

General Church Education



Gideon Is Called

Judges 6

Lesson 21

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

Gideon Is Called

Judges 6

Teacher Background

Once again, Israel worshiped idols. This time they were overcome by the Midianites, Amalekites and sons of the East. These nomadic tribes appeared at harvest and stole Israel's crops, so the people were starving. When Israel cried out, the Lord raised up Gideon as a judge.

As Gideon threshed wheat secretly, an angel appeared and called him to save the people. Gideon asked for a sign to know it was the Lord talking to him. With his staff, the angel miraculously burned up an offering that Gideon placed on a rock. The angel told Gideon to destroy Baal's altar, build an altar to the Lord, and sacrifice a bull. Fearing he might be harmed, Gideon obeyed at night. When the Israelites saw this, they wanted to kill Gideon, but his father stopped them.

Then the Lord gathered Israel's enemies in the valley of Jezreel, ready to attack. Gideon asked four tribes for help, but before the battle he wanted a sign that he could trust the Lord to be with him. The Lord gave Gideon the sign of the fleece. This story depicts a time when the Lord makes us strong so we can get rid of evil things which are spoiling our life. Gideon, from the tribe of Manasseh, represents love of the neighbor being acted on in our lives.

Key Ideas

- When Israel turned from the Lord enemies attacked.
- The Lord raised Gideon as a judge so people remember the Lord and obey His commandments.
- The Lord gave Gideon signs so he would know the Lord was with him.

From the Writings

“Midian’ stands for those under the influence of falsity because the good of life does not exist with them; ‘Amalek’ for those under the influence of falsities with which they assail truths; ‘the sons of the east’ for those who possess cognitions that support what is false.” *Arcana Coelestia* 3762.6

Angels have absolutely no power on their own. All the power they have comes from the Lord. They are powerful to the extent that they recognize this fact. Any of them who believe that their power comes from themselves immediately become so weak that they cannot resist even a single evil spirit. This is why angels take absolutely no credit to themselves and turn down any praise or admiration for anything they have done, but attribute it all to the Lord. See *Heaven and Hell* 230.

A rod and staff signify the power of Divine Truth because they were branches of trees, and these signify the knowledges of truth and good, which are the truths of the natural person; and as they were used to support the body, they signified power. See *Apocalypse Explained* 727.

‘And God will give to you of the dew of heaven’ means from Divine Truth; ‘and of the fatness of the land’ means from Divine Good. In the highest sense, in which they have reference to the Lord, both are Divine. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3579.

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Vocabulary

thresh—beating wheat to remove the husk

winepress—hollow in a rock where grapes were trodden to make wine

sign—an action showing the Lord to be present

fleece—wool shorn from a sheep at one shearing

The children of Israel settled down to live in the land of Canaan. As they started to prosper, they forgot the amazing miracles the Lord had done for them. They did not remember how He helped them cross the Jordan River. They did not remember how He helped them conquer their enemies. They started to worship false gods, such as Baal. They built altars and wooden statues or idols to worship.

The Lord needed a way to lead the children of Israel back to Him. So He let the Midianites and other enemies overpower them. These enemies were nomads. They lived in tents and moved from place to place. They lived in deserts to the south and north of Canaan. They did not have houses, and they did not grow their own food. Instead, they stole other people's food for themselves and their animals.

For seven years the children of Israel sowed seeds and tended their fields. But each year, as the crops were ripening, the Midianites crossed the river Jordan with their cattle and camels, and set up

tents in the valley of Jezreel. Then they ate up all the harvest. There were so many of them that the Word says they were like a swarm of locusts. When they had eaten or destroyed everything, they left, and the children of Israel had nothing to eat. They were starving. The bare fields are like a mind that is eaten up by selfish thoughts and feelings. It does not bear fruit or serve others. It cannot be useful.



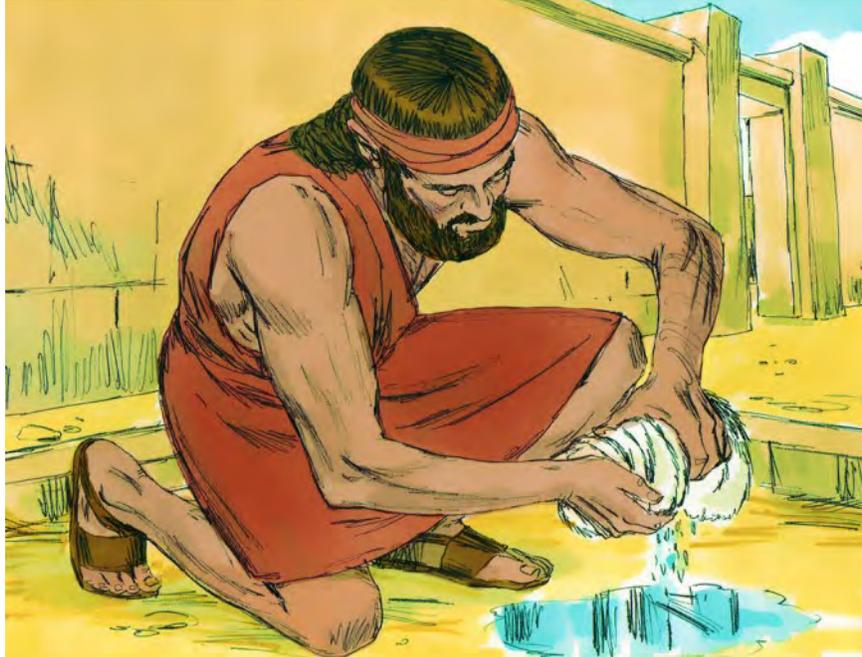
The Israelites Cried for Help

Have you ever hidden something you have done or are thinking about from the light of truth? The Israelites were so afraid that they hid in caves in the mountains. They desperately cried out to the Lord. The Lord sent a prophet to tell them what was wrong.

Read Judges 6:1-10.

An Angel Appeared

Then the angel of the Lord came to Gideon to ask him to deliver the children of Israel from the Midianites. He appeared as Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress. The winepress was a hollow cut in a rock where grapes were trodden and crushed to make wine. Gideon was trying to save the wheat by keeping it safely out of sight of the Midianites. The Midianites would not expect to find wheat there. The angel said, “The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!”



Gideon’s Response

Gideon was discouraged by all that was happening. He felt weak. When the Lord asked him to save Israel from Midianites, he said, “Indeed, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”

Do you remember what Moses said to the Lord at the burning bush? “Who am I...that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” The Lord gave Moses two signs so he would believe he was powerful enough to do what the Lord asked (see Exodus 4:8-11). Gideon also asked for signs.

Read Judges 6:11-18.

The First Sign

Gideon prepared a meal of meat and bread for the angel visitor. He laid the food on a rock. The angel touched it with his staff and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the food. Then Gideon knew he had seen the Angel of the Lord face to face, and that power of the Lord would be with him. So Gideon built an altar to the Lord in Ophrah. He called the altar The-Lord-Is-Peace.

Read Judges 6:19-24.

Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal

To defeat their enemies, the Israelites had to worship the Lord alone. So, that same night, Gideon obeyed the Lord. Even though he knew everyone would be angry, he destroyed his father’s altar

to Baal and cut down the idol beside it. He built an altar to the Lord on top of the rock and used the wood from the idol to offer his father's young bull as a burnt sacrifice. Gideon bravely did what was right while everyone around him did what was wrong.

Read Judges 6:25-33.

After this the Midianites, the Amalekites and the Sons of the East gathered in the Valley of Jezreel to attack Israel. The spirit of the Lord came on Gideon. He blew his trumpet to gather his family and sent messengers to summon warriors from the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali.

Read Judges 6:34-35.

The Second Sign

As Israel's enemies gathered to fight, Gideon asked the Lord for the sign of the fleece to be certain that he would succeed in saving Israel. Fleece is the wool cut off sheep at shearing time. Gideon put the fleece on the ground. He asked the Lord to send dew on the fleece, but not on the ground. Dew is water in the air that forms droplets on cold surfaces. Maybe you have walked across grass in the early morning and your feet have become wet with dew? Dew usually settles on everything, so Gideon asked for an amazing miracle. He wanted the dew to be on the fleece, but not on the ground. In the morning, he wrung a bowl full of dew out of the fleece, but the ground was dry.

The Third Sign

Gideon still needed one more sign to trust the Lord. This time he asked the Lord to send dew on the ground, but not on the fleece. And the Lord did. Then Gideon knew that the Lord was with him and would help drive out the strangers spoiling their land. In the next lesson you will learn how the Lord gave Gideon a great victory.

Read Judges 6:35-40.

Discussion Questions

- What did the Lord command the children of Israel to do with the nations in the land? Did they do it?
- What happened when Israel did not follow the Lord's commandments? Are there times when it has been hard for you to follow a commandment? What made it hard?
- Where can we get the strength to fight against wrong ideas and selfish feelings? How did the angel give Gideon the courage to tear down the altar of Baal?
- The second commandment says we are not to make carved images and worship them. What carved images might we worship today? How can we tear these images down?
- As soon as Gideon tore down the altar of Baal he saw Israel's enemies preparing to attack Israel. Can we fight our spiritual enemies without seeing them first? How does seeing problems make it possible to fight against them?
- How can praying or reading the Word help when you are struggling?

Activity Overview | Gideon Is Called

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Wait on the Lord;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the Lord. Psalm 27:14

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Gideon in the Winepress Collage
- Gideon and the Fleece Project
- Picture to color—Gideon and the Fleece (Judges 6)

Additional Activity Ideas

- Draw pictures of the three signs Gideon received from the Lord. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-draw-gideons-three-signs-judges06.pdf>.
- Review the events of Judges 6 by matching quotations from the story with questions about what happened. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-choose-a-quotation-to-match-a-question-about-gideon-judges06.pdf>.

Activity 1 | Gideon in the Winepress Collage

Create a collage to illustrate the dramatic moment when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, calling Gideon to lead his people against their enemies.

Materials Needed

Gideon, Angel and Winepress templates

blue paper to use as a background

brown paper or sandpaper for the winepress

crayons, markers or pencils

scissors

glue

Optional: small seeds, brown pipe-cleaners, glitter

Directions

1. Gideon was in a winepress—a place hollowed out of the ground. Cut out the *Winepress template*, p. 126. Trace around the template on the back of a piece of sandpaper or brown paper. Cut the winepress out and glue it to the bottom of the blue background paper.
2. Color the pictures of Gideon and the Angel.
3. Cut out the figures and glue them to the collage, placing Gideon in the winepress hollow looking at the angel beside him.
4. Add details such as the terebinth (cashew) tree with crayons or markers.
5. *Optional:* Decorate the collage with small seeds to represent the grain Gideon was threshing, brown pipe-cleaners or small sticks for the angel's staff and/or for Gideon's threshing flail, glitter around the angel, etc.



Gideon, Angel and Winepress



Activity 2 | Gideon and the Fleece

Gideon asked the Lord for a sign that the Israelites would win the battle against their enemies. He put out a fleece on two nights. After the first night there was dew on the fleece but the ground was dry. After the second night, the ground was wet with dew but the fleece was completely dry. Create a mirror-image picture to show the miracles that happened during these two nights.

Materials Needed

copy of *Ground for Fleece* p. 128
2 pieces white felt or paper, approx. 7”x 4½” (18cm x 11cm)
white liquid glue
blue paint or food coloring
a lid or paper plate for mixing paint and glue
cotton buds (e.g. Q-tips)
tape
scissors



Directions

1. Make a two-sided picture to show the miracle of the fleece the Lord did each night.
2. Fold the *Ground for Fleece* along the tan line. Starting in the center of the fleece shape, poke the scissors through *both* pages. Cut out the fleece shape through both pages.
3. Unfold the *Ground for Fleece* page. It should have a fleece-shaped hole on each side of the tan line. Tape a piece of white felt or white paper to the back of each hole so the “fleece” shows on the picture side of the paper.
4. Now you are ready to add the dew! Squeeze some white glue into a lid or onto a paper plate. Add a drop of blue paint or blue food coloring and mix it into the glue using a cotton bud (e.g. Q-tip).
5. Create the dew by dipping the end of a cotton bud into the blue glue. On one side of your page make blue glue dots *only* on the fleece to show what happened on the first night Gideon put out the fleece.
6. On the other side of the page make blue dots *only* on the ground to show what happened on the second night Gideon put out the fleece.
7. Tape the backs together to make the project two-sided.

Ground for Fleece



