

51 Gideon Meets God

MEMORY VERSE: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matt 28:20

SCRIPTURES: Judges 6

AIM: God is superior.

Before Joshua died, he warned the Israelites that they could not serve God in a way that would please Him in their own strength. And not long after he died, the Israelites proved Joshua right. In fact, they stopped even trying to please God. Instead, they turned to false gods and worshiped sticks and stones. And when they did that, God stopped protecting them from their enemies. Yet even then, when the Israelites would cry out for help, God would show mercy on them by choosing a person (who would be called a "judge") to save them from their enemies. In all, God sent 15 different judges in a period of about 300 years.

One of the judges was named Gideon. One day the angel of God came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to a man named Joash who had a son named Gideon. The angel of God appeared to him and said, "God is with you, O mighty warrior!"

Gideon replied, "It doesn't feel like God is with us, because Midian has overpowered us for seven years."

But God faced him directly: "You will go and save Israel from Midian."

Gideon said to him, "Me, my master? How and with what could I ever save Israel? Look at me. My clan's the weakest in Manasseh and I'm the runt of the litter."

God said to him, "**I'll be with you.** Believe me, you'll defeat Midian as one man."

Gideon prepared a meal to share with his visitor to see if it was the Lord who was providing this message. And when he returned with it, God consumed the offering with fire right in front of Gideon's eyes!

Gideon said, "Oh no! Master, God! I have seen the angel of God face-to-face!"

But God reassured him, "Peace, don't panic. You won't die."

Then Gideon built an altar there to God and named it "God's Peace."

Next, God told Gideon to tear down the altar of the false god, Baal, that the people were worshiping. And that night, Gideon did exactly as God commanded. In the morning, the people of the town were furious and demanded from Joash to bring his son out so they could punish him for destroying their altar.

But Joash stood up to the crowd pressing in on him, "Are you going to fight Baal's battles for him? Anyone who takes Baal's side will be dead by morning. **If Baal is a god in fact, let him fight his own battles and defend his own altar.**"

They then nicknamed Gideon Jerub-Baal because with God's strength, he tangled with Baal and was victorious.

After God's demonstration of His superiority over false gods, He had more plans for Gideon. He was going to use him in a mighty way to provide victory over the Midianites who were oppressing them.