us the Holy Spirit and the entire Word of God. We have more spiritual information than we could digest and we have more spiritual ability and power than all men of previous dispensations. These past few generations on this earth have had greater access to God's Word than any generation that has gone before. Not only will God not physically tap you on the shoulder and audibly give you direction in your life, but you do not need to have that. He has given you all that you need. The only audible information given you by God is through your pastor teacher. Here, God speaks to you; and if any pastor teacher tells you that you are responsible to do his job for him (that is, study the Bible and teach it to yourself), right away you know that you have the wrong pastor teacher.

Now, this is how Gideon spoke to our Lord—he used the masculine plural noun *ʾādōwn* (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *aw-DOHN*]. Gideon used the singular of this to show respect back in v. 13. This is the word we transliterate *adonai*; and it means *lord, master, owner, superior, sovereign*. As I mentioned, it is a word used of both man and God. Now, we are going to need to get rather technical. In the Hebrew, we have two basic plural forms of this word: the first is *ʾādōnay* (אֲדֹנָיִם) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]; and the second is *ʾādōnây* (אֲדֹנָיִם) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]. Generally speaking, they are both plural nouns, but they are called the plural excellenior, which means that they are the plural of great significance or of great emphasis. The former can also be used for an actual plural and the latter can be used only for God. However, our problem is this: the difference is the vowel points—one ends with the qamats, the long a (,) and the other with the pattach, or the short a (.) . These diacritical markings; these vowel points were added thousands of years after the Bible was written, based in part upon verbal tradition and, very likely,

<sup>25</sup> Don't get me started here—I am thinking of one person in particular; however, there are hundreds of thousands of Christians whose Bibles only contain a few dozen verses; verses that they shout out every time they are in a theological dispute; and they essentially ignore the greater part of Scripture and harp only upon these few particulars. This is part of the problem of learning a little Scripture and then trying to obey the little truth that you have.

partially upon interpretation. Therefore, even though Gesenius unequivocally states that ʾădônây is only used of God;<sup>26</sup> we have to keep in mind that there was a long interval which fell between the writing of Scripture and the addition of that differentiating diacritical marking; therefore, I would not assert that Gideon as of yet knows that he is speaking to God. That he is actually speaking to God the Son will dawn on him as they continue to speak. Strong's #113 BDB #10.

The Gideon asks the question with the bêyth preposition, the definite article and the interrogative mâh (הַמָּה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *what, how*. Together, they mean *in what?, in what thing?, on what account?, why?, how?, in what way?, by what means?*. (Mâh = Strong's #4100 BDB #552; bêyth = Strong's #none BDB #88). Gideon says, *"In what way can I deliver Israel?"* As he speaks, he begins to realize to Whom he is talking, but he continues. I hope you realize how atypical his reaction is to previous believers. Whereas many fell and worshiped our Lord,<sup>27</sup> Gideon just kept on talking. Well, at least he didn't try to out-wrestle Him, like Jacob in Gen. 32:24–32.

Gideon then introduces his thoughts with the demonstrative particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*] *lo, behold*. More freely, we can go with *observe, look here, look, listen*. Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243. What Gideon asks Jesus Christ to observe is the masculine singular noun ʾelep (אֶלֶף) [pronounced *EH-lef*], which has several meanings. This word appears to be rendered *a thousand* most of the time, in some places where only that rendering would make sense, such as Ex. 18:21 and 25, which read, in part, *leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens* (see also Ex. 38:25, 29 I Sam. 29:2). Another meaning of ʾelep is *family or clan* (however, this is not the only word used for *family*). This same word is translated *kine or cattle* in Deut. 7:13 28:4, 18, 51. Obviously, the connection between these words is the idea that we have a large number of things which are countable, but large enough that most would just give an estimate. Strong's #505 BDB #48.

Then he describes his family with the definite article and the masculine singular adjective dal (דָּל) [pronounced *dah*], and it means *weak, low, think, poor, frail, needy, helpless*. Here we would translate this *the neediest or the poorest, the most frail, the most helpless*. Strong's #1800 (masc.) #1803 (fem.) BDB #195. Out of the entire tribe of Manasseh, those in his family were the most poor, frail and helpless. Then he says, *and I, the least in* and we have the masculine singular construct of bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced *BAH-yith*]<sup>28</sup>, which means *house, household, habitation*. Strong's #1004 BDB #108. It is possible that Gideon did not want any kind of assignment like this and it is possible that he had a realistic opinion of himself (I tend to side with the latter). This is obviously a guy with very little going on for him, in his own opinion, and he is probably right in this estimation. McGee has a marvelous explanation of this: *Now consider for a moment the position Gideon occupies in his own thinking. He said in effect, "You certainly are not asking me to do this. To begin with, I belong to the nation Israel. We are now under the heel of the Midianites." It was bad enough to be under Egypt, but imagine being under these nomads of the desert, the Midianites! "We are in slavery. Here we are hiding, and here I am threshing at the foot of the hill. And you come and call me? Well, to begin with, the tribe of Manasseh (one of the sons of Joseph) is not noted for anything; we have had no conspicuous men. In the tribe of Manasseh, my family is not very well known. We are sort of ne-er-do-wells. We are not prominent folk. In my family I happen to be the very least one. You made a big mistake in calling me because you happen to have called the smallest pebble that is on the beach." Honestly, this man felt that he was the last man in Israel to be used of God. And did you know that he was right? He was the last man in Israel that God should have called. Our problem today, friends, is that most of us are too strong for God to use. Most of us are too capable for God to use. You notice that God only uses weak men, don't you?*<sup>29</sup>

Without meaning to sound too cornball, this makes him an outstanding candidate for grace. **For consider your calling, family of God: that there were not many wise, according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to discredit the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to discredit the things which are strong** (I Cor. 1:26–27). McGee continues: *God used all of these judges but not because they were capable or outstanding. Does that encourage you, friends? Do you know why God does*

<sup>26</sup> H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., Gen. 18:1–3 Ex. 3:6.

<sup>28</sup> Why not BAH-yeeth?

<sup>29</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 150.

*not use most of us? We are too strong. Most of us have too much talent for God to use us. Most of us today are doing our own will, and going our own way. There are multitudes of people, talented people, people with ability, whom God is not using. Do you know why? They are too strong for God to use...God does not use the flesh...God wants weak vessels and that is the only kind He will use. God follows this policy so that no flesh will glory in His presence. When God gets ready to do anything, He chooses the weakest thing He can get in order to make it clear that He is doing it, not the weak arm of the flesh That is God's method.<sup>30</sup>*

God uses the weak things of this world to confound the strong. We have two incidents in the Bible which illustrate that principle. If you were a betting man and you were told to put your chips on a little baby floating in the Nile or on one of the greatest pharaohs of Egypt, Rameses II, who built the great cities of Egypt, who would you bet on? Add to that, that Rameses II had ordered the death of all infants. However, God used Moses to decimate Egypt, the most powerful nation in the world at that time. This incident foreshadowed when our Lord was born when Herod, the powerful Gentile ruler over Judah, ordered the execution of all infants aged 2 years or younger in order to eliminate the Christ Child. This Herod, who was actually a great man in his beginnings, could not stand before this child, this babe in a manger.

**And so said unto him Y<sup>e</sup>howah, "And I am with you and you will strike down Midian as a man one."**

Judges  
6:16

**So Y<sup>e</sup>howah said to him, "But I will be with you and you will strike down Midian as one man."**

**Therefore Jehovah said to him, "I will be with you so that you will strike down Midian as one man."**

You will notice that there are times when God listens to what a man has to say and responds (e.g., Gen. 18:23–33) and there are times like this when He pretty much ignores what man has to say and lays everything out for him. There is not a lot that Gideon needs to understand. God is with him and Gideon will strike down Midian as though he is striking down a single man. Keil and Delitzsch wrongly note that God is telling Gideon that he will strike down Midian with one blow; the verbiage indicates to Gideon that he will defeat Midian just as he, Gideon, could stand up to one man and defeat him. It is at this time that Gideon is getting a clue as to Who this person is that he is speaking to.

Perhaps you have noticed that the exchange between Jesus Christ and Gideon is somewhat like the one between Jesus Christ and Moses: **But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" And He said, "Certainly, I will be with you, and this will be the sign to you that it is I Who have sent you; when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this mountain."** (Ex. 3:11–12). And we have already noted God speaking to Joshua: **"No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. I will not fail you nor will I forsake you."** (Joshua 1:5).

Gideon knows some doctrine. He knows about all of the stories of how God had delivered Israel in the past. Gideon knows doctrine for two reasons. Even though his father has been swept into idolatry, his father will later stand up to the idolaters in Judges 6:31. This would indicate that his father has both some backbone and some knowledge of God's Word. We will also find out at the end of Judges 8 and the beginning of 9 that Gideon had close ties to the city of Shechem. In fact, we can reasonably theorize that Ophrah is a small settlement outside of Shechem and Shechem is between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, where Joshua saw to it that the Law of God was written on some rocks. Therefore, both Gideon and his father knew God's Word and God's history with Israel better than most. Because of God's very active role in the history of Israel in the past, Gideon had misapplied this, thinking that God had forsaken Israel, never taking into account that it appeared that way to Moses for 38½ years. However, he did know Bible doctrine and he suddenly had come to the realization that the person speaking to him claimed to be God.

<sup>30</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 151.

**And so he said unto Him, “If please I have found grace in Your eyes; and You will do for me a sign that You are speaking with me.**

Judges  
6:17

**So then he said to Him, “Please if I have found grace in Your eyes, then you will do for me a sign that You are speaking with me.**

**He therefore said to Him, “If I have found grace in Your sight, then please, perform for me a sign that it is really You Who is speaking with me.**

Gideon begins with the hypothetical particle and then the particle of entreaty again, which is *please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you, pray thee*. It is part of an exhortation or part of an entreaty. It is equivalent to our word *please*, although it often does not sound right when translated that way. I cannot come up with a good one word translation, so I will do what the KJV does, but update it from *I pray thee* to *I respectfully implore [or ask or request] you* or *I urge you*. Strong's #4994 BDB #609.

When Gideon says that he has found grace, he follows this with the *bêyth* preposition and the feminine plural noun *ʿayin* (אֵינַי) [pronounced *GAH-yin*], which means *eyes*. Strong's #5869 (And #5871) BDB #744 (and BDB #745). With this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular suffix, referring to God. **“If please, I have found grace in Your eyes.”**

What Gideon asks is for God to do for him the masculine singular of *ʾôth* (אֶת) [pronounced *oath*], which means *signs, token, pledge, assurance*. These are things which are the visible assurances of God's work; or, in this case, visible assurances that Gideon is actually speaking to God. Strong's #226 BDB #16.

I don't know how other people are, but sometimes, the reality of a situation doesn't always sink in all at once. In fact, I have been in relationships that on a conscious level, I could not have told you what was going on except in retrospect. This is Gideon. For most of this conversation, he has been oblivious to Who he has been speaking to, and, several minutes into the conversation, it dawns upon him who this other Person is. Now he is not completely convinced nor does he know just what to make of it, so he requests for there to be a sign—some sort of a miracle, to where he is confident that this is God speaking to him. The gist of the conversation is that he is going to be risking his life to deliver Israel. Gideon is hiding from the Midianites in a wine press, trying to scratch out a little granola for himself—personally, he would not have been my first choice to deliver Israel (and Gideon is not his own first choice either).

Barnes is more charitable than most concerning Gideon at this point: *Gideon now perceived that the Lord was speaking to him by His angel. He saw, however, no qualifications in himself, or in his family or tribe, for the office of saviour to his people. He therefore desires some assurance that the message he had just received was indeed from god, and not a mere dream or delusion. He asks as a sign (v. 18) that his mysterious visitor should tarry under the oak till he should return to Him with his gifts and offerings.*<sup>31</sup> Many of us have heard these Bible stories for years and take what is occurring to Gideon rather lightly. God is standing in front of him telling him what to do, so why doesn't he just do it? Gideon has just got out of his hiding place where he was pounding out some stalks of grain in order to get some wheat for his morning granola. Suddenly, an Angel, speaking as God and speaking for God, begins to tell him that he is to deliver Israel out of the hands of Midian. Gideon is floored. He forgets his theological position and tries to determine how can he be certain that this is really happening and that this person is Who He says He is. Don't ever make this situation out to be the no-brainer that some people make it out to be.

**“[Do] not please depart from here until my coming to You and I will bring my present and I will place [it] before Your faces.” And so He said, “I [even] I will stay until your return.”**

Judges  
6:18

**‘Please do not depart from here until my coming to You and I will bring my present and I will place it before Your face.’ And so He aid, “I will stay until your return.”**

**“Please, whatever You do, do not leave here until I return to You. I will bring my present and I will place it before You.” He therefore answered, “I will remain here until you return.”**

<sup>31</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 431.

Gideon is now formulating in his mind what he can do to determine whether this is really God. He finally recognizes that is what is being said—that God is in the form of a man speaking directly with him. He first uses the negative and then the particle of entreaty and then the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of the verb *mûsh* (מִשׁ) [pronounced *moosh*], which means *to depart, to remove*. Strong's #4185 BDB #559. Gideon asks the Lord not to move from, and then he uses the demonstrative adjective *zeh* (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*], which means *here, this*. Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260. The time frame that Gideon placed the Lord under is *until* and then we have the Qal infinitive construct of *bôw* (בֹּוֹ) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go*. In Strong's #935 BDB #97. With this, we have the 1<sup>st</sup> person suffix; this is followed by *to You*. This gives us: “**Not please depart from here until my coming to you...**” Gideon is an intelligent man and you can feel his mind racing to try to figure out what it is he is going to have God do. Therefore, his speech is rather jumbled up. He is using fairly simple Hebrew words, but it doesn't hang together all that smoothly. The reality of what might be happening is actually sinking in so he becomes somewhat excited at this point.

Then he tells God that he will bring the feminine singular of *minchâh* (מִנְחָה) [pronounced *min-KHAWH*], which means *tribute offering, gift, present*. Strong's #4503 BDB #585. The verb which follows is the Hiphil perfect of *nûwach* (נִוַּח) [pronounced *NOO-ahkh*], which means *rest, cause to rest, to be at rest, set down, lay down, deposit, leave*. In the Hiphil, this means *to deposit, to set down, to cause to rest*. Strong's #5117 (and 3240) BDB #628. What Gideon will do will parallel what Abraham did in meeting God by the oaks of Mamre in Gen. 18 (which passage I will quote later).

What follows is a phrase that occurs often in the Word of God; we have the lamed prefixed preposition and the masculine plural of *pâniym* (פְּנִיִּם) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*], which means *faces* (usually referring to one face, however). Strong's #6440 BDB #815. With the lamed preposition, it means *in the sight of, in the presence of, in the face, before the face of* or, more literally, *to or for the faces*. Together, these can also refer to time and be translated *before* or *formerly*. (Lamed is BDB #510). This gives us: “[Do] **not please depart from here until my coming to You and I will bring my present and I will place [it] before Your faces.**” Jesus Christ reassures him that He will not leave. The last word is the Qal infinitive construct of *shûw* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo<sup>b</sup>v*]; which means *to return, to turn*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. Our Lord is more than patient, in no way implies what Gideon is doing is wrong or lame, and promises to remain.

**And Gideon went and so he prepared a kid of she-goats and an ephah of flour—unfermented cakes. The flesh he set in the basket and the broth he put in the pot and so he brought [these things] unto Him under the oak. And so he approached...**

Judges  
6:19

**Then Gideon went and prepared a kid of the she-goats and an ephah of flour—unfermented cakes. The flesh he set in a basket and the broth he put in a pot. Then he brought [these things] to Him under the oak. And then he approached [Him]...**

**Then Gideon left and prepared one of the young goats along with some unfermented bread. He placed the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot and brought them to the Angel of the Lord under the oak. As he approached,**

The second verb is the Qal imperfect of *âsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *aw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. What he prepares is a baby goat (*a kid of she-goats*). He also prepares the feminine singular construct of *êphâh* (אֶפְחָה) [pronounced *ay-FAW*], and we have transliterated that ephah, primarily because we do not have a precise measurement to correspond with it, other than it being equivalent to 10 omers Ex. 16:36). According to Scofield, an ephah was equal to about 3 pecks or 5 quarts. This would make an omer to be a half a quart = 1 pint = 2 cups. Strong's #374 BDB #35. Gideon was going to prepare a lot of unleavened bread, as this was to be both a sacrifice to God as well as a test of God.

What he places in the basket is the masculine singular of *bâsâr* (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced *baw-SAWR*], which means *flesh*. Strong's #1320 BDB #142. He placed it in the masculine singular of *çal* (סַל) [pronounced *sahl*], which means, simply, *basket*. Strong's #5552 BDB #700.

The next item that we speak of is the masculine singular of *mârâq* (מַרְקָ) [pronounced *maw-RAWK*], which is found only three times in the Bible (Judges 6:19, 20 Isa. 65:4\*), and generally translated *broth* or *juices*. Strong's #4839 BDB #600. What Gideon placed this into was the masculine singular of *pârûr* (פָּרוּר) [pronounced *paw-ROOR*], which means *pot*. Strong's #6517 BDB #807. We don't know where this broth came from. My guess is that it is water, wine and/or juices from the meat.

Where Gideon brings these things is *unto Him* and then we have the preposition *ʿel* (עַל) [pronounced *e/*], which denotes direction and means *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding*. Strong's #413 BDB #39. This precedes the preposition *tachath* (תַּחַת) [pronounced *TAH-khahth*], which means *underneath, below, under beneath*. Strong's #8478 BDB #1065. Together, they mean *under*.

The final verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *nâgash* (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-GASH*], which means *to come near, to draw near, to approach, to come hither* in the Qal stem; and *to bring near, to bring hither, to be brought* in the Hiphil. Strong's #5066 BDB #620. The sentence structure seems to hold together more in the English if the last line of v. 19 is placed with v. 20. As you have no doubt noticed over the years that the Hebrew sentences often begin with a *wâw* consecutive or a *wâw* conjunction, which is not generally done in English. We tend to like sentences to be of a certain length (not too long and not too short), whereas the Hebrew tends to either string together several thoughts or have a lot of very short sentences.

Now you will note the similarities here to our Lord appearing to Abraham. **Now Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. And when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he observed three men standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by. Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will bring a piece of bread that you may refresh yourselves, after that you may go one, since you have visited your servant." And they said, "So do, as you have said." So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make bread cakes." Abraham also ran to the herd and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant; and he hurried to prepare it. And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate. (Gen. 18:1–8).**

**...and so said unto him, Angel of the God,  
"Take the flesh and the unfermented cakes  
and set them down upon rock this and the  
broth, pour." And so he did.**

Judges  
6:20

**...then the Angel of God said to him, "Take the  
flesh and the unfermented cakes and set them  
down upon this rock and pour the broth." And  
so he did.**

**...the Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unfermented bread and place them down on this rock and pour the brother over them." And Gideon followed his instructions.**

We know that the subject of this sentence is *Angel of the God* because it is not preceded by a direct object notation. What God instructed Job to do was Hiphil imperative of *nûwach* (נִוַּח) [pronounced *NOO-ahkh*], which we looked at in v. 18, and it means, in the Hiphil, this means *to deposit, to set down, to cause to rest*. Strong's #5117 (and 3240) BDB #628.

It is difficult to determine where exactly the broth was poured by the Hebrew. It appears as though it was poured on the unleavened bread and upon the meat. The reason for this is that all of it will suddenly burst into flames, which is more of a sign if everything is wet.

Now, you may think that what Gideon is doing is a waste of time, but recall that Gideon does know portions of God's Word. You probably don't recall that early on outside the land, when Moses and Aaron offered up some sacrifices, that the following happened. **And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of Jehovah appeared to all of the people. Then fire came out from before Jehovah and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and**

fell on their faces (Lev. 9:23–24). Gideon does not even tell the Angel of Jehovah what to do. He will present the offering and then observe for himself.

And so reached out an Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah a end of the staff which [was] in His hand and so he touched in the flesh and in the unfermented cakes and so sprang up the fire out from the rock and so she consumed the flesh and the unfermented cakes and an Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah departed from his eyes.

Judges  
6:21

Then the Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah put forth the end of the staff that [was] in His hand and it touched the flesh and the unleavened bread. Then the fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened bread, and the Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah departed from his sight.

So then the Angel of Jehovah reached out with the tip of his staff and touched the meat and the unleavened bread and fire sprang up from the rock and the fire consumed the flesh and the unleavened bread. Then, suddenly, the Angel of Jehovah vanished from his sight.

We have got a lot to deal with in this verse. The general meaning is fairly easy to ascertain, but the details are a bit more difficult; therefore, we will see what others have done.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Then the messenger of Yahweh put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the flesh and the cakes,—and there came up fire out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the cakes, and the messenger of Yahweh had departed out of his sight.
NASB	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 [or, departed] from his sight.
NIV	With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared.
Owen's Translation	Then reached out the angel of Yahweh 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 flesh and the unleavened cakes and the angel of Yahweh vanished from his sight.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And the messenger of Jehovah putteth forth the end of the staff which <i>is</i> in His hand, and cometh against the flesh, and against the unleavened things, and the fire goeth up out of the rock and consumeth the flesh and the unleavened things—and the messenger of Jehovah hath gone from the eyes.

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *shâlach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAHKH*], which means *to send, to send forth, to send away, to dismiss, to deploy*. When found in association with hands in the Qal stem, *shâlach* means *to reach forth, to reach out, to put out*. Strong's #7971 BDB #1018. What the Angel of Jehovah stretched forth is the masculine singular construct of *qâtseh* (קֵצֶה) [pronounced *kaw-TSEH*], which means *end, extremity*. Strong's #7097 BDB #892.

The verb which follows is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, which refers to the end of the staff and not to God. That verb is the Qal imperfect of *nâgâ* (נָגַע) [pronounced *naw-GAHG*], which means *to touch, to reach out and touch*. Oddly enough, this is generally followed by the *bêyth* preposition , which means *to reach out to touch*. Strong's #5060 BDB #619. He reaches out with the tip of the staff and touches *the flesh*. The other thing which is touched is the feminine plural of *matstsâh* (מַצֵּת) [pronounced *mahts-TSAWH*], which means *unfermented bread, unleavened bread, unleavened cakes*. It is derived from the word for *sweet*, and therefore often refers to *sweet unfermented cakes*. It is the word from whence we derive *matzah*. Strong's #4682 BDB #595.

Then we have the Qal imperfect of *âlâh* (אָלַח) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means *to climb, to ascend, to rise*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. The subject of *âlâh* is the feminine singular of *esh* (אֵשׁ) [pronounced *aysh*], which



means *fire*. Strong's #784 BDB #77. The action continues with the Qal imperfect of *ʾâkal* (אָכַל) [pronounced *aw-KAHL*], which means *to eat*. However, it is often found used figuratively for *devour, consume, destroy*. Strong's #398 BDB #37. It is this slick trick which tells us that the broth, or some sort of liquid, had been poured out over the sacrifice and over the unleavened bread cakes. That is, the fact that these things were soaked in a non-flammable liquid adds to the event of them being immediately consumed by fire.

The final verb is the Qal perfect of *hâlak* (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK*], which means *to go, to come, to depart, to walk*. Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. Many of the translators render this *vanish* because of the of the final prepositional phrase *from his eyes*. The last word being the feminine plural of *ʿayin* (עַיִן) [pronounced *GAH-yin*], which means *eyes*. Strong's #5869 (And #5871) BDB #744 (and BDB #745). What happened confirmed both that the Angel of Jehovah was Jehovah and that Gideon's offering had been accepted by God. As Manoah's wife will reason later on in this book, **"If Jehovah had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have let us hear [these things] at this time."** (Judges 13:23b).

**And so saw Gideon that an Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah He [was]; and so said Gideon, "Uhhah, my Lord Y<sup>h</sup>owah, for therefore I have seen an Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah faces unto faces."** Judges 6:22

**Then Gideon saw He [was] the Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah and [therefore] Gideon said, "Alas my Lord Y<sup>h</sup>owah, forasmuch as I have seen the Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah face to face."**

**At that point, Gideon realized that He was the Angel of Jehovah and he then cried out, "Alas, my Lord Jehovah, I have seen the Angel of Jehovah face to face."**

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *râ`âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means *to see*. It would be reasonable to render this as *to perceive*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. What has happened is that Gideon recognized Who this person was—He knew Him to be the Angel of the Lord. Gideon then calls out, the first word being the interjection *ʾâhâhh* (אָהָה) [pronounced *uh-HAWH*], which is somewhat onomatopoeic, rendered by the KJV as *Ah!* or as *alas*. Gesenius calls it an interjection of lamentation simply from the sound of it. It comes from a word which means *to grieve, to mourn*. The only contemporary interjection which comes to mind was *oh dear*, which is better than what I found in Roget's Thesaurus.<sup>32</sup> That being unsuitable, I would almost rather transliterate it. Strong's #162 BDB #13. He calls this out to the masculine plural of *ʾâdôwn* (אֲדוֹנָי) [pronounced *aw-DOHN*], which means *lord, master, owner, superior, sovereign*. Strong's #113 BDB #10. This is followed by the proper noun *Jehovah*. Literally, what we have is: **And so saw Gideon that an Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah He [was]; and so said Gideon, "Uhhah, my Lord Jehovah..."** If we change the order of the words somewhat to fit in with our English, it gives us: **Then Gideon saw He [was the] Angel of Y<sup>h</sup>owah, and so Gideon said, "Alas, my Lord Jehovah..."** What I see him as doing is falling on the ground and crying this out or looking up into the air and crying this out.

This is followed with the conjunction *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. Then we have the preposition and adverb combination *kîy ʿal kên* (כִּי עַל כֵּן) [pronounced *kee ahl KANE*], which means, literally, *for therefore*. together they mean *forasmuch as*. *Kîy* = Strong's #3588 BDB #471; *ʿal* = Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752; *kên* = Strong's #3651 BDB #467 & BDB #485. All of this is found at BDB #475. This is followed by *I have seen* and the phrase *faces unto faces*, which is *pânîym ʿel pânîym* (פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM el paw-Neem*]. It means, literally *faces to faces*; we would render it *face to face*. *Pânîym* = Strong's #6440 BDB #815 and *ʿel* = Strong's #413 BDB #39. This is similar to Jacob when he first met with Jesus Christ face to face. **So Jacob named the place Peniel, for "I have seen God face to face, yet my soul has been preserved."** (Gen. 32:30; see also Gen. 16:13; Judges 13:22–23). What person wouldn't think that meeting God face to face, even as an Angel of Jehovah, would not indicate death.

**And so said unto him Y<sup>h</sup>owah, "Peace unto you; you will not fear; you will not die."** Judges 6:23

**Then Y<sup>h</sup>owah said to him, "Peace [be] unto you; you will not fear; you will not die."**

<sup>32</sup> Roget's Thesaurus has been a God-send when it comes to finding contemporary words for the Hebrew.

**Then Jehovah said to him, “Be tranquil and unagitated—do not fear, for you will not die.”**

The first thing which Jehovah says to Gideon is *shâlôwm* (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], which means *completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated*. Strong’s #7965 BDB #1022.

We are not given a time frame here; we don’t know if the sacrifice was consumed in fire and then Jehovah said to him, “Peace to you...”; and then He departed; or if after the Angel of Jehovah departed, that Gideon spoke to God and somehow God communicated to him that there was no reason to fear and that he would not die. There are several really goofy groups of people out there now who claim to speak with Jesus directly on a daily basis. None of them express this fear or reverence. You place them on a roller coaster, they will exhibit fear and reverence; place them next to the One they think created the universe, and they think nothing of it. In fact, this inherent (and reasonable fear) of God appearing to man is found throughout the Bible and rarely in more recent literature where some even claim to be washing the dishes and talking face to face with Jesus Christ.

What appears to be the order of events is just as they are presented here. Gideon speaks to the Angel of Jehovah, not realizing Who He is. It slowly dawns upon Gideon who this person is and the Lord permits a sign to convince Gideon. Suddenly, the Angel of Jehovah is no longer there, and Gideon cries out to God that he has seen the Angel of Jehovah face to face. The only thing which is unclear is how exactly God answers Gideon; that is, is it a small voice within, a booming voice without, the voice of the Angel of Jehovah. Although there are several writers of Scripture who are fairly clear as to what takes place, there are a great many times when the way that God speaks to them is not defined as well as I would like.

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## Gideon Obeys God and Tears down the Artifacts of Idolatry

**And so built there Gideon an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah and so he called him, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] peace.”  
Unto the day the this still he [is found] in Ophrah Abiezrite.**

Judges  
6:24

**Therefore, Gideon built there an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah and called it “Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] peace.”  
Until this day it is still in Ophrah Abiezrite.**

**Therefore, Gideon built an altar there to Jehovah and he called it, “Jehovah is peace.” Even to today, this altar can be found in Ophrah Abiezrite.**

The first verb here is the Qal imperfect of *bânâh* (בָּנָה) [pronounced *baw-NAWH*], which means *to build, to rebuild, to restore*. Strong’s #1129 BDB #124. The word *altar* is a masculine singular, so, although it reads, *he called him, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah peace”*; it actually, in the English, should be *he called it, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] peace.”* Many translations transliterate this as *Y<sup>e</sup>howah-shâlôwm*. Gideon obviously named the altar *Jehovah is peace* because Jehovah said to him, “**Peace to you.**” When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his uniquely-born son, Isaac, and then provided him a substitute, Abraham named that place *YHWH-jireh*; i.e., *Jehovah will provide* (Gen. 22:14). When Joshua defeated Amalek before Moses, Moses built an altar and named it *Jehovah is my banner* (Ex. 17:1–15). Again, Gideon knew the Bible, as much as had been written. God chose him because (1) he did know Scripture; and, (2) God was able to set up a series of parallels between his experience and the experiences of saints from the past, and Gideon would be able to recognize these parallels.

Then we have the preposition *‘ad* (אֲד) [pronounced *‘ad* ] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until*. Strong’s #5704 BDB #723. Then we have *the day the this* and the adverb *‘ôwd* (עוֹד) [pronounced *‘ôwd*] (it is also written אֲד), which means *still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet*. Strong’s #5750 BDB #728.

When referring to a city, often we get a city and a *state*, e.g., *Minneapolis, Minnesota*; except here we have *Ophrah Abiezrite*. The indication is that this city is under the domination of that people during that time. Abiezer is a

descendant of Gilead who is the son of Manasseh and he settled in the area west of the Jordan (Joshua 17:2). Abiezer is probably equivalent to lezer (compare Num. 26:30 Joshua 17:2 I Chron. 7:14–18). Joash was obviously a descendant of Abiezer and Gideon was the son of Joash Judges 6:11). Apart from the genealogical references and the mention of the Abiezrites in this chapter and the next three, there is no other mention of them in the Bible.<sup>33</sup> Simply, all we are dealing with here is a small city which was in the midst of the area occupied by the Abiezrites, descendants of Manasseh.

**And so he was in the night the that and so spoke to him Y<sup>e</sup>howah, “Take an ox the young that to your father and an ox of the second, seven years and pull down an altar of Baal which to your father and the asherah which beside him you will cut down.**

Judges  
6:25

**And so it came to pass in that night that Y<sup>e</sup>howah spoke to him. “Take the young ox that [belongs] to your father and a second ox, seven years old. Then pull down the altar of Baal which [belongs] to your father and you will cut down the asherah beside it.**

**Then, during that night, Jehovah spoke to him, saying, “Take a young ox which belongs to your father along with a seven year old ox. Then tear down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father and cut down the asherah which is beside it.**

Now, here we are given a little more detail as to the circumstances of God speaking to Gideon. God speaks to him that night—we don’t know how, but I would think in a dream, although it does not appear to Gideon to be a dream.

The first verb which Jehovah uses is the Qal imperative of *lâqach* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*] which means *to take, to take from, to take in marriage, to seize*. Strong’s #3947 BDB #542. This is quite interesting—Gideon does not own an ox, or he does not own an animal which God could use. He has to go to his father’s herd and his father is obviously an idolater or he has these objects just to go along with other people of Israel (the latter seems to be the case, as we go further in this narrative). Gideon will take a young ox and a full grown ox. The oxen represent Jesus Christ in His incarnation and they will be sacrificed. Gideon is to take these first. Then, prior to the sacrifice, Gideon is to take down the altar of Baal. Literally, this altar of Baal is said to be *which to your father*. The relative pronoun and the *lâmed* preposition together mean *which [belong] to your father*. *ʿAsher* = Strong’s #834 BDB #81. *Lâmed* = Strong’s #none BDB #510. That Israel was not to become involved with idolatry was stated many times back in the Law,<sup>34</sup> but God also told this to the people of Israel via the Angel of Jehovah in Judges 2:2a: **“And as for you, you will not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land; you will tear down their altars.”**

The *asherah*, which we have found refers to the goddess or to the actual monument or statue to the female goddess. After *asherah* we have the relative pronoun and the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *ahl*] and it means, primarily, *upon, against, above*. When *ʿal* is used in connection with something geographical, it has the connotation of *contiguity* or *proximity*; so here, it means *by* or *beside*. Strong’s #5920, #5921 BDB #752. The masculine singular suffix refers to *the altar of Baal* and not to Gideon’s father or to the bulls. Gideon is told that he will cut this shrine dedicated to the female goddess down.

What was the purpose of the two oxen? The young ox represents that which is pure and undefiled; too young to exhibit any negative characteristics, and therefore represents the perfection and innocence of Jesus Christ (the former referring to His life without sin and the latter to His lack of an old sin nature). The seven year old ox speaks of two things: (1) In the years of an ox, this ox is roughly the same age as our Lord when He went to the cross; and, (2) the number seven is used of God as a sign of perfection or a sign of His work. There is another reason that

<sup>33</sup> One of David’s elite soldiers was called Abiezer, and possibly he received his name from this descendant of Manasseh; however, was probably a Benjamite (II Sam. 23:27 I Chron. 11:28 27:12). Recall that there is also a city of Ophrah in the territory of Benjamin (Joshua 18:23); I don’t think that there is a connection, as Ophrah here is referred to as Ophrah Abiezrite. And Benjamin and Manasseh are separated by Ephraim, so it cannot be a border city either.

<sup>34</sup> E.g., **“You will tear down their altars and smash their pillars and cut down their Asherim.”** (Ex. 34:13). Or, **“You will tear down their altars and smash their pillars, and cut down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.”** (Deut. 7:5b).

Gideon was to take the bull of seven years—this was the amount of time that Israel had spent under the thumb of Midian. This bull was born when Midian came into Israel and began to plunder her; and it would die the year that Gideon delivered Israel from the hand of Midian. Looking at things from that perspective, the young bull represented Israel beginning another era of freedom and prosperity.

Now it is quite interesting that Gideon takes two oxen, but only one of them is actually mentioned directly with the sacrifice and that is the seven-year-old bull in v. 28. The second bull is offered but nothing is said about the young ox. Keil and Delitzsch obsess about this somewhat and mention what other commentators have said, and, of those mentioned, all of them get this wrong. *Most commentators suppose that Gideon sacrificed both of the oxen,—the young bullock as an expiatory offering for himself, his father, and all of his family, and the second ox of seven years old for the deliverance of the whole nation.*<sup>35</sup> Bertheau, another commentary mentioned by Keil and Delitzsch supposed that Gideon used these oxen in order to pull down the altars to Baal and Ashtaroth. Keil and Delitzsch rightly call these interpretations arbitrary, and take the view that there was only one ox, reasoning that if God had told Gideon to take two oxen, then He would have instructed him what to do with both oxen. All of these commentators miss the point entirely. What happened to the young bull is not really the issue, but that it is **not** mentioned again is actually the true issue. We should not be concerned as to what happened with this young bull, but more with why God the Holy Spirit chose not to include this information in Scripture. When we approach it from this angle, the explanation becomes simple but important. This sacrifice is to be seen as a shadow representation of what was to come. There was only one sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross, and that was His death for our sins when he would have been in His adult age, which was what the seven-year-old bull represented. Nothing is said in Scripture about the young oxen, whether or not it was sacrificed; however, this is the over-riding rule of God the Holy Spirit Who often would see to it that the Old Testament shadows represented well that which was to come. Therefore, the focus is upon the adult bull, not upon the child, as our focus should be upon our Lord Who gave Himself on our behalf on the cross.<sup>36</sup> We also need to look at this from the immediate perspective of Israel. The bull of seven years, which represented Midian's domination of Israel was to be slain; the young bull, which represented Israel's new freedom and prosperity, would live.

I was personally quite lucky to have a strong foundation in dispensationalism, so that dealing with a passage like this is easy. Now, EVERYONE, regardless of what they claim to believe is a dispensationalist, regardless of what they think they think. Perhaps you fancy yourself a person who believes that covenant theology is correct and that dispensationalism is not, but that is because you are stupid and you do not realize that you are a dispensationalist. The key is not the terms themselves but the degree to which a person takes it. The other day I heard a person taking questions on the radio and he described dispensationalism is a teaching whereby there are different ways that people are saved during different time periods. Now, having been a believer for almost 30 years and having studied this for sometime, this was the first time that I ever heard that we dispensationalists believe that you are saved in different ways depending upon when you were born. What I am saying to you is that no dispensationalist that I know of believes that. God has slightly different programs for different time periods and that is all that dispensationalism is. Even the covenant theologian teaches that the church began in Abraham's tent, and, right there, he becomes a dispensationalist. Even the stupidest Christian on this earth recognizes that God worked through a particular nation, Israel, throughout most of the Old Testament, that prior to that time period, there was no Israel, so God did not work through Israel; and that, today, God is not working directly through the nation Israel. Now, it should be reasonably obvious that God primarily works through believers and that people are saved through believing in Jesus Christ (or, in the Angel of Jehovah, the revealed member of the Trinity in the Old Testament). If you believe in any of that (and how could you not?), then you are a dispensationalist. If you believe that any aspect of God's program was different in one time period than it is today; or that the end times or the thousand year rule of Christ are times where there are some differences in theology and/or worship, then you are a dispensationalist. If you realize that the Israelites offered animal sacrifices in the Old Testament as per God's commands (e.g., Lev. 6) and that you recognize that we do not offer animal sacrifices today (as per Heb. 10:1–12), then you are a dispensationalist.

<sup>35</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 243.

<sup>36</sup> As far as I know, I am the only commentator to give the correct interpretation of this lack of mention of the young bullock.

Salvation is not the key to dispensationalism, and if you think dispensationalism means that you are saved in different ways throughout the various time periods, then you have been misinformed and you steadfastly have been refusing to believe in things which dispensationalists do not believe in. The key is that God works through different groups during different time periods and the way He reveals Himself is slightly different in the various dispensations. We do not find the name *Jesus Christ* in the Old Testament because God had not been incarnated as a person yet. Prior to His incarnation, the revealed member of the Godhead came to man in dreams, in visions and He occasionally spoke to some men face to face, e.g. Gideon spoke face to face with the Angel of Jehovah. Once our Lord took upon Himself the body of a man, then He no longer came to us as the Angel of Jehovah. Furthermore, he no longer comes and speaks to us through dreams and visions. He came as one of us and revealed Himself as one of us. All of this has been historically recorded and what we need to know about God is found in the Bible. Now He speaks to us through His Word, which is complete. If you grasp and hold to even a small portion of what I just said, then you are a dispensationalist. Even more clear is that God worked through the nation Israel through most of the Old Testament and He worked through the church in the New Testament era. That is all that dispensationalism is. There was no church in the Old Testament and God does not work directly through Israel in the New. We don't go to Israel today and find that God is sending prophets to Israel. And, to emphasize this, there was even a period of 400 years where we had a cleansing of the palate. That is, for 400 years, God did not send His messengers to Israel, between the Old and New Testaments. When our Lord came in the flesh, this was after a long, dry spell of 400 years (represented in the Old Testament by Moses' 40 years in the desert with the people of God; represented by our Lord's 40 days of testing in the wilderness). There was to be no confusion and there was to be no overlapping and that the coming of our Lord in the flesh was to be unprecedented and separated from everything even slightly similar which had come before. That is, we were never to confuse our Lord with the prophets which God sent to Israel. We, in fact, even have a parable which illustrates this: the owner of the vineyard leaves his servants in charge of his vineyard and he sends men to check on what is being done. Those men were the prophets of God whom Israel ignored, persecuted and killed. Then the owner of the vineyard sent his own son to those who were taking care of the vineyard (this is Jesus Christ being sent to Israel). They killed his own son just as Israel would kill God's own Son. This was a parable which described, in part, the old dispensation of Israel. God placed Israel in charge of His vineyard, which was the world. He sent to them prophets and they ignored, persecuted and killed His prophets. Then God sent to Israel His uniquely-born Son, and Israel would kill Him as well. This is the dispensation of Israel in a nutshell. Once our Lord was crucified for our sins and once He rose again, then God began to work through a new medium, the church, and some Israelites belonged to the church and some Gentiles belonged to the church. And there was no longer an important distinction between Israel and not Israel. **There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).**

Now I have gone on a long walk around dispensationalism for one reason and that is to deal with the doofuses who read passages like this and go off the deep end. Israel, as a nation under God, was to remove all idolatry. Israel was not to tolerate idolatry and it was okay for Gideon to take someone else's property, like his father's, and destroy it, if it was used for idolatrous purposes. Israel had been enjoined by God to do such things. They were to tear down altars and all structures in Israel which glorified Baal and the various goddesses. However, man has misunderstood that and at the time prior to the founding of our country, we had a great deal of persecution of religions by other religions. God did not call upon us of the Church Age to attack and destroy those religions that we see as false. We are not supposed to find the local synagogue and burn it to the ground; we don't drive around to the Mormon Tabernacle and raze it with a rented demolition ball. In fact, we are to let these people be and to tolerate them. Nowhere in the epistles does the Apostle Paul tell Christian believers to go out and tear down the idolatry of Rome; no believer is told to attack the religious heathen of Rome. So, what I am saying is that, no matter what the circumstances, you are not to interfere with the religious practices of someone else, no matter how lame and incorrect they are. That is a simple application of dispensationalism. Similarly, we do not offer animal sacrifices, we do not keep the Sabbath, we do not follow the Sabbatical years, we do not go to a temple or to a tent to worship, and we do not use the various articles of furniture which were so important to Israel. Those are a simple applications of dispensationalism. And, if you also do things differently from our brothers in ancient Israel, then you are a dispensationalist as well. But the one thing that you do not get to do is to persecute those who believe differently from you. We are not called upon to do that in our Age.

“And you will build an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah your God upon a top of the place of safety the this in the arrangement and you will take the bull the second and you will offer a burnt offering with wood of the asherah which you cut down.”

Judges  
6:26

“And you will build an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah your God upon the top of this place of safety in an arrangement. Then you will take the second bull and you will offer a burnt offering with the wood of the asherah that you cut down.”

“And you will construct a proper altar dedicated to Jehovah your God in this place of safety. Then you will take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering using the wood from the Asherah that you cut down.”

Recall that the altars built for Jehovah God were not great works of art, but they were simply stones piled upon stones (and sometimes, it was simply one large stone—I Sam. 14:33–35). There was often an arrangement, or a moderately careful piling of these stones (as one might outline a flower bed with stones), but there was no craftsmanship involved in setting up the stones. Recall that even though the holy furniture, which was already built and in existence, never allowed for the creation of any sort of image. They were strictly pieces of furniture with no attempt whatsoever to copy the image of God. The reason for this is that there is no way to approximate with our physical world God’s person. Interestingly enough, we have no description whatsoever of our Lord’s physical body and no one really knows how he looked (although he probably had short hair and a beard). There are several passages indicating that He did not look dramatically different from other people of His era.

Let’s look at a couple of translations now.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Then shalt thou build an altar unto Yahweh thy God on the top of this fort, with the pile,—and shalt take the second bullock, and cause it to go up as an ascending sacrifice, with the wood of the sacred stem which thou shalt cut down.
NASB	‘...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.’
NIV	“The build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering.”
Owen's Translation	And build an altar to Yahweh your God on the top of this stronghold with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the asherah which you shall cut down.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	‘...and thou hast built an altar to Jehovah thy God on the top of this stronghold, by the arrangement, and has taken the second bullock, and caused to ascend a burnt-offering with the wood of the shrine which thou cuttest down.’

The altar was built upon the masculine singular of *mā'ōwz* (מַעֲזָה) [pronounced *maw-OHZ* or *maw-GOHZ*], which means *place of safety, means of safety, place or means of protection, a fortified place, a fortress, a stronghold*. Strong’s #4581 BDB #731. This is followed by the *bêyth* preposition, the definite article and the feminine singular of *ma'ārekeh* (מַעְרָכָה) [pronounced *mah-ġuh-reh-KEH*], which means *arrangement, row, rank, battle line* and this word is often translated *armies* (I Sam. 17:36, 45). We find this word used many times in I Sam. 4 and 17. Strong’s #4634 BDB #790. The NIV renders this as *a proper kind of altar*. It simply means that the stones are arranged rather than just chunked into a pile.

Note that there is nothing particularly special or holy or unholy about the wood from the asherah which was cut down. It is plain old wood and it is used as the fuel for the fire. Once it is burning, then Gideon was to sacrifice the seven year old bull.

And so took Gideon ten men from his servants and did as which [was] spoken unto him Y<sup>h</sup>owah. And so he was as which he feared a house of his father and men of the town to do [this] by day and so he did [it at] night.

Judges  
6:27

So Gideon took ten men from his servants and he did just as Y<sup>h</sup>owah spoke to him. And it was just as he feared the house of his father and the men of the town to do [this] by day, so he did [it] by night.

So then Gideon took of his servants and he did what Jehovah told him to do. And because he was afraid of the house of his father as well as the men of the town, he did this at night rather than in broad daylight.

In this verse we find the verb *ʿâsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] used three times. It means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. We find it first in the Qal imperfect as Gideon does as God has directed him; however, because he feared his own family as well as the men in his town too much *to do* (*ʿâsâh* in the Qal infinitive construct), he does this (Qal imperfect) by night. After the first *ʿâsâh*, we have the kaph preposition and the relative pronoun, which, together, they mean *as which, as one who, as, like as, just as*. [Kaph (כ) = No Strong's # BDB #453; *ʿâsher* (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *uh-SHER*] = Strong's #834 BDB #81]. Gideon will do what God tells him to do, but he is afraid.

Where it literally reads *and so he was*, it actually means *and then it came to pass* or *and so it was*. After this we have kaph + *ʿâsher* again. Now note that most translators aren't consistent at this point. The NASB, the NIV, Owen, Rotherham and Young all render the first occurrence as *as* and the second as *because*. Rotherham renders the first instance as *as* and the second as *that as*, making him the most consistent of the group.

This is followed by the Qal perfect of *yârêʿ* (יָרַע) [pronounced *yaw-RAY*] means *fear, fear-respect, reverence, to have a reverential respect*. Strong's #3372 BDB #431. In this instance, this simply means *fear*. What he fears was the masculine singular construct of *bayîth* (בַּיִת) [pronounced *BAH-yith*]<sup>37</sup>, which means *house, household, habitation* as well as *inward*. Strong's #1004 BDB #108. He also feared the men of the town. We are not told whether these men were Israelites or a remnant of the Canaanite population or whether these were some Midianites who lived in the town. Very likely, they were a combination of the three.

This is followed by *to do* and the adverb *yômâm* (יוֹמָם) [pronounced *yoh-MAWM*], which means *daily, daytime, by day, in the daytime*. Strong's #3119 BDB #401. Since he couldn't do this *by day*, he did it and this is followed by the masculine singular noun *laylâh* (לַיְלָה) [pronounced *LAY-law*], which means *night*. This appears to be used as an adverb here just as it is in Joshua 1:8. Strong's #3915 BDB #538. This is typical, although we are exhorted that **"We ought to fear God rather than man."** (Acts ). Now, the fear was reasonable; you might see a around Christmas time Santa Claus and a sled and several reindeer cut of out plywood out in someone's front yard and you might be tempted to step into this yard and kick everything down. You might even want to set it on fire and offer up their pet dog (what Gideon was about to do was not too different from this). Although such a thing might be reasonable at the direction of God, God does not direct us to do these kinds of things in this dispensation. Now you may wonder *why not?* First off, you are a believer, and second, this Santa Claus crap is a bunch of pagan hooey, so why just not kick this stuff down and then burn it on their front lawn? The difference between then and now is two-fold: (1) the distinction between what was holy and what was profane was more clear-cut in the Old Testament because Satan did not fully grasp what it was that he was counterfeiting. Satan did not understand the gospel in the Old Testament, which is why he was involved in the crucifixion of our Lord. He just didn't get it, although millions of people were saved in the Old Testament as they understood enough to be saved. Therefore, Satan's counterfeits were superficial and easy to ferret out (although he got better at this as time went on; take the Pharisees, for instance). More importantly, Israel began as a nation directly ruled by God Who gave them both the Law, which was very explicit, and the prophets, who told them when they were screwing up. We don't have this during this dispensation. Although we have the full realm of doctrine, the gospel is clearly understood by Satan, and therefore his counterfeit gospel is a very close call. In fact, his proper theological approach in the Catholic church (which most Catholics do not grasp), is so close to the truth as to be eerie. You see, the Catholic church holds that we are saved by faith through grace, apart from any personal merit. Now, you didn't know that and most

<sup>37</sup> Why not BAH-yeeth?

Catholics don't know that. However, the key is their use of the word *grace*. Properly speaking, in the realm of Catholic theology, grace is *infused grace*. That is, God places just enough goodness in us coterminous with salvation that we will act like we should. Reform Protestant theology, which is correct, teaches that grace in salvation is *imputed grace*; that is, we do not have anything in and of ourselves that is worthy, and God imputes His grace and His righteousness to us. Our only power in the realm of righteousness is the filling of the Holy Spirit. That is, after being baptized by the Spirit at salvation, we then periodically name our sins to God and are filled with the Holy Spirit, giving us a temporary spiritual impact which rests entirely upon God the Holy Spirit (it is temporary until we sin again).

Gideon, in this verse, takes his first step as a leader, rallying some of his servants against Baal. The fact that he is able to put together ten servants should indicate that his family is not a family of nobodies. Since they had some servants, it is reasonable to think that they had a greater influence in this city than we first might have supposed.

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## The Men of the City Approach Gideon's Father and Demand the Execution of Gideon

And so arose early men of the town in the morning and behold, broken down an altar of the Baal and the asherah which [is] beside him cut down and the bull the second offered upon the altar, the one built.

Judges  
6:28

And so the men of the town arose early in the morning and behold, the altar of Baal was broken down and the asherah beside it had been cut down. Furthermore, the second bull had been offered upon the [recently] built altar.

When the men woke up the next morning, they saw that the altar of Baal was torn down and that the asherah beside it had been cut down. They also noticed that a bull had been offered upon a recently built altar.

The first verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *shâkam* (שָׁכַם) [pronounced *shaw-KAHM*], which means *to start, to rise, to rise early, to make an early start*. This verb was originally used for leading the backs of beasts for a day's journey and came to mean arising early. This verb is found only in the Hiphil. Strong's #7925 BDB #1014.

The preposition describing the location of the asherah is *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *ahl*], which means *upon, against, above, by, beside*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. The masculine singular suffix refers to the altar of Baal.

This is followed by the feminine singular, Pual perfect of *kâath* (כָּאָת) [pronounced *kaw-RAHTH*], which means *to cut off, to cut down*. Strong's #3772 BDB #503. The feminine means this refers back to the asherah; the Pual is the passive of the Piel (intensive) stem and likewise emphasizes an accomplished state. The asherah has received cutting down and it was a done deal. It was such a done deal that what remained of it were burning embers.

The final verb is the Qal passive participle of *bânâh* (בָּנָה) [pronounced *baw-NAWH*], which means *to build, to rebuild, to restore*. Strong's #1129 BDB #124. Here the participle acts like an adjective, describing the altar. Since it was not there before, I have included the adverb *recently*.

Like many working-class people, the men of the city got up early the next morning to work. They did not necessarily go to the heathen altar to worship, but it was obvious to those who worked for Gideon's father that the heathen altars had been torn down and this news was quickly spread abroad. If the men of the city were up and about by dawn, those who were awake knew about this by, say, 8 am.



And so they said a man unto his neighbor, “Who has done the word the this?” And so they investigated and so they sought and so they said, “Gideon ben Joash has done the word the this.”

Judges  
6:29

And so they said [each] man to his neighbor, “Who has done this thing?” So they investigated and they sought and they said, “Gideon son of Joash has done this thing.”

**They continued to ask one another who had done this. After some investigation, they determined that Gideon, the son of Joash, had done it.**

This verse begins literally with *and so they said a man* and this is followed by the masculine singular noun *rêa* (רֵעֵ) [pronounced RAY-ahg], which is a person with whom you come into contact. This could be rendered *associate, neighbor*. Strong's #7453 BDB #945.

What the person did was the definite article and the masculine singular noun *dâ<sup>b</sup>vâr* (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw<sup>b</sup>-VAWR], which means *word, saying, doctrine, thing*. Strong's #1697 (or #1696) BDB #182.

What these men did after talking amongst one another was the Qal imperfect of *dârash* (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced dah-RAWSH], which means *to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to investigate, to study, to follow, to inquire*. Strong's #1875 BDB #205. The second thing that they did was the Piel imperfect of *bâqash* (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced baw-KAHSH], which means *to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence*. Strong's #1245 BDB #134.

It took them a short amount of time, but after asking around, what Gideon did was not completely unnoticed. Their investigation was thorough and he came up (correctly) as the culprit.

And so said men of the town unto Joash, “Bring out your son and he will die because he pulled down an altar of Baal and because he cut down the asherah which [was] beside him.”

Judges  
6:30

So the men of the town said to Joash, “Bring out your son and he will die because he pulled down the altar of Baal and because he cut down the asherah which [was] beside it.”

**Then the men approached Joash and said, “Bring your son out; he will die because he tore down the altar of Baal and because he cut down the asherah next to it.”**

The first thing that Gideon had done was the Qal perfect of *nâthats* (נָתַתְּ) [pronounced naw-THAHTS], which means *to pull down, to break down*. Strong's #5422 BDB #683. We have more here than just simple destruction of property. These were important religious artifacts and insofar, as the people of the city were concerned, Gideon was dead meat. Their point of view was exactly opposite that of Scripture. Moses told the people: “If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known; gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), you will not yield to him or listen to him, and your eye will not pity him nor will you spare or conceal him. But you will execute him and your hand will be the first hand against him to put him to death; and afterwards, the hand of all the people. In this way, you will stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from Jehovah your God, Who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out from the house of bondage.” (Deut. 13:6–10). This indicates just how far out of balance things had gotten in Israel.

And so said Joash to all who took a stand against him, “Will you [even] you contend for the Baal? If you [even] you deliver him whoever contends for him will be caused to die with the morning. If a god he [is], let him contend for himself because he pulled down his altar.”

Judges  
6:31

Then Joash said to all who took a stand against him, “Will you [even] you contend for Baal? If you [even] you deliver him, whoever contends for him will be put to death. If he [is] god, let him contend for himself because he [Gideon] has pulled down his altar.”

Then Joash stood up to those who were in his face and said, “Will you fight for Baal? Even if you rescue Baal, you will you put to death. And if Baal is God, then let him fight for himself, since it was only Gideon who tore down his altar.”

The first verb in the quote of Joash is the Qal perfect of *ʿamad* (אָמַד) [pronounced *gaw-MAHD*], which means *to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand*. Strong's #5975 BDB #763. Then we have a verb which occurs three times in this verse. *Riyb* (רִיב) [pronounced *reeb*], means *to debate, to contend, to dispute*. Strong's #7378 BDB #936. First it is in the Qal imperfect. Joash asks these men if they will debate or contend for Baal. When they do this, they open two cans of worms. First, Baal is supposedly a god who has come and supplanted Jehovah, so why would he require any help from anyone else? Secondly, the Law specifically states that Jehovah is God and that none can come before Him. An additional 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural personal pronoun is thrown in there for emphasis. So far, we have: **And so said Joash to all who took a stand against him, “Will you [even] you contend for the Baal?”** This is quite a change of heart. These religious artifacts were on Joash's property; it is possible that he allowed them just to get along with those of the city, but he is now re-thinking his position.

Then we have the hypothetical particle *ʾim* (אִם) [pronounced *eem*], which means *if*. Strong's #518 BDB #49. This is followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural personal pronoun again and the Hiphil imperfect of *yasha* (יָשָׁא) [pronounced *yaw-SHAHG*], which means *to deliver, to save*. Strong's #3467 BDB #446. The verb carries with it the masculine singular suffix. This is followed by the relative pronoun and the Qal imperfect of *contend* again (this time as a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular). This is followed by the Hophal imperfect of *to die*. The Hophal is the causative passive stem. This means that they *will be caused to die*. Literally, this gives us: **“If you [even] you deliver him, whoever contends for him will be caused to die.”** You will note that this sentence appears to be lacking in careful structure. Joash is standing in front of the religious thugs of the town who are demanding the whereabouts of his son so that they can stone him to death. Note that Joash is not a heathen; he apparently taught his son, Gideon, just Who God is.

This is followed by the hypothetical particle, the masculine plural of *elohim* (generally translated *God* when referring to the God; and rendered *gods* when referring to heathen deities), and then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular personal pronoun. Then we have the apocopated, Qal imperfect of *contend* again. With the *lamed* preposition and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine suffix, this would be **“...If god he [is], let him contend for himself.”** Joash's argument is quite simple: if Baal is God then he can deal with Gideon. It won't require the rest of the town to become involved. Elijah will make a similar argument from Mount Carmel—when Baal did not answer the call of his servants, Elijah suggested: **“Call out with a louder voice, for he is God; either he is chasing women or maybe he just stepped out for a moment, or perhaps he is on a journey, or maybe he has fallen asleep [after being on a drunk] and needs to be awakened.”** (I Kings 18:27b). Since Elijah had a lot more doctrine than Joash, his sarcasm was a lot more on point.

Now a good question would be why was the statue of Baal and the asherah on the property of Joash? Barnes suggests, and I am inclined to agree with him, that Joash is some kind of an official, a governor or the magistrate of the city. Not everyone in that town had a Baal statue in their backyard—in fact, this was no doubt some sort of an honor and something which went with a high position in the city (if not the highest position in the city). Now, Gideon did not learn what he learned in a vacuum—obviously someone taught him about the exodus out of Egypt, and very likely, this was his father Joash. Furthermore, Gideon's deist viewpoint (that God was with Israel and then God just picked up and walked away) was also not learned in a vacuum. He probably learned that from his father

as well. There is a great deal of inference which we can derive from these circumstances. Now, I realize that Gideon made this big deal about being the least in a family of losers, but, frankly, he did not want to participate in the plan that God had for him (and, at the time, he at first did not even realize that this visitor was God). God's choice of Gideon should make more sense now. He was a member of a family of influence, which would give him leadership credence with the population of Ophrah. Recall that we just studied that Gideon organized ten servants to help him pull down this statue of Baal. This should indicate that (1) this is no small, 6 foot statue; and, (2) Gideon comes from a family that enjoys some measure of wealth. All these things taken together further suggest that Joash is the highest ranking official of that city.

Now, the religious statues were in his father's backyard, so that Gideon was not trespassing on anyone's private property. The stand Gideon took caused his father to take a stand as well. Those who were loyal to Jehovah God now had a recognizable leader they could rally behind, that leader being Gideon. Although we have some resistance on the part of these men of the city of Ophrah, this is in no way the entire male population—this was a very vocal minority whom Joash is able to talk down by himself. I hope that by all of this, you are getting a better feel for just exactly who Joash and his son Gideon are—their influence and power; and that you have a better grasp of the overall situation as it occurs.

**And so he called to him in the day the that Jerub-baal, to say “Let contend with him the Baal” because he pulled down his altar.**

Judges  
6:32

**So he named him in that day Jerub-baal, to say, “Let Baal contend with him” because he [Gideon] pulled down his [Baal's] altar.**

**So Joash named Gideon that day; he named him Jerub-baal, which means “Let Baal contend with him” because Gideon had pulled down Baal's altar.**

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *qârâ`* (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*] which simply means *call, proclaim, read*. It is used here *to name* something. When followed by a *lâmed*, as it is here, it means *to give a name to*. *Strong's #7121 BDB #894*.

For reasons which are beyond me, *Jerub-baal* is supposed to be a transliteration, but it is not correctly transliterated. There is no *j* in the Hebrew. It is actually *y<sup>e</sup>rub-ba'al* (יֵרֻבְעַל) [pronounced *y<sup>e</sup>-roob-bah-AHL*], which is would be bettered rendered *Yerub-baal*. It means, essentially, *contending with Baal*. His name was derived from the verb which Joash used in the previous verse, which meant *to contend, to dispute, to grapple*. The couple Bibles which report that this means *let Baal plead* or *let her plead* miss the context entirely.<sup>38</sup> *Strong's #3378 BDB #937*. Gideon will be known by this name just as well as his own from that time forward (Judges 7:1 8:29, 35 9:1 I Sam. 12:11).<sup>39</sup>

Gideon's father seemed to take all of this in stride. He even nicknames his son *contending with Baal*. We are not given any further information here—that is, did Gideon's father ever indicate where he was? That seems to be unlikely, given what is written. Essentially, we aren't told anything and the implication is that Joash stood by his guns (finally), and that these men just wandered off, not getting what they wanted. That this nickname stuck and was used from thereon in (Judges 7:1), makes it most likely that *Gideon* was Gideon's given name (recall that it means *to cut down*), and that one of the reasons God chose Gideon was that God loves irony. Then we change scenes drastically.

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<sup>38</sup> That would be the NKJV and the Scofield KJV. Today's English Version reports this as meaning *let Baal defend himself*, which is not too bad of an over-simplification.

<sup>39</sup> I could also reference II Sam. 11:21, but that would require some explanation as well as a trip to the Septuagint, so we will save that for when we exegete it. For those who need to know right this instant, check the NIV Study Bible footnote for Judges 7:32.

## Gideon Rallies the Israelite Forces Against Midian

**And all of [the] Midianite and [the] Amalekite and sons of [the] east gathered together and so they crossed and so they encamped in a valley of Jezreel.**

Judges  
6:33

**Then all of the Midianites and the Amalekites and the sons of the east gathered together and crossed over [into Israel] and camped in the valley of Jezreel.**

**As a result, the Midianites, the Amalekites, and their allies from the east gathered together and crossed over into the land of Israel, camping in the valley of Jezreel.**

The first verb in this verse is the Niphal perfect of *ʿāçaph* (אָחַפּ) [pronounced *aw-SAHF*], which means *transfer, transport, relocate, gather, to gather and remove, to remove*. Strong's #622 BDB #62. This is followed by the adverb *yachad* (יַחַד) [pronounced *YAH-khahd*], which means *together, alike, all together*. Strong's #3162 BDB #403. Because these are nomadic peoples, we cannot say exactly from whence they originated. Amalek was originally located in the Negev (Num. 13:29) and Midian was down by the Gulf of Aqabah, although, admittedly, this is based more upon the testimony of Josephus than it is upon the Bible.<sup>40</sup> Although this is reasonable as the area that they occupied, being a nomadic people, they did not confine themselves to any one place nor did they leave a lot of physical evidence for archeologists to find. At this point in time, it is questioned that there every was a Midianite city (we have no historical record of any Midianite city nor have archeologists uncovered any cities that they attribute ownership to the Midianites). As for *the sons of the east*, Abraham had many sons by his wife Keturah (this was after Isaac was born), and he sent them off to the east; it is possible that these are their descendants.

Then we have the Qal imperfect of *ʿāḇar* (אָבַר) [pronounced *aw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716. The explanation here is that the primary forces of Midian and Amalek were still stationed east of the Jordan. The next verb is the Qal imperfect of *chānah* (חָנָה) [pronounced *khaw-NAW*] properly means *to incline*; it is used primarily *to pitch a tent, to encamp*. When followed by the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *aI*], it means *to encamp against someone else*. Here, it is followed by the *bēyth* preposition, so this will give us the location of their encampment. Strong's #2583 BDB #333.

The Valley of Jezreel is the same place where the enemies of Deborah and Barak originally stationed themselves. The Valley of Jezreel is a rather large area which falls roughly between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee (it is closer to the Mediterranean). The Valley of Megiddo is the northwestern portion of the Valley of Jezreel. This attack by Midian, Amalek and the sons of the east will be their last attack against Israel. Although it does not appear as though Gideon destroyed all of the Midianites (Judges 8:28 I Kings 11:18), this will be the last time that they rise up against Israel and they will quietly disappear from history by the end of Judges 8, mostly mentioned as a memory (Psalm 83:9 Isa. 9:4 10:26).

**And a Spirit of Y<sup>h</sup>owah clothed Gideon and so he blew with the trumpet and so were assembled Abiezrite after him.**

Judges  
6:34

**And the Spirit of Y<sup>h</sup>owah clothed Gideon so [that] he blew the trumpet and the Abiezrite were assembled following him.**

**Then the Spirit of Jehovah clothed Gideon so that, when he blew the trumpet, the Abiezrites assembled themselves and followed after him.**

The first verb is the Qal perfect of *lāḇash* (לָבַשׁ) [pronounced *law-BAHSH*], which means *to put on, to clothe, to be clothed, to wear*. Strong's #3847 BDB #527. The Holy Spirit clothes Gideon. There is no indication of when or how a believer would be given the strength of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Here, it is not apparent that Gideon's volition is involved. We find this phrase only three times in the Old Testament; here, I Chron. 12:18 and II Chron. 24:20. In I Chron. 12:18, we have David and his elite guard of thirty men, and in this passage, the Holy Spirit clothes the chief man of the thirty. In the latter passage, God the Holy Spirit clothed Zechariah apparently until the time of his death. This appears to be the beginning of the end for Judah (the southern portion of the divided

<sup>40</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities II. xi. 1.*

kingdom). We studied the **Doctrine of the Old Testament Ministry of the Holy Spirit** in Num. 11:25b. The short explanation is that a handful of men throughout the history of Israel enjoyed the filling of the Holy Spirit, as all believers have the opportunity to do. We do not find the same wording here as in Judges 3:10 11:29 13:25 14:6, 19. However, the general principle seems to apply. We have believers in Jesus Christ who are given the strength and the power of the Holy Spirit. As the divine good which is preserved throughout all eternity goes with all that we do when filled with the Holy Spirit, they enjoyed that same privilege.

The first thing that Gideon does is the Qal imperfect of *tâqa'* (טָקַף) [pronounced *taw-KAHQ*], which means *to thrust, to clap, to give a blow, to give a blast*. Strong's #8628 BDB #1075. This is followed by the *bêyth* preposition (*in, with*) and *the trumpet*.

What followed was the Niphal imperfect of *zâ'aq* (צָעַק) [pronounced *zaw-GAHK*], which means *to cry out, to call, to cry*. In the Niphal (the passive stem), it means *to call together, to assemble*. Strong's #2199 BDB #277. What follows is the preposition *'achar* (אַחֲרָיִם) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*], which means *after, following*. Strong's #310 BDB #29. Note the transformation from Gideon, who hid in a wine press to put together some granola for breakfast, to the Gideon who tore down the altars of Baal and asherah, to the Gideon who suddenly was leading his people against the forces of Midian and Amalek. We also grasp here why it was noised abroad that Gideon's deed of tearing down the altars—this gave him credence as a man of God and as a leader; prior to this, he was just some guy sifting out a little granola, hiding from the enemy. Many of the believers in Israel understood that they were related to the Lord of Glory, to Jesus Christ, to Jehovah God. Their allegiances were not with Baal or with the asherah. However, they did not have the nerve to take such a position themselves against Baal or against asherah. Gideon stood up against this idolatry, thus giving him the credence he needed to lead Israel.

The idea here is that because Gideon was clothed with the Holy Spirit, when he blew the trumpet, the first group of Israelites fell in behind him under his command. I have seen the power of the Holy Spirit and it is amazing. I recall having an evangelist speak to the students at the high school where I worked. He came three times. The first time, he spoke to a double classroom and the students filled those classrooms and spilled out into the hallway—they gave him perfect attention. Some even attended this a half-dozen times and they still felt that he had something to tell them. When he spoke to the students in the auditorium the next time, he had a group of Freshmen who had but 30 minutes or so to go until their lunch break and he had about 5 minutes worth of things to say when their bell rang. 99.9% of the time, a dozen kids would yell “Bell rang” (often in anticipation as well as after the fact) and there would be a mad rush for the doors to lunch. No one in that auditorium moved. They listened while he finished and he could have taken an additional fifteen minutes or their entire lunch and they would have stayed. That's the power of the Holy Spirit. Gideon was operating under that power.

**And messengers he sent into all of Manasseh and so called out then he after him and messengers he sent into Asher and into Zebulun and in Naphtali and so they went up to meet them.**

Judges  
6:35

**And he sent Messengers into all of Manasseh so [that] they [Manasseh; lit., he] were called out after him [Gideon]; he also sent messengers into Asher and into Zebulun and into Naphtali; and they went up to meet them.**

**Gideon sent messengers into all the regions of Manasseh, calling them to follow him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun and to Naphtali; and men from these nations came out to him in support.**

As is often the case, the general idea behind this verse is clear, but the nitty gritty is not clear; therefore, let me give you what others have done first:

*The Emphasized Bible*

Messengers also sent he throughout all Manasseh, and they also were gathered after him,—messengers also sent he throughout Asher and throughout Zebulun and throughout Naphtali, and they came up to meet them.

NASB

And 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.

**Owen's Translation** And messengers he sent throughout all Manasseh and they too were called out after him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali and they went up to meet them.

**Young's Lit. Translation** ...and messengers he hath sent into all Manasseh, and it also is called after him; and messengers he hath sent into Asher, and in to Zebulun, and into Naphtali, and they come up to meet them.

After the wâw conjunction, we have the masculine plural of mal<sup>el</sup>âk<sup>e</sup> (מַלְאֲכָיִם) [pronounced *mahl<sup>e</sup>-AWCH<sup>e</sup>*], which means *messenger, angel*. Strong's #4397 BDB #521. Gideon did not want to face all of this on his own or with a small army, so he contacted, first of all, Manasseh. Although it does not indicate here which side of the Jordan River he appealed to, my guess would be the west side, as that is where the other two tribes are from as well.

The next phrase can seem difficult at first, but it actually is not. The verb is the Niphal imperfect of zâ'âq (צָאָה) [pronounced *zaw-GAHK*], which means *to cry out, to call, to cry*. In the Niphal (the passive stem), it means *to call together, to assemble*. Strong's #2199 BDB #277. What follows the verb is the adverb gam (גַּם) [pronounced *gahm*], which means *in addition to, moreover, also, furthermore*. Strong's #1571 BDB #168. Then we have the emphatic use of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular pronoun, which refers back to Manasseh. Finally we end with the preposition 'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*], which means *after, following*. Strong's #310 BDB #29. With this preposition, we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, which refers back to Gideon. Literally, what we have is *and so he [Manasseh] was called out also after [or, to follow] him [Gideon]*.

Literally, the end of this verse reads: *And so they [the three tribes] went up to meet them [Gideon and his followers]*. Gideon did not fully believe that Israel would follow him, so, when they did, he sent messengers to other areas nearby to gather together more troops. Gideon was rather new to this so he really did not know how to proceed. When he realized that he would be followed, his troops were already in motion. Therefore, he could not send messengers throughout all of Israel. He only had time to contact the tribes which were nearby. Plus, obviously, he had to use some of his own men as messengers, thus reducing his own initial troop strength. So great was Gideon's influence, that everyone he contacted came out to join him in their war against the Midianites (recall with Deborah and Barak, there was a limited response from the rest of Israel—see Judges 5:17). It is not clear why Issachar is not mentioned. Barnes suggests that the Midianites were deeply embedded in Issachar and that they had to eradicate the Midianites from Issachar first.<sup>41</sup> I mention this, principally because I have no other explanation—however, I do not have any Scripture to back up Barnes' conjecture.

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## Gideon Tests the Lord One More Time

**And so said Gideon unto the God, "If Your being a deliverer in my hand Israel according as You have promised..."**

Judges  
6:36

**Then Gideon said to God, "If You are a deliverer of Israel by my hand, as that which You have promised..."**

**Gideon then said to God, "If You are going to deliver Israel by my hand, as you have promised..."**

After the hypothetical particle, we have the masculine substantive yêsh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced *yaysh*], which means *being, substance, existence*. It often acts as a substantive plus the absolute status quo verb *to be*; e.g., *[if] there be* (1 Sam. 20:8), *there is* (Esther 3:8), *there shall be* (Jer. 31:6). However, this acts not as a mere copula [pronounced *KOP-ye-la*], but existence is emphasized. In the KJV, the verbal portion of this is often italicized. The second word in the second line of Job 6:6 is the substantive of existence or being—*or is there, or does there exist*. Strong's #3426 BDB #441. Now, at first, this would seem to be easy, but with it we have a 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, which refers to God. Before we look at some other translations, let me throw in the Hiphil participle of the verb which follows, which is yâsha' (יָשָׁא) [pronounced *yaw-SHAH* or *yaw-SHAHG*], which means *to deliver*,

<sup>41</sup> Barnes' Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 433.

to save. Joshua's name was in part built upon this word. This verb is found only in the Hiphil and Niphal and the participle is often translated *deliverer, savior*; and less literally, *redeemer, rescuer, lifesaver, liberator*. Strong's #3467 BDB #446. On the one hand, this is very alliterate literature, on the other, it is difficult to render. This is followed by *in [or, by] my hand Israel*, giving us "If you will be a deliverer by my hand Israel..." or "If your being a deliverer in [or, by] my hand Israel...". Young renders this 'If thou are Savior of Israel by my hand...' Rotherham: *If thou art about to bring salvation by my hand unto Israel...* The NASB: "If Thou wilt deliver Israel through me [lit., by my hand]..."

This is followed by the kaph preposition and the relative pronoun, together which mean *according as, as, when, according to that which, as that which*. The kaph preposition = Strong's #none BDB #453. `asher = Strong's #834 BDB #. Together they = Strong's #834 BDB #455. What follows is the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect of dâ<sup>b</sup>var (דַּבַּר) [pronounced daw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR], which means *to speak, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. In the Piel, it is stronger and it can be translated *to promise*. In the Piel, it is stronger and it can carry with it the idea of providing guidance and direction. Strong's #1696 BDB #180. This is another verse that should not have been ended where it was ended. We have the first part of a conditional statement, the remainder of which follows.

Gideon does not seem to recognize what God has done up to that point. He has gone from a wimpy nobody scrounging for cereal hidden by a winepress, to a national leader. Gideon does not seem to be able to recognize the amazing transformation which has taken place in his own life—something that one could only attribute to the power of God the Holy Spirit. However, now he is going to have God prove to Gideon that He really is Himself.

**“[then] behold, I am laying the fleece of wool in the threshing floor. If dew is upon the fleece to her alone and upon all the ground [it is] dry, and I know that Your delivering by my hand Israel according as You have promised.”**

Judges  
6:37

**“[then] observe, I will lay the fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If dew is upon the fleece to alone and [if it is] dry upon all the ground, then I know that You will deliver by my hand Israel as that which You have promised.”**

**“...then note that I will lay this wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew on that fleece alone while it is dry around it on the ground, then that will tell me that You will deliver Israel by my hand as You have promised.”**

This fleece of wool is simply wool which has been sheered from a sheep and adhered together to make one piece. Where Gideon is going to place the *fleece of wool* is *in* (bêyth), a preposition which speaks more to proximity than anything else. Where the fleece would be placed is the masculine singular of gôren (גֹּרֵן) [pronounced GOH-ren], which means *threshing floor*. It is a place where grain is stored. Strong's #1637 BDB #175.

Then we have *if dew is upon the fleece*, and this is followed by lâmed (Strong's #none BDB #510) and bad (בַּד) [pronounced bahd] (Strong's #905 BDB #94) with a personal suffix; literally, they would read *to herself alone, to her alone*; together, they mean *alone, by themselves, by oneself*. The threshing floor is out in the open air and would therefore be covered with dew. What Gideon is asking for is for the fleece to be wet, yet the threshing floor around it to be dry.

Now you must fully realize that Gideon did not question God's ability to perform what He claimed He would perform; nor did Gideon doubt God's faithfulness. What he doubted was whether or not he was actually speaking to God. Was this Angel (or, Messenger, actually) Who came a spoke to him directly—could this really be the God of Israel? That is Gideon's only problem in all of this, which simply reveals some common sense on his part. However, what Gideon missed was the big picture. He wants God to do some parlor trick whereas God has already done the greater thing for Gideon. God made Gideon leader over all of Israel (at least northern Israel); God brought together the men from tribes who in the past had not rallied behind the cause of united Israel. Gideon sent out messengers and God sent men to follow him. This is what should have convinced Gideon that this indeed was God that he was speaking to.

Some people never see what God has done. I recall waking up one morning and realizing that I was well-off and provided for quite well financially. This was not something which I set out to do; there was no concerted effort or plan on my part—God just blessed me, and He did the same to my family. Coming from a family of six and being raised in a small three-bedroom house (it was expanded eventually), I was never poor, but we certainly were not well off. Therefore, when I realized that God had blessed me financially, it was a shock. It occurred gradually, and I certainly could have credited myself and my foresight—however, that was not really the case. The actual fact of the matter was that God saw to my needs and gave me an abundance. He blesses believers in a myriad of ways, and one cannot expect that, as a part of growth, that they will experience financial prosperity. Even more importantly, if you are a believer, simultaneously seeking fortune as a part of your blessing on this earth, that in itself can be a problem. You don't get to dictate to God what you want. You don't get to spend \$100 a month on lottery tickets and expect that you are giving God the opportunity to bless you financially. You don't get to gamble on Internet stocks throughout the day, and in this way, allow God to bless you. You don't get to be blessed how you think you should be blessed by blindly pursuing it. God will take care of you and He has His way and it is the only way. All you need to do is to get back into fellowship and stick with His Word—daily. **Trust in Jehovah with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; revere Jehovah and turn away from evil, and it will be healing in your body and refreshment in your bones. Honor Jehovah from your wealth and from the first of all your produce so that your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine** (Prov. 3:3–10).

**And so he was so and so he arose early from a next day and so he compressed the fleece and so he drained dew out from the fleece a filling of the bowl [with] water.**

Judges  
6:38

**And so it was. Then he arose early on the following day, and he compressed the fleece and he drained [enough] dew from the fleece to fill the bowl [with] water.**

**And what Gideon had asked for, came to pass. He arose early the next day and squeezed the fleece and drained enough water from the fleece to fill a bowl with water.**

We begin this verse with the wâw consecutive and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of the verb *to be*; followed by the adverb *so*. Because there is no neuter in the Hebrew, this is translated *and it was so* (KJV, NASB, Rotherham); *and it is so* (Young); *and that is what happened* (NIV, REB); *and so it was* (me).

Gideon arose early and this is followed by the mîn preposition (*out of, out from*) and the feminine singular of mâchôrâth (מָחֹרָת) [pronounced *mokh-or-AWTH* or *moh-khō-RAWTH*], which means *the morrow* (the day following a past day), *the next day, the following day*. An oddball thing here is that we have a *short Qâmats*, which looks exactly like a Qâmats to me. This letter is mentioned in Strong's and the "o" pronunciation is found in both Strong's and in The New Englishman's Concordance; however, this must be a rarity, as I don't find it in Mansoor's Hebrew nor is there a different, *short Qâmats* listed on the WordPerfect keyboard. With the mîn, this is literally *from the next day*; and it means *on the morrow, on the following day*. Strong's #4283 BDB #564.

Now we go into this wâw consecutive fit where we have four just in this verse, indicating a movement or indicating a series of consecutive actions are taking place. The next verb is the Qal imperfect of zûwr (זָוַר) [pronounced *zoor*], which appears to be a true homonym. Where it usually means *to be strange, to be foreign, to become estranged*; here it means *to press down and out, to compress* (Judges 6:38 Job 39:15 Isa. 59:5). It is possible that this is a foreign word which the Israelites picked up in addition to their own use. Strong's #2115 (and Strong's #2114 and 2116) BDB #266. The next verb is the Qal imperfect of mâtsâh (מָצָה) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*], which means *to drain, to drain out*. Strong's #4680 BDB #594.

So far, we have: **And so it was and so he arose early on the following day, and he compressed the fleece and he drained dew from the fleece...** Then we have the Qal infinitive construct of mâlê' (מָלֵא) [pronounced *maw-LAY*], which means *to fill, to make full, to be full*. In the construct, it means *a filling of, a fulfillment of*. It is not preceded by the lâmed prefixed preposition, so *to fill* is not exactly correct. Strong's #4390 BDB #569. The filling is of a *bowl*, and it is *of water*.



The upshot is that Gideon called the shots; he asked God to fill the fleece with water but to leave the ground around it completely dry. But then Gideon starts to think about this. Most of us don't work with fleece, but most of us have seen a sponge and we are dealing with the same principal. If you set a dry sponge on a wet table, it will absorb much of the water. His conclusion is that maybe what God did was not that impressive after all. Now, I said that Gideon starts to think about this; however, he may have already had a two-day battery of tests in mind. In either case, God knew from eternity past that Gideon would ask first for the fleece to be soaked, but the ground dry; and then on the next day for the ground to be soaked and the fleece dry. The latter sign would be the most convincing.

Now, it would be very easy to criticize Gideon at this point and to point out that he has assured God that if God performs that one simple sign for him that *"I will know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken."* Then Gideon will ask for just one more sign. We have already seen with Gideon's first meeting with the Angel of Jehovah that it took him some time before he was able to grasp that God was Who He was. That is, he wanted to present his theology to this person standing in front of him, not at first realizing that this was the Angel of Jehovah, Who was Jehovah God. My point being is that, under a little bit of pressure, Gideon did not think clearly; perhaps he didn't think clearly while under no pressure. Because Gideon's personality is what it is, it seems very likely that he asked for God to perform the first sign, and then, upon reflection, realized that it was not as big of a miracle as he had supposed in the first place and so added this addendum sign. Having been under pressure many times and generally not thinking clearly, I don't want to heave any stones at Gideon myself.<sup>42</sup>

Also, we should go with a little application. Some of you stupidly speak to God and tell him, "If you want me to make a left turn at Kirby and Main, rather than a right turn, then I want the next song on the radio to be..." You do this because you are a psycho and God's Word will bring you down to earth. Gideon was allowed this because he spoke to Jehovah God face to face as a man speaks to a man. Gideon was allowed this because he did not have the full Word of God to depend upon. You have God's complete Word and that is your complete guide to your life. You do not need supernatural signs and wonders in order to guide you. If you obey God's Word; if you confess your sins regularly; if you study God's Word for, say, an hour a day (this is via a pastor-teacher; not on your own), then you will get an abundance of guidance. You do not require signs and wonders to guide you. God's Word is completely capable of such a thing. However, you have to get under the ministry of a pastor who knows what his job is; you have to be filled with the Spirit; and when you get out of line, realize that is where you left God's path for your life and that you must confess that sin and get back on God's path. Do not focus on the teeny tiny minutia of life if you refuse to obey God where it is absolutely clear. Your focus should be upon what you know. And one of the most ignored, yet important passages of Scripture for new believers is: **Was any man called when uncircumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that...brothers, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called...are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife** (I Cor. 7:18–21, 24, 27). The key is, when you are not certain of what God has for you to do; if you are young in the faith (which means you are not certain about God's guidance in your life), then you put your car in neutral, you get into God's Word, and you grow. At some point in time, you will grow to where you can make some decisions. However, if you are not certain of God's guidance and you are making big decisions, you will often regret those decisions. And guaranteed, if you are asking God for any kind of a goofy sign, then you are not old enough spiritually to make any major decisions. You put your car in neutral and grow up first; then you can make a decision. You've got some 8 year old kid; do you allow him to make all the major decisions for himself in his life. Hell no, that would be stupid. He has to grow and he has to learn and he has to be guided so that at some point in his life, he can make some good decisions. It is a natural process. Ditto for you—if you are not certain what God wants you to do, then you are not ready to make any major decisions. You need to grow first, and then you will have the ability to make a major decision in your life.

<sup>42</sup> A much longer and fairly reasonable discussion of Gideon and his demands in this chapter can also be found in *Hard Sayings of the Bible*; Walter Kaiser Jr., Peter Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred Brauch; InterVarsity Press; ©1996; pp. 192–193.

And so said Gideon unto the God, “Will not kindle Your nostril [or, anger] against me and let me speak only the occurrence: in the fleece, let him be, please, dry upon the fleece alone and upon all the earth will be dew.”

Judges  
6:39

Then Gideon said to the God, “[Let] not Your anger be kindled against me and let me speak only [this] once: please, let it be dry upon the fleece alone and there will be dew upon all the ground.”

Then Gideon said to God, “Please do not kindle Your anger against me; just allow me this one additional indulgence: tomorrow, let it be dry on the fleece only let there be moisture upon the ground.”

The first verb in Gideon’s quote is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *chârâh* (חָרָה) [pronounced *khaw-RAWH*], which means *to kindle, to become angry*. The connection is this: you put together a little kindling, and you build a small fire; then you add some larger sticks, and the fire gets larger; then you add some branches, and it becomes larger yet. It is a process and the concept is *to seethe with anger*. Obviously this is an anthropopathism—God does not get angry; but the picture here is that God listens to what Gideon wants him to do and he gets a little mad. Then He thinks about it, and He gets a little more angry; He thinks about it some more, and He begins to seethe and burn with anger. Strong’s #2734 BDB #354. Gideon does not even use an anthropopathism here; the subject of the verb is the masculine singular of *ʿaph* (אֶפֶס) [pronounced *ahf*], which means *nose, nostril*, but is also translated *face, brow, anger*. The idea is then when a person was angry with you, the tilt of his head revealed his nostril or nose as being the most prominent feature. Strong’s #639 BDB #60. Gideon asks for God not to become angry with him for what he is about to ask. The problem is that he has been re-thinking this fleece thing and the first sign which he asked of God.

Then we have the 1<sup>st</sup> person, voluntative Piel imperfect of *dâʿvar* (דַּבַּר) [pronounced *daw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR*] again, which means *to speak, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. In the Piel, it is stronger and it can carry with it the idea of providing guidance and direction, if not a set of mandates (and this would be determined by context). Strong’s #1696 BDB #180. This is a strong stem to use with God. It is followed by the adverb *ʿak<sup>e</sup>* (אָכֵן) [pronounced *ahk*], which means *surely, only*. Strong’s #389 BDB #36. This is followed by the definite article and the feminine singular noun *paʿam* (פַּעַם) [pronounced PAH-ahm or PAH-gahm], which means *beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time*; obviously a pretty unusual array of meanings. Strong’s #6471 BDB #821.

An interesting thing: recall when Abraham was informed that Sodom, Gomorrah and several other cities were to be destroyed; Abraham asked if there were 50 righteous men (50 believers) residing in the city; would God still raze the city. God told him *no*. Then he drops the number and asks again, and then asks again after that. For the final question, Abraham says, “Oh, please do not be angry with me, and I will speak only this once...” (Gen. 18:32b). This sentence is almost word-for-word the same as what Gideon says. I don’t think that this is coincidental. I think that Gideon is quoting, albeit meagerly, from God’s Word. I also think that part of the reason that God indulges Gideon at this point is that Gideon does have some knowledge of His Word; furthermore, that is why God chose him.

Now we have the apocopated 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular of *to be*, the particle of entreaty, and the word for *dry*. What Gideon will be asking for is for the fleece to be dry, yet the ground around it to be covered with moisture.

Now Gideon asks God to do just the opposite of what he asked for before. Gideon is not asking for some incredible miracle; just some simple act of God to give him confidence. Now you might be wondering whether or not you should do this. After all, it is in the Bible and some old Bible guy is doing it. For some people, this is their theology. They read a little Scripture, get only the superficial gist of it, if even that, and then go out and practice it. That’s so goofy that words fail me. Gideon’s sign is that he has sent out messengers to various tribes and they have responded to his call for help. Gideon’s sign is that he has gone from being an afraid little nobody to the leader of northern Israel in the space of a few weeks. What Gideon is asking for is kid’s stuff compared to what God has already done.

**And so did God so in the night the that and so he was dry in the fleece only and upon all the earth was dew.**

Judges  
6:40

**And God did so in that night and it was dry on the fleece only and upon all the ground there was dew.**

**So God did what Gideon asked, and the next day, the fleece was dry and the ground around it was wet.**

God indulges us much more than we should ever be indulged. Gideon asks for some parlor tricks to bolster his confidence and God provided these tricks for him. Recall that God has already proven Himself to Gideon early on in this chapter; then He exalted Gideon to a four star general over most of the armies of Israel. Now Gideon asks for parlor tricks and God graciously accedes to his wishes.

Zodhiates is easier on Gideon than I am, and provides a rather even-handed approach: *Gideon desired a tangible sign to reassure him of God's leading. God does not condemn Gideon, but graciously gives him repeated signs to confirm the divine call (v. 36–40). These two signs...provided an increased assurance that it was God's supernatural working. Gideon, from that point on never wavered in his trust in God, even when God sent him into battle with only three hundred men.*<sup>43</sup> The last point is important, so I will repeat it: Gideon was a slow starter, asking God several times in this chapter to do things to reassure him that this was God and that God was going to do as He had promised. However, after this point in time, Gideon will function with certainty one-mindedness and dedication. He is now convinced that it was God Who spoke to him and he is convinced that he can now lead Israel to victory over the Midianites.

Now, for your application, it is fairly simple—you do not ask God for supernatural signs. God has given His complete and connected thought to mankind via His Word, the Bible. When you follow what is in His Word, He will take care of the small stuff. **Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight** (Prov. 3:5–6). **But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. Let not that man expect that he will receive anything from Jehovah. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways** (James 1:5–8).

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<sup>43</sup> *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 661.