

Book of Judges

Part 3

Othniel

9 But when they cried out to the Lord, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. **10** The Spirit of the Lord came on him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war.

Ehud

15 Again the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man... who ran the sword through the belly of Eglon the King of Moab and did not pull the sword out but left it and his fat covered over the sword.

Shamgar

31 After Ehud came Shamgar, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He too saved Israel.

Deborah

Then **Deborah**, a prophet and leader in Israel. Along with **Barak** and **Jael**, the wife of Heber, who picked up a tent peg and a hammer and drove the peg through the head of Sisera, the commander of the army of Canaan, into the ground, and he died.

23 On that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites.

Judges 6

The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. **2** Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. **3** Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other

eastern peoples invaded the country. **4** They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. **5** They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.

6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

- The forty years of rest following the defeat of Sisera eventually came to an end. In their prosperity and complacency, **Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD.**

Here is the message of the Book of Judges
How the Nation of Israel conducted themselves Mattered to God...
Our Actions Matter to God...

Matthew 15 - (*Jesus, quoting from Isaiah*)

8

“These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

9

They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’

- God is watching...
- When Israel walked in Obedience to God, there was Peace...
- When Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord, they were given over to their enemies who oppressed them...
- On the flip side of the coin...
- Obedience to God brought deliverance from bondage...
- God never single handedly delivers Israel in Judges, He always partners with a willing, obedient person...

11 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 “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, **“but if the Lord is with us,** why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given 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 **“Pardon me, my lord,”** Gideon replied, **“but 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, leaving none alive.”**

This is an interesting part in the book of Judges:

Up until now all the other accounts of the Judges with an exception to Deborah have been brief, to the point and we look at those used by God in the 3rd person...

The story of Gideon is different...

The story is longer and more details is shared...

The person of Gideon is relatable...

When we read about the other Judges we see them as heroes...

When we read about Gideon we often see ourselves...

1. God chooses Gideon

- None of this made sense to Gideon
- Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress out of fear...
- The Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” Gideon has never seen himself as a Mighty Warrior...
- The Lord turned to Gideon and said, “Go in the strength you have...
- Gideon’s reply - “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

When God does something, it is not required to make sense...

When God does something that doesn’t make sense, pay close attention... Jesus was born in a manger...

God doesn’t need someone who is qualified...

All God needs is a willing vessel, He will take care of the rest...

“God doesn’t call the qualified
He qualifies the called.”

He often times chooses those who are utterly dependent upon Him...

- **Can you see yourself in Gideon yet?**

2. God narrows the margin

Judges 7

1 Early in the morning, 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. **2** The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, saying, ‘My own strength has saved me.’ **3** Now announce to the

army, '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 thin them out 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 as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink." **6** Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. 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 others go home."

- God is about to demonstrate His Power...
- He wants it to be clear, this victory is not because of a large army, it is because of the strength of man, this victory is because of the Lord...
- He welcomes the odds and says stack them up please...
- God already reduced Gideon's army from 32,000 to 10,000.
- Here He reduced it from 10,000 to 300.
- Now the army of Israel is less than 1% of its original size and the proportion was 400 Midianite soldiers to each Israeli soldier.
- Gideon could only trust in God because there was nothing else to trust.

Let me ask you something: Do you think God still does things like that today?

- He chose one man who had no children to start a nation...
- He chose twelve disciples to change the world...
- Now He will use 300 men to overthrow a vast army...

Just like he separated the 22,000 from the 10,000 and the 300 from the 10,000. God has a way of finding those who are completely sold out to Him. He always reserves for Himself a Remnant.

the Bible says

Luke 3

His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Matthew 25

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. **32** All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. **33** He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Matthew 5

10

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. **12** Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- God will separate the wheat from the chaff...
- The Sheep from the Goats...

3. God & Gideon win

Judges 7

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 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 bowed down and worshiped. 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.

24...So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they seized 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.

Judges 8:28

Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land had peace forty years.

On that unexpected night Gideon surrounded the Midianites...
They sounded trumpets all around...

When the trumpets sounded suddenly there were two kinds of people:
Those who were filled with Joy and who were filled with Dread...

The Bible says there are some trumpet blasts yet to come...
For some it will be Joyful and for others it will be Dreadful...

Are you Ready?
Are you Ready for the trumpet call of God?

Closing:

- 1. God chooses Gideon**
- 2. God narrows the margin**
- 3. God & Gideon win**