

GOD CALLED GIDEON



Judges 6

After Deborah rescued Israel, there was peace in the nation for 40 years. After Deborah was gone, Israel again sank into sin. This time, God sent the Midianites to oppress Israel. Midian was more of an annoying bully than a super power of the day. Midian was east of Israel, and the Midianites and Amalekites would band together and raid Israel during the growing and harvesting season. Midian's tactic was to destroy everything that was growing, much like locusts.

Israel had taken to creative techniques to hide their crops and threshing so Midian would not know what they were doing. This is where we meet the next judge of Israel. Gideon was inside a winepress. This press would have been dug into the hard rocky ground so that when the grapes were pressed, the juice would run down and be collected. Threshing wheat inside a winepress would not have been ideal because threshing required wind, something that did not typically blow inside a hole in the ground.

As Gideon was threshing wheat, an angel appeared and gave Gideon a special task to do. Gideon considered himself to be a resident from the smallest clan of the smallest tribe in Israel and he didn't feel qualified to be the rescuer of Israel. As a matter of fact, Gideon tested God to gain confirmation that God's will was for Gideon to lead the nation into battle against the Midianites.

The name *Gideon* means "to hack or cut to pieces." This is exactly what God asked of Gideon as his first task. The false idols that littered the countryside had to be taken down and Gideon needed to start in the house of his own father. Gideon went at night and tore down the Asherah pole on his father's property and destroyed the altar to Baal.

Facing protest from his community, Gideon eventually was convinced through additional signs that God indeed was calling him to be the leader of God's army as they rid the nation from the oppression of Midian.