

Gideon Series – Part 3

Judges 6:16-40

Jay Hohfeler

REVIEW:

In response to Israel's crying out after 7 years of domination by the Midianites:

- **God sends a prophet** to condemn their sin of pagan practices; strong indictment
- **God comes to Gideon** as the angel of the Lord (pre-existent Christ).
- **Finds him in a winepress**, simultaneously threshing wheat by hand while hiding from enemies

God's call to Gideon (the next Judge of Israel):

- **"The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor."**
- **"Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?"**

Gideon's 2 complaints:

1. **V13: If you are with us, why are we having all this hardship?**
 - *Answer: consequences of doing evil in the sight of the Lord*
2. **V15: How can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh; I'm the least in my family.**
 - *Answer: "Go in this might of yours... do not I send you?" (v14)*
"But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." (v16)

This was Gideon's call from the Lord, Himself.

"Go in this might of yours... do not I send you?" (v14)

The Angel's (Christ's) overall answer to all Gideon's objections:

"But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." (v16)

"Basically, God has nothing else or more to offer you. You can go through a lot with this promise. It does not answer your questions about details. It only provides the essential. Nothing about when or how or where or why. Only the what, or, better, the Who."

Dale Ralph Davis

Judges. Such a Great Salvation

¹⁷ And he said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. ¹⁸ Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay till you return."

¹⁹ So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. ²⁰ And the angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them." And he did so. ²¹ Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up

from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. ²² Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." ²³ But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." ²⁴ Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

"We western Christians don't understand Gideon's agony. We want to reach our hand into our Bible page and pat Gideon's shoulder and soothe him by saying "Don't worry, brother Gideon, God's not really scary like that--if only you had a new testament."

Dale Ralph Davis
Judges; Such a Great Salvation

VOCABULARY ON IDOL WORSHIP

Baal: originally many gods—over time became a proper name.

- Often depicted holding a raised lightning bolt
- Viewed as the supreme god of rain, thunder, agriculture, and fertility.

Baal Worship:

Ritual Practices: ecstatic rites, loud chanting, self-inflicted injuries to invoke Baal.

Sensuality: temple prostitution and the worship of sexuality.

Sacrifice: In certain extreme manifestations: firstborn children to appease the deity.

Asherah: Canaanite mother goddess - image carved into wood poles

Fertility and Life: Associated with the ocean, motherhood & nature, often symbolized by sacred trees or living groves.

Asherah Worship:

Asherah Poles (Asherim): wooden poles, trees, or living groves planted near altars.

Household Figurines: small, terra-cotta fertility figurines. Featured exaggerated maternal or tree-like characteristics for private, domestic devotion. Enlarged breasts & genitalia to emphasize fertility.

Bull: symbolized strength, fertility, wealth, divine power; sacred animal in pagan cults

Used for Sacrifice: valuable; considered a costly and significant act of worship

To gain favor with gods to:

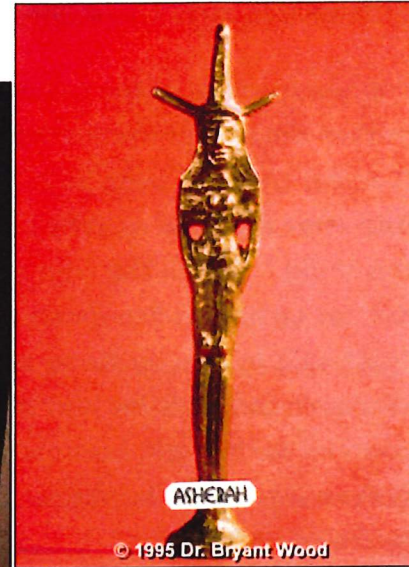
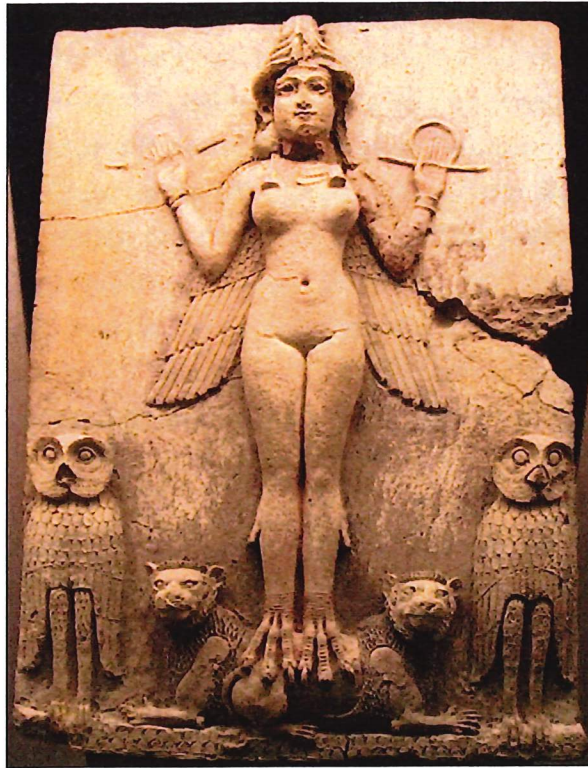
- Express gratitude
- Seek forgiveness
- Ensure fertility of crops, herds, or people
- Obtain victory in war



Baal



Asherah



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Asherah Poles →

²⁵ That night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it ²⁶ and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down." ²⁷ So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

Principle #1

God is very jealous—for me. He demands I starve & destroy idols in my life. Killing them won't ruin my life; false gods will.

Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal

²⁸ When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built. ²⁹ And they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And after they had searched and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." ³⁰ Then the men of the town said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it." ³¹ But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down." ³² Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he broke down his altar.

³³ Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. ³⁵ And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.



INDWELLED BY HOLY SPIRIT	FILLED BY HOLY SPIRIT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time event • Monergistic (one-way street) act of God • God imparts new spiritual life • Regenerated heart; born again • Precedes faith; necessary to believe • Happens before conversion • Saves, justifies before God forever 	<p>Special work for a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited time (can come & depart) • Limited extent • Limited purpose (particular work or purpose) • Limited effect (influence & power externally) <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the Judges, Saul; • Not Godly, but used w/filling of Holy Spirit

All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (whether Old Covenant or New Covenant).

Principle #2

In the lives of believers, the Holy Spirit operates this way:

One Indwelling and many fillings.

The Sign of the Fleece

³⁶ Then Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, ³⁷ behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said." ³⁸ And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. ³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew." ⁴⁰ And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.



"Laying out a fleece' is the lazy man's way to discern the will of God. It requires no work, little discipline, and almost no character development. God has a different program of guidance."

Bruce Waltke

Finding the Will of God: A Pagan Notion?

Remember in the winepress, what the Lord said to Gideon:

V12 **¹² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor."**

V14 **¹⁴ And the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?"**

V16 **¹⁶ And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."**

Was Gideon's problem that he did not know the will of God?

If not, then what WAS Gideon's problem?

Recalling what we've read so far in Judges 6, what's the evidence that God was WITH Gideon just as he said?

- *Coming to him when Gideon was hiding*
- *Giving him a clear, unambiguous call (mission)*
- *The Angel's miracle with the food on the rock*
- *Courage to destroy Baal altar*
- *Changing the hearts of the people around him the next day (sparing his life—incredible!)*
- *Changing his Dad's heart*
- *Courage to gather nearby tribes to fight for Israel*
- *God made those tribes agreeable (same heart; same new courage)*

Principle #3

God demonstrates His amazing attribute of patience.
However, we can't let Gideon's confusion be our example.
We cannot expect God to do His work—our way.

Principle #4

What did God want from Gideon (and us)?

- To prefer the Guide more than the guidance

Principle #5

When god calls us to something, He gives assurances and we must then step out in obedience and faith.
There is no honor in doubting God's future provision.

One Commentator said, "Gideon was tenaciously holding on to his doubts."

Is this what we find ourselves doing?