

Gideon

D. God provided a prophet to correct His people (6:1-10)¹.

Gideon

Midianites, Israelites prepared shelters in cliffs, caves, and strongholds, eastern peoples invaded their country, all the way to Gaza

(Judg 6:1-10 NIV)



Gideon

E. God called people even from insignificant families to deliver His people (6:11-24).

Gideon

Angel of the Lord sat under oak in Ophrah,

Three possible places:

4 miles east of Bethel,

Or, on the plain of Esdraelon

(Valley of Jezreel) west of Mt Moreh (Abraham's first stop in Canaan, Jacob buried foreign gods there, Jacob incident of Dinah, Joseph's brothers' sheep, God's Curse, baldy, Joshua built altar on Mt. Ebal, Gideon selected his army there)

Or, west of Mt Gerazim near Shechem.

Probably near Shechem. Mt Gerazim and Mt Ebal form the valley of Shechem.

(Judg 6:11-24 NIV) The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. {12} When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said,

"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

{13} "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?'"

But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."

{14} The LORD turned to him and said,

"Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand."

Am I not sending you?" {15} "But Lord," Gideon asked,

"how can I save Israel?"

My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." {16} The LORD answered,

"I will be with you,

and you will strike down all the Midianites together." {17}

Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes,

give me a sign

that it is really you talking to me. {18} Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you."

And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return." {19} Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its

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broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. {20} The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. {21} 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. {22} When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD!

I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!"

{23} But the LORD said to him, "Peace!

Do not be afraid.

You are not going to die." {24} So Gideon

built an altar

to the LORD there and

called it The LORD is Peace.

To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

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F. God proved more powerful than Baal (6:25-32).

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(Judg 6:25-32 NIV)

That same night

the LORD said to him,

"Take the second bull from your father's herd,

the one seven years old.

Tear down your father's altar to Baal

and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. {26}

Then 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."

{27} So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town,

he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

{28} In the morning when the men of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar!

{29} They asked each other, "Who did this?" When they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it." {30} The men of the town demanded of Joash,

"Bring out your son. He must die,

because he has broken down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it." {31} But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning!

If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar."

{32} So that day they called Gideon "Jerub-Baal," saying,

"Let Baal contend with him," because he broke down Baal's altar.

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G. God's Spirit gives power to God-called leaders (6:33-40).

Gideon

Midianites, and others, in Valley of Jezreel

(Judg 6:33-40 NIV) Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. {34}

Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon,

and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. {35} He sent messengers throughout Manasseh,

calling them to arms,

and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them. {36} Gideon said to God,

"If you will save Israel by my hand

as you have promised-- {37} look,

I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor.

If there is dew only on the fleece

and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." {38} And that is what happened. Gideon rose early

the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew--a bowlful of water.

{39} Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request.

Allow me one more test with the fleece.

This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew." {40} That night God did so.

Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Gideon

H. Divine power, not human numbers, provides victory for God's people (7:1-25).

Gideon

(Judg 7 NIV)

Early in the morning

, Jerub-Baal (that is,

Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod.

The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. (Abraham's first stop in Canaan, Jacob buried foreign gods there, Jacob incident of Dinah, Joseph's brothers' sheep, God's Curse, baldy, Joshua built altar on Mt. Ebal, Gideon selected his army there) {2} The LORD said to Gideon,

"You have too many men

for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, {3} announce now to the people,

'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back

and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. {4} But the LORD said to Gideon,

"There are still too many men.

Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go.' {5} So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." {6} Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. {7} The LORD said to Gideon,

"With the three hundred men that lapped, I will save you

and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." {8} So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.

{9} During that night the LORD said to Gideon,

"Get up, go down against the camp,

because I am going to give it into your hands. {10}

If you are afraid to attack,

go down to the camp with your servant Purah {11} and

listen to what they are saying.

Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. {12} The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern

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peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore. {13}

Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream.

"I had a dream," he was saying.

"A round loaf of barley bread

came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed." {14} His friend responded,

"This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon

son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands." {15} When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out,

"Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."

{16} Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside. {17}

"Watch me,"

he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. {18} When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and

shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

{19} Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard.

They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.

{20} The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted,

"A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"

{21} While each man held his position around the camp,

all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

{22} When the three hundred trumpets sounded,

the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords.

The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

(Beth Shittah is in Moab, remember the Shittim wood, Zererah is a city in the Jordan Valley, and Abel Meholah and Tabbath are in the mountains of Gilead, east of the Jordan, north of Moab, 14 miles southeast of the crossroad of the Jordan and Jezreel valleys.)

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{23} Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. {24} Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, **"Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them**

as far as Beth Barah. **(Beth Barah is a ford over the Jordan River)** " So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they took the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. {25} They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the

rock of Oreb,

and Zeeb at the

winepress of Zeeb.

They pursued the Midianites and brought the **heads of Oreb and Zeeb**

to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.

Gideon

I. God is King and can rule His people without power groups, institutions, or symbols (8:1-35).

Gideon

(Judg 8 NIV) Now the

Ephraimites

asked Gideon,

"Why have you treated us like this?"

Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they criticized him sharply. {2} But he answered them,

"What have I accomplished compared to you?"

Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer? {3} God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?"

At this, their resentment against him subsided.

{4} Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet

keeping up the pursuit,

came to the Jordan and crossed it. {5} He said to the men of

Succoth, "Give my troops some bread;

they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian." {6} But the officials of Succoth said,

"Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?"

{7} Then Gideon replied,

"Just for that,

when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand,

I will tear your flesh

with desert thorns and briers." {8} From there he went up to

Peniel

and made the same request of them, but they

answered as the men of Succoth had.

{9} So he said to the men of Peniel, "When I return in triumph,

I will tear down this tower."

{10} Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor

(Karkor is in Gilead)

with a force of about

fifteen thousand men, all that were left

of the armies of the eastern peoples;

a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen.

{11}

Gideon went up by the route of the nomads

east of Nobah and Jogbehah (60 miles east of Sea of Galilee) (20 miles southeast of the Jordan and 7 northwest of Amman).

and fell upon the unsuspecting army.

Gideon

{12} Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them,
routing their entire army.

{13} Gideon son of Joash
**then returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres.
(between Mt Tabor and the Jordan River)**

{14} He caught a young man of Succoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the
names of the seventy-seven officials of Succoth,
the elders of the town. {15} Then Gideon came and said to the men of Succoth, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me by saying, 'Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your exhausted men?'" {16} He took the elders of the town and taught the men of Succoth a lesson by
punishing them with desert thorns and briers.

{17} He also
pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of the town.

{18} Then he asked Zebah and Zalmunna,
**"What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?"
"Men like you,"**

they answered, "each one with the bearing of a prince." {19}
Gideon replied,
"Those were my brothers,
the sons of my own mother. As surely as the LORD lives, if you had spared their lives, I would not kill you." {20} Turning to Jether, his oldest son, he said,

"Kill them!"
But Jether did not draw his sword, because
he was only a boy and was afraid.

{21} Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Come, do it yourself.
'As is the man, so is his strength.'

" So Gideon stepped forward and killed them, and took the ornaments off their camels' necks. {22}

The Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us
--you, your son and your grandson--because you have saved us out of the hand of Midian." {23} But Gideon told them,

"I will not rule over you,
nor will my son rule over you.
The LORD will rule over you."

{24} And he said, "I do have
one request,
that each of you give me an earring from your share of the plunder." (It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold

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earrings.) {25} They answered, "We'll be glad to give them." So they spread out a garment, and **each man threw a ring from his plunder** onto it. {26} The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to **seventeen hundred shekels**, (1,700 shekels = 680 ounces = 1,700 coins) not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels' necks. {27} **Gideon made the gold into an ephod**, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. (**Ophrah is in Valley of Jezreel west of Mt Moreh, Abraham's first stop in Canaan, Jacob buried foreign gods there, Jacob incident of Dinah, Joseph's brothers' sheep, God's Curse, baldy, Joshua built altar on Mt. Ebal, Gideon selected his army there**) **All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it** there, and **it became a snare to Gideon and his family.** {28} Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years. {29}

Jerub-Baal (Gideon)

son of Joash went back home to live. {30} He **had seventy sons** of his own, for he had many wives. {31} **His concubine**, who lived in Shechem, also **bore him a son**, whom he named

Abimelech

. {32} Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. {33} No sooner had Gideon died than the **Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals.** They set up Baal-Berith as their god and {34} **did not remember the LORD their God**, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side. {35} They also failed to show kindness to the **family of Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon)** for all the good things he had done for them.

Gideon

J. God does not honor self-seeking leaders of His people (9:1-57).

Gideon (after his death)

(Judg 9 NIV)

Abimelech (Gideon's Son who wanted to be king)

son of Jerub-Baal (Gideon)

went to

his mother's brothers in

Shechem

and said to them and to all his mother's clan, {2} "Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you,

or just one man?'

Remember, I am your flesh and blood." {3} When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said,

"He is our brother."

{4} They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelech used it to hire

reckless adventurers,

who became his followers. {5}

He went

to his father's home in

Ophrah

and on one stone

murdered his seventy brothers,

the sons of Jerub-Baal. But

Jotham, the youngest son (of Gideon)

of Jerub-Baal,

escaped by hiding.

{6} Then all the

citizens of Shechem

and Beth Millo gathered beside the

great tree at the pillar in Shechem

to

crown Abimelech king.

{7} When

Jotham was told

about this, he climbed up on the

top of Mount Gerizim (the blessing Mt. opposite Ebal the bald one)

and shouted to them, "Listen to me,

citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. {8}

One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves.

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They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.' {9} "But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and men are honored, to hold sway over the trees?' {10} "Next, the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and be our king.' {11} "But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?' {12} "Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come and be our king.' {13} "But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men, to hold sway over the trees?' {14} "Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come and be our king.' {15} "The thornbush said to the trees, 'If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!' {16} "Now

if you have acted honorably

and in good faith when you made Abimelech king, and if you have been fair to Jerub-Baal and his family, and if you have treated him as he deserves-- {17} and to think that my father fought for you, risked his life to rescue you from the hand of Midian {18} (but today you have revolted against my father's family, murdered his seventy sons on a single stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his slave girl, king over the citizens of Shechem because he is your brother)-- {19} if

then

you have acted honorably and in good faith toward Jerub-Baal and his family today,

may Abimelech be your joy,

and may you be his, too! {20}

But if you have not, let fire come out from Abimelech

and consume you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo,

and let fire come out from you,

citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and consume Abimelech!" {21}

Then Jotham fled,

escaping to Beer, and he lived there because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech. {22} After Abimelech had governed Israel three years, {23}

God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem,

who acted treacherously against Abimelech. {24}

God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal's seventy sons, the shedding of their blood, might be avenged

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on their brother Abimelech and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him murder his brothers. {25} In opposition to him these

citizens of Shechem set men on the hilltops

to ambush and rob everyone who passed by, and this was reported to Abimelech. {26} Now

Gaal

son of Ebed moved with his brothers into Shechem, and its citizens put their confidence in him. {27} After they had gone out into the fields and gathered the grapes and trodden them, they held a festival in the temple of their god. While they were eating and drinking, they cursed Abimelech. {28} Then Gaal son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should be subject to him? Isn't he Jerub-Baal's son, and isn't Zebul his deputy? Serve the men of Hamor, Shechem's father! Why should we serve Abimelech? {29} If only this people were under my command! Then I would get rid of him. I would say to Abimelech, 'Call out your whole army!'" {30}

When Zebul the governor of the city heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, he was very angry.

{31} Under cover he sent messengers to Abimelech, saying,

"Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem and are stirring up the city against you.

{32} Now then, during the night you and your men should come and lie in wait in the fields. {33} In the morning at sunrise, advance against the city.

When Gaal and his men come out against you, do whatever your hand finds to do."

{34} So

Abimelech and all his troops

set out by night and took up

concealed positions near Shechem

in four companies. {35} Now Gaal son of Ebed had gone out and was standing at the entrance to the city gate just as Abimelech and his soldiers came out from their hiding place. {36} When Gaal saw them, he said to Zebul,

"Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!"

Zebul replied, "You mistake the shadows of the mountains for men." {37} But Gaal spoke up again:

"Look, people are coming down from the center of the

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land, and a company is coming from the direction of the soothsayers' tree." {38} Then Zebul said to him,

"Where is your big talk now

, you who said, 'Who is Abimelech that we should be subject to him?' Aren't these the men you ridiculed?

Go out and fight them!"

{39} So Gaal led out the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelech. {40}

Abimelech chased him, and many fell wounded in the flight-

-all the way to the entrance to the gate. {41} Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and

Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem.

{42} The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields, and this was reported to Abimelech. {43} So he took his men, divided them into

three companies and set an ambush in the fields.

When he saw the people coming out of the city, he rose to attack them. {44} Abimelech and the companies with him rushed forward to a

position at the entrance

to the city gate. Then

two companies rushed upon those in the fields

and struck them down. {45} All that day

Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people.

Then he destroyed the city and

scattered salt over it.

{46} On hearing this, the citizens in the tower of Shechem went into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith. {47} When Abimelech heard that they had assembled there, {48} he and all his men went

up Mount Zalmon.

He took an ax and

cut off some branches

, which he lifted to his shoulders. He ordered the men with him, "Quick! Do what you have seen me do!" {49}

So all the men cut branches and followed Abimelech.

They

piled them against the stronghold and set it on fire

over the people inside. So all the people in the tower of Shechem,

about a thousand men and women, also died.

{50}

Next Abimelech went to Thebez

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and besieged it and captured it. {51} Inside the city,
however,

was a strong tower,

to which all the men and women--all the people of the
city--fled. They locked themselves in and climbed up on
the tower roof. {52}

Abimelech went to the tower

and stormed it. But as he approached the entrance to the
tower to set it on fire, {53}

a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head

and cracked his skull. {54} Hurriedly he called to his
armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and

kill me, so that they can't say, 'A woman killed him.'"

So his servant ran him through, and he died. {55} When
the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they went
home. {56}

**Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his
father**

by murdering his seventy brothers. {57}

God also made the men of Shechem pay for all their wickedness.

The curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal came on them.