

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF JUDGES

Message Eight

The Intrinsic Significance of Gideon as God's Valiant Warrior

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Judg. 6—9

- Judg. 6:1 Then the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years.
- Judg. 6:2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the children of Israel made for themselves the dens which are in the mountains as well as the caves and the strongholds.
- Judg. 6:3 And whenever Israel sowed its seed, Midian rose up with Amalek and the children of the east, and went up against them.
- Judg. 6:4 And they encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land until you come to Gaza, and they left no sustenance in Israel, or sheep or ox or donkey.
- Judg. 6:5 For they went up with their cattle and their tents and came in like a locust swarm in number; both they and their camels were without number. And they came into the land to destroy it.
- Judg. 6:6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of Midian. And the children of Israel cried out to Jehovah.
- Judg. 6:7 And when the children of Israel cried out to Jehovah because of Midian,
- Judg. 6:8 Jehovah sent a man who was a prophet to the children of Israel. And he said to them, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, It was I who brought you up out of Egypt and brought you out from the slave house;
- Judg. 6:9 And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you. And I drove them out before you and gave you their land.
- Judg. 6:10 And I said to you, I am Jehovah your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But you did not listen to My voice.
- Judg. 6:11 And the Angel of Jehovah came and sat under the terebinth that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while Gideon his son was beating out the wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites.
- Judg. 6:12 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said to him, Jehovah is with you, valiant warrior.
- Judg. 6:13 And Gideon said to Him, Please, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, then why has all this happened to us? And where are all His wondrous deeds that our fathers recount to us, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up out of Egypt? But now Jehovah has abandoned us and delivered us into the hand of Midian.
- Judg. 6:14 Then Jehovah turned to him and said, Go in this strength of yours, and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Indeed I have sent you.
- Judg. 6:15 And he said to Him, Please, Lord, by what way can I save Israel? My clan here is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.
- Judg. 6:16 And Jehovah said to him, Surely I will be with you, and you will strike the Midianites as one man.

Judg. 6:17 And he said to Him, If now I have found favor in Your sight, perform a sign for me that it is You who are speaking with me.

Judg. 6:18 Do not depart from here until I come to You and bring my present and set it before You. And He said, I will remain until you return.

Judg. 6:19 So Gideon went and prepared a kid and an ephah of flour in unleavened cakes. He put the flesh in a basket and put the broth in a pot, and he brought it out to Him under the terebinth. And he presented it.

Judg. 6:20 And the Angel of God said to him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock; and pour out the broth. And he did so.

Judg. 6:21 And the Angel of Jehovah put forth the end of the staff that was in His hand and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And fire came up from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And the Angel of Jehovah went from his sight.

Judg. 6:22 And Gideon saw that He was the Angel of Jehovah. And Gideon said, Alas, O Lord Jehovah! For I have seen the Angel of Jehovah face to face.

Judg. 6:23 And Jehovah said to him, Peace be with you. Do not be afraid; you shall not die.

Judg. 6:24 Then Gideon built an altar there to Jehovah, and he called it Jehovah-shalom. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Judg. 6:25 And that night Jehovah said to him, Take your father's bull, that is, the second bull, seven years old; and tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it.

Judg. 6:26 And build an altar to Jehovah your God upon the top of this stronghold in the ordered manner. Then take that second bull, and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you will cut down.

Judg. 6:27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as Jehovah had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's house and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it at night.

Judg. 6:28 And when the men of the city rose up early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, broken down; and the Asherah beside it was cut down. And the second bull had been offered upon the altar that had been built.

Judg. 6:29 And they said to one another, Who has done this thing? And after they inquired and sought about, they said, Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.

Judg. 6:30 Then the men of the city 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.

Judg. 6:31 And Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him will be put to death while it is still morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself; for his altar has been broken down.

Judg. 6:32 Therefore on that day he named Gideon Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal contend against him, for he has broken down his altar.

Judg. 6:33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east gathered together, and they crossed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel.

Judg. 6:34 And the Spirit of Jehovah clothed Gideon; and he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called up behind him.

Judg. 6:35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they were also called up behind him. And he sent messengers throughout Asher and Zebulun and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.

Judg. 6:36 And Gideon said to God, If indeed You will save Israel through my hand, as You have said,

Judg. 6:37 I am laying here a fleece of wool on the threshing floor: If there is dew on the fleece alone and it is dry on all the ground, I will know that You will save Israel through my hand, as You have said.

Judg. 6:38 And so it happened. When he rose up early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung dew from the fleece, a bowlful of water.

Judg. 6:39 Then Gideon said to God, May Your anger not burn against me, but allow me to speak only this one time. Allow me to make this test with the fleece only this one time. Let it be dry on the fleece only, and let there be dew on all the ground.

Judg. 6:40 And God did so that night, so that it was dry on the fleece only and there was dew on all the ground.

- Judg. 7:1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was to their north, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.
- Judg. 7:2 And Jehovah said to Gideon, The people with you are too many for Me to deliver Midian into their hand; Israel might vaunt himself against Me, saying, My own hand has saved me.
- Judg. 7:3 Now then proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, Whoever is afraid and trembling should return and depart from here. And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.
- Judg. 7:4 Then Jehovah said to Gideon, The people are still too many. Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. And he of whom I say to you, This one shall go with you, he shall go with you. And every one of whom I say to you, This one shall not go with you, he shall not go.
- Judg. 7:5 So he brought the people down to the water. And Jehovah said to Gideon, Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart; likewise everyone who bows down on his knees to drink.
- Judg. 7:6 And the number of those who lapped the water into their mouth with their hand was three hundred men, but the rest of the people bowed down on their knees to drink water.
- Judg. 7:7 And Jehovah said to Gideon, Through the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and I will deliver Midian into your hand. But let all the other people go, each to his own place.
- Judg. 7:8 Then the people took provisions in their hand and their trumpets; and he sent all the men of Israel away, each to his own tent, but retained the three hundred men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.
- Judg. 7:9 And that night Jehovah said to him, Arise; go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand.
- Judg. 7:10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down with Purah your young man into the camp;
- Judg. 7:11 And you will hear what they are saying. Then afterward your hands will be strengthened so that you can go down against the camp. So he went down with Purah his young man to the edge of the battle array that was in the camp.
- Judg. 7:12 Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay in the valley like a locust swarm in multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand on the seashore is in multitude.
- Judg. 7:13 And when Gideon came, at that moment a man was recounting a dream to his companion; and he said, I have just had a dream. There was this round loaf of barley bread tumbling through the camp of Midian. And it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and it turned it upside down. And the tent collapsed.
- Judg. 7:14 And his companion answered and said, This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. God has delivered Midian and all the camp into his hand.
- Judg. 7:15 And when Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, Arise, for Jehovah has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.
- Judg. 7:16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies; and he put trumpets into the hands of them all, as well as empty pitchers, with torches inside the pitchers.
- Judg. 7:17 And he said to them, Look at me, and do as I do. Right when I come to the edge of the camp, you shall do just as I do.
- Judg. 7:18 When I and all who are with me blow the trumpet, you also blow the trumpets around all the camp and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon!
- Judg. 7:19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch. They had just then posted the watch. And they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.
- Judg. 7:20 And the three companies blew the trumpets and shattered the pitchers; and they held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets were in their right hands to blow. And they cried out, A sword for Jehovah and for Gideon!
- Judg. 7:21 And each man stood in his place around the camp. Then the whole camp ran off, and they shouted

- and fled.
- Judg. 7:22 And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and Jehovah set each man's sword against his companion and against the whole camp. And the camp fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.
- Judg. 7:23 And the men of Israel were called up from Naphtali and from Asher and from all of Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.
- Judg. 7:24 Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, Come down against Midian, and seize the waters against them as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. And every man of Ephraim was called up, and they seized the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.
- Judg. 7:25 And they captured two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine press of Zeeb; and they pursued Midian. And they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.
- Judg. 8:1 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, Why have you done this thing to us, that you did not call us when you went to battle against Midian? And they contended with him sharply.
- Judg. 8:2 And he said to them, What have I done now to compare with you? Are not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?
- Judg. 8:3 It was into your hand that God gave the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you? Then their hostile spirit toward him subsided when he said this word.
- Judg. 8:4 Then Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the three hundred men with him, weary yet pursuing.
- Judg. 8:5 And he said to the men of Succoth, Please give us loaves of bread for the people behind me, for they are weary and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.
- Judg. 8:6 But the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your hand now, that we should give bread to your army?
- Judg. 8:7 And Gideon said, Because of this, when Jehovah does deliver Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will trample your flesh on the thorns of the wilderness and the briers.
- Judg. 8:8 Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way; and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered.
- Judg. 8:9 And he spoke also to the men of Penuel, saying, When I return in peace, I will break down this tower.
- Judg. 8:10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their camps were with them, about fifteen thousand men, all who were left of the entire camp of the children of the east; for there had fallen one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword.
- Judg. 8:11 And Gideon went up by way of the tent dwellers, east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he struck the camp when the camp was off guard.
- Judg. 8:12 And Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and he pursued after them. And he captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and threw all the camp into confusion.
- Judg. 8:13 And when Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle from the ascent of Heres,
- Judg. 8:14 He captured a young man from among the men of Succoth and questioned him. And he wrote down for him the princes of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.
- Judg. 8:15 Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning whom you taunted me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your hand now, that we should give bread to your men who are weary?
- Judg. 8:16 And he took the elders of the city and the thorns of the wilderness and the briers, and with them he trampled the men of Succoth.
- Judg. 8:17 And he broke down the tower of Penuel and slew the men of the city.
- Judg. 8:18 Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, What were the men whom you slew in Tabor like? And they said, As you are, so were they. Each one was like the children of a king in form.
- Judg. 8:19 And he said, They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As Jehovah lives, if you had kept them alive, I would not slay you.
- Judg. 8:20 And he said to Jether his firstborn, Rise up; slay them. But the youth would not draw his sword, because he was fearful; for he was still a youth.

- Judg. 8:21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, You rise up, and fall on us; for there is as much strength as there is man. And Gideon rose up and slew Zebah and Zalmunna. And he took the crescents that were on their camels' necks.
- Judg. 8:22 And the men of Israel said to Gideon, Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson as well; for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.
- Judg. 8:23 But Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Jehovah will rule over you.
- Judg. 8:24 And Gideon said to them, Let me make a request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his spoil. (The Midianites had golden earrings, for they were Ishmaelites.)
- Judg. 8:25 And they said, We will willingly give it. And they spread out a garment, and each of them threw an earring from his spoil there.
- Judg. 8:26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold. This was besides the crescents and the pendants and the purple garments that were upon the kings of Midian and besides the chains that were on their camels' necks.
- Judg. 8:27 And Gideon made an ephod with it and placed it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel went as harlots to it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his house.
- Judg. 8:28 So Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, and they lifted up their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.
- Judg. 8:29 Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his house.
- Judg. 8:30 And Gideon had seventy sons, the issue of his loins, for he had many wives.
- Judg. 8:31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech.
- Judg. 8:32 And Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and he was buried in the tomb of Joash his father in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
- Judg. 8:33 And as soon as Gideon died, the children of Israel turned again and went as harlots after the Baals. And they made Baal-berith their god.
- Judg. 8:34 And the children of Israel did not remember Jehovah their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies all around;
- Judg. 8:35 Nor did they show mercy to the house of Jerubbaal, that is, Gideon, for all the good he had done to Israel.
- Judg. 9:1 Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's brothers; and he spoke to them and to all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,
- Judg. 9:2 Speak now in the hearing of all the lords of Shechem, What is better for you, that all the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, rule over you, or that one man rule over you? Now remember that I am your bone and your flesh.
- Judg. 9:3 And his mother's brothers spoke of him in the hearing of all the lords of Shechem with all these words; and their heart inclined toward Abimelech, for they said, He is our brother.
- Judg. 9:4 And they gave him seventy pieces of silver from the house of Baal-berith. And with it Abimelech hired worthless and wanton men, and they followed after him.
- Judg. 9:5 And he went to his father's house in Ophrah and slew his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone; but Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, was left, for he hid himself.
- Judg. 9:6 Then all the lords of Shechem and all the house of Millo gathered, and they went and made Abimelech king at the terebinth of the pillar that was in Shechem.
- Judg. 9:7 And when Jotham was told, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim and lifted up his voice and called out and said to them, Listen to me, you lords of Shechem, that God may listen to you.
- Judg. 9:8 The trees once went forth to anoint a king over themselves. And they said to the olive tree, Reign over us.
- Judg. 9:9 But the olive tree said to them, Shall I leave my fatness, because of which God and men are honored by me, and go to wave over the trees?
- Judg. 9:10 Then the trees said to the fig tree, You come and reign over us.
- Judg. 9:11 But the fig tree said to them, Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?
- Judg. 9:12 Then the trees said to the vine, You come and reign over us.

- Judg. 9:13 But the vine said to them, Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?
- Judg. 9:14 So all the trees said to the bramble, You come and reign over us.
- Judg. 9:15 And the bramble said to the trees, If you are truly anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge under my shade; but if not, may fire come forth from the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon!
- Judg. 9:16 Now therefore if you have dealt truly and with integrity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt in a good way toward Jerubbaal and toward his house, and if you have dealt with him as his hands have deserved—
- Judg. 9:17 (For my father fought for you and risked his life, and he delivered you from the hand of Midian.
- Judg. 9:18 But you have risen up today against the house of my father and have slain his sons, seventy men, on one stone; and you have made Abimelech the son of his female servant king over the lords of Shechem, for he is your brother.)
- Judg. 9:19 Now if you have dealt truly and with integrity toward Jerubbaal and toward his house today, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you.
- Judg. 9:20 But if not, may fire come forth from Abimelech and devour the lords of Shechem and the house of Millo, and may fire come forth from the lords of Shechem and the house of Millo and devour Abimelech!
- Judg. 9:21 And Jotham ran off and fled, and he came to Beer and remained there because of Abimelech his brother.
- Judg. 9:22 And Abimelech was prince over Israel three years.
- Judg. 9:23 And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem, and the lords of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,
- Judg. 9:24 So that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be avenged and so that their blood might be put upon Abimelech their brother, who slew them, and upon the lords of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brothers.
- Judg. 9:25 And the lords of Shechem set men in ambush for him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed everyone who passed by them on the way; and Abimelech was told.
- Judg. 9:26 And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem, and the lords of Shechem put their trust in him.
- Judg. 9:27 And they went out into the field and gathered the grapes of their vineyards and trod them, and had a festival. And they went to the house of their god and ate and drank, and they cursed Abimelech.
- Judg. 9:28 And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech and who are we of Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem; but why should we serve this man?
- Judg. 9:29 But, oh, that this people were put in my hand; then I would remove Abimelech. And he said of Abimelech, Increase your army and come out!
- Judg. 9:30 When Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger burned.
- Judg. 9:31 And he sent messengers to Abimelech in Tormah, saying, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have now come to Shechem, and now they are stirring up the city against you.
- Judg. 9:32 And now rise up at night, you and the people with you, and wait in ambush in the field;
- Judg. 9:33 And in the morning, as soon as the sun rises, you shall rise up early and rush on the city. And right when he and the people with him come out against you, you shall do with him as you find occasion.
- Judg. 9:34 And Abimelech and all the people with him rose up at night and waited in ambush against Shechem in four companies.
- Judg. 9:35 And Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city. And Abimelech and the people with him rose up from the ambush.
- Judg. 9:36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains. But Zebul said to him, You are seeing the shadow of the mountains as though they were men.
- Judg. 9:37 And Gaal spoke again and said, Look, people are coming down from the height of the land, and one company is coming by the way of the terebinth of Meonenim.

- Judg. 9:38 Then Zebul said to him, Where is your boast now, that you said, Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? Is not this the people that you despised? Go out now, and fight them.
- Judg. 9:39 So Gaal went out before the lords of Shechem and fought with Abimelech.
- Judg. 9:40 And Abimelech pursued him, and Gaal fled from before him. And many wounded fell, up to the entrance of the gate.
- Judg. 9:41 And Abimelech dwelt in Arumah. And Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they could not dwell in Shechem.
- Judg. 9:42 Then on the next day the people went out into the field, and Abimelech was told.
- Judg. 9:43 And he took his people and divided them into three companies, and he waited in ambush in the field. And he looked, and there were the people coming out of the city. And he rose up against them and struck them.
- Judg. 9:44 And Abimelech and the companies that were with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city, and two companies rushed upon all those who were in the field and struck them.
- Judg. 9:45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day. And he took the city, and the people who were in it he slew; and he tore down the city and sowed it with salt.
- Judg. 9:46 And when all the lords of the tower of Shechem heard of it, they went to the stronghold of the house of El-berith.
- Judg. 9:47 And Abimelech was told that all the lords of the tower of Shechem had gathered together.
- Judg. 9:48 And Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him. And Abimelech took an ax in his hand and cut down a tree limb. And he lifted it up and put it on his shoulder, and he said to the people who were with him, What you see me doing, hurry and do as I have done.
- Judg. 9:49 So all the people also cut down each a limb. And they followed after Abimelech and set the limbs against the stronghold. And they set the stronghold on fire over them, so that all the men of the tower of Shechem also died, about a thousand men and women.
- Judg. 9:50 Then Abimelech went to Thebez; and he encamped against Thebez and took it.
- Judg. 9:51 But there was a strong tower in the middle of the city; and all the men and women and all the lords of the city fled there and shut themselves in; and they went up to the roof of the tower.
- Judg. 9:52 And Abimelech came up to the tower and fought against it. And he came near the entrance of the tower to burn it with fire.
- Judg. 9:53 And a certain woman threw an upper millstone upon Abimelech's head, and it cracked his skull.
- Judg. 9:54 Then he called immediately to the young man who bore his armor and said to him, Draw your sword and kill me; otherwise they will say concerning me, A woman slew him. And his young man pierced him through, and he died.
- Judg. 9:55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they went away, each to his own place.
- Judg. 9:56 And God repaid the evil of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by slaying his seventy brothers.
- Judg. 9:57 And God brought all the evil of the men of Shechem back upon their own heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal came upon them.

I. Gideon was raised up by God as His valiant warrior and sent by God to save Israel (Judg. 6:12-14; cf. John 8:29) from the oppression of the Midianites (Judg. 6:1—8:32); we must see the intrinsic significance of Gideon's success:

- Judg. 6:12 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said to him, Jehovah is with you, valiant warrior.
- Judg. 6:13 And Gideon said to Him, Please, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, then why has all this happened to us? And where are all His wondrous deeds that our fathers recount to us, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up out of Egypt? But now Jehovah has abandoned us and delivered us into the hand of Midian.
- Judg. 6:14 Then Jehovah turned to him and said, Go in this strength of yours, and save Israel from the

hand of Midian. Indeed I have sent you.

John 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

Judg. 6:1—8:32 See the verses listed under *Scripture Reading* of this message.

A. Gideon listened carefully to the word of God, something that was rare among the children of Israel at that time:

1. The Lord always wants to open our ears to hear His voice so that we may see things according to His economy—Rev. 1:10, 12; Job 33:14-16; Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6.

- Rev. 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,
Rev. 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,
Job 33:14 For God speaks in one way, / Indeed in two ways, without any perceiving it—
Job 33:15 In a dream, a night vision, / When deep sleep falls upon men / In the slumberings upon their beds—
Job 33:16 Then He opens the ears of men / And seals up their instruction,
Isa. 50:4 The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one.
Isa. 50:5 The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back.
Exo. 21:6 Then his master shall bring him to God and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

2. As the Spirit is speaking to the churches (Rev. 2:7a), we all need an opened, circumcised (Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51), cleansed (Exo. 29:20; Lev. 8:23-24; 14:14), and anointed ear (vv. 17, 28) to hear the Spirit's speaking.

- Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
Jer. 6:10 To whom shall I speak and testify, / That they may hear? / Indeed, their ear is uncircumcised, / And they are unable to listen. / See, the word of Jehovah has become a reproach to them; / They have no delight in it.
Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you always oppose the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, you also do.
Exo. 29:20 Then you shall slaughter the ram and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the lobe of the right ear of his sons and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the rest of the blood on and around the altar.
Lev. 8:23 And Moses slaughtered it and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.
Lev. 8:24 And he brought Aaron's sons near, and Moses put some of the blood on the lobe of their right ear and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot; and Moses sprinkled the rest of the blood on and around the altar.
Lev. 14:14 And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one who is to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.
Lev. 14:17 And from the rest of the oil that is in the palm of his hand the priest shall put some on the lobe of the right ear of the one who is to be cleansed and some on the thumb

of his right hand and some on the big toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering.

Lev. 14:28 And the priest shall put some of the oil that is in the palm of his hand on the lobe of the right ear of the one who is to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering.

B. Gideon obeyed God's word and acted on it—cf. Heb. 11:32-33a:

Heb. 11:32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

Heb. 11:33 Who through faith overcame kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

1. In the New Testament we have Christ's life of obedience and submission, and if we walk according to the spirit, we will spontaneously fulfill the righteous requirement of the law—Phil. 2:5-11; Rom. 8:4.

Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

Phil. 2:6 Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped,

Phil. 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;

Phil. 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.

Phil. 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Phil. 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Phil. 2:11 And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Rom. 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

2. If our attitude in coming to the law is to care only for the commandments in letters, we will have the law in the aspect of the killing letter; however, if we take every part of the law as the word breathed out by the God whom we love, we will have the law in the aspect of the life-giving Spirit; then the law will function to dispense God Himself as life into us as His loving seekers—Psa. 119:25, 116, 130; 2 Cor. 3:6; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

Psa. 119:25 My soul clings to the dust; / Enliven me according to Your word.

Psa. 119:116 Uphold me according to Your word that I may live, / And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

Psa. 119:130 The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple.

2 Cor. 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Tim. 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

3. To be vital is to be living and active by being filled with the Spirit inwardly and outwardly and by preaching the gospel and teaching the truths at any time and in any place by diving into the Word for the increase and propagation of the Lord—Dan. 11:32b; Acts 13:52; 4:8, 31; 13:9; 2:38; 5:32b; 2 Tim. 4:1-2.

- Dan. 11:32 And with his smooth words he will cause those who act wickedly toward the covenant to be profane. But the people who know their God will show strength and take action.
- Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders,
- Acts 4:31 And when they had so besought, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.
- Acts 13:9 But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him
- Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, Repent and each one of you be baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 5:32 And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.
- 2 Tim. 4:1 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:
- 2 Tim. 4:2 Proclaim the word; be ready in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching.

C. Gideon tore down the altar of Baal (the chief male god of the Canaanites) and cut down the Asherah (the chief female goddess); this touched God's heart because God hated the idols, which He regarded as men with whom His wife Israel had committed harlotry; intrinsically, an idol is anything within us that we love more than the Lord and that replaces the Lord in our life—Judg. 6:25-28; Ezek. 14:1-3.

- Judg. 6:25 And that night Jehovah said to him, Take your father's bull, that is, the second bull, seven years old; and tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it.
- Judg. 6:26 And build an altar to Jehovah your God upon the top of this stronghold in the ordered manner. Then take that second bull, and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you will cut down.
- Judg. 6:27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as Jehovah had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's house and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it at night.
- Judg. 6:28 And when the men of the city rose up early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, broken down; and the Asherah beside it was cut down. And the second bull had been offered upon the altar that had been built.
- Ezek. 14:1 Then some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me.
- Ezek. 14:2 And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying,
- Ezek. 14:3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I be inquired of at all by them?

D. By tearing down the altar of Baal and cutting down the Asherah that belonged to his father, Gideon sacrificed his relationship with his father and his enjoyment of society to follow Jehovah; for Gideon to do such a thing required that he sacrifice his own interests, and his sacrifice was a strong factor of his success—Judg. 6:28-32.

- Judg. 6:28 And when the men of the city rose up early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, broken down; and the Asherah beside it was cut down. And the second bull had been offered upon the altar that had been built.
- Judg. 6:29 And they said to one another, Who has done this thing? And after they inquired and sought about, they said, Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.
- Judg. 6:30 Then the men of the city 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.
- Judg. 6:31 And Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him will be put to death while it is still morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself; for his altar has been broken down.
- Judg. 6:32 Therefore on that day he named Gideon Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal contend against him, for he has broken down his altar.

E. As a result of the above four factors, Gideon received a reward—the economical Spirit came upon him (v. 34); hence, he became powerful and with only three hundred men defeated two princes and two kings, who had people “like a locust swarm in number” and “camels...without number” (v. 5; 7:25; 8:10-12); with Gideon we have a picture of a man who lived in union with God, a God-man, to fulfill God’s word and to carry out God’s economy.

- Judg. 6:34 And the Spirit of Jehovah clothed Gideon; and he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called up behind him.
- Judg. 6:5 For they went up with their cattle and their tents and came in like a locust swarm in number; both they and their camels were without number. And they came into the land to destroy it.
- Judg. 7:25 And they captured two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine press of Zeeb; and they pursued Midian. And they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.
- Judg. 8:10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their camps were with them, about fifteen thousand men, all who were left of the entire camp of the children of the east; for there had fallen one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword.
- Judg. 8:11 And Gideon went up by way of the tent dwellers, east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he struck the camp when the camp was off guard.
- Judg. 8:12 And Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and he pursued after them. And he captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and threw all the camp into confusion.

II. The selection of the overcomers is seen with God’s selection of Gideon and the three hundred men to fight with him to defeat the Midianites—6:1-6, 11-35; 7:1-8, 19-25; 8:1-4:

- Judg. 6:1 Then the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years.
- Judg. 6:2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the children of Israel made for themselves the dens which are in the mountains as well as the caves and the strongholds.
- Judg. 6:3 And whenever Israel sowed its seed, Midian rose up with Amalek and the children of the east, and went up against them.
- Judg. 6:4 And they encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land until you come to Gaza, and they left no sustenance in Israel, or sheep or ox or donkey.
- Judg. 6:5 For they went up with their cattle and their tents and came in like a locust swarm in number;

- both they and their camels were without number. And they came into the land to destroy it.
- Judg. 6:6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of Midian. And the children of Israel cried out to Jehovah.
- Judg. 6:11 And the Angel of Jehovah came and sat under the terebinth that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while Gideon his son was beating out the wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites.
- Judg. 6:12 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said to him, Jehovah is with you, valiant warrior.
- Judg. 6:13 And Gideon said to Him, Please, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, then why has all this happened to us? And where are all His wondrous deeds that our fathers recount to us, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up out of Egypt? But now Jehovah has abandoned us and delivered us into the hand of Midian.
- Judg. 6:14 Then Jehovah turned to him and said, Go in this strength of yours, and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Indeed I have sent you.
- Judg. 6:15 And he said to Him, Please, Lord, by what way can I save Israel? My clan here is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.
- Judg. 6:16 And Jehovah said to him, Surely I will be with you, and you will strike the Midianites as one man.
- Judg. 6:17 And he said to Him, If now I have found favor in Your sight, perform a sign for me that it is You who are speaking with me.
- Judg. 6:18 Do not depart from here until I come to You and bring my present and set it before You. And He said, I will remain until you return.
- Judg. 6:19 So Gideon went and prepared a kid and an ephah of flour in unleavened cakes. He put the flesh in a basket and put the broth in a pot, and he brought it out to Him under the terebinth. And he presented it.
- Judg. 6:20 And the Angel of God said to him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock; and pour out the broth. And he did so.
- Judg. 6:21 And the Angel of Jehovah put forth the end of the staff that was in His hand and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And fire came up from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And the Angel of Jehovah went from his sight.
- Judg. 6:22 And Gideon saw that He was the Angel of Jehovah. And Gideon said, Alas, O Lord Jehovah! For I have seen the Angel of Jehovah face to face.
- Judg. 6:23 And Jehovah said to him, Peace be with you. Do not be afraid; you shall not die.
- Judg. 6:24 Then Gideon built an altar there to Jehovah, and he called it Jehovah-shalom. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
- Judg. 6:25 And that night Jehovah said to him, Take your father's bull, that is, the second bull, seven years old; and tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it.
- Judg. 6:26 And build an altar to Jehovah your God upon the top of this stronghold in the ordered manner. Then take that second bull, and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you will cut down.
- Judg. 6:27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as Jehovah had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's house and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it at night.
- Judg. 6:28 And when the men of the city rose up early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, broken down; and the Asherah beside it was cut down. And the second bull had been offered upon the altar that had been built.
- Judg. 6:29 And they said to one another, Who has done this thing? And after they inquired and sought about, they said, Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.
- Judg. 6:30 Then the men of the city 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.
- Judg. 6:31 And Joash said to all who stood against him, Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save

- him? Whoever contends for him will be put to death while it is still morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself; for his altar has been broken down.
- Judg. 6:32 Therefore on that day he named Gideon Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal contend against him, for he has broken down his altar.
- Judg. 6:33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east gathered together, and they crossed over and encamped in the valley of Jezreel.
- Judg. 6:34 And the Spirit of Jehovah clothed Gideon; and he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called up behind him.
- Judg. 6:35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they were also called up behind him. And he sent messengers throughout Asher and Zebulun and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.
- Judg. 7:1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was to their north, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.
- Judg. 7:2 And Jehovah said to Gideon, The people with you are too many for Me to deliver Midian into their hand; Israel might vaunt himself against Me, saying, My own hand has saved me.
- Judg. 7:3 Now then proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, Whoever is afraid and trembling should return and depart from here. And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.
- Judg. 7:4 Then Jehovah said to Gideon, The people are still too many. Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. And he of whom I say to you, This one shall go with you, he shall go with you. And every one of whom I say to you, This one shall not go with you, he shall not go.
- Judg. 7:5 So he brought the people down to the water. And Jehovah said to Gideon, Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart; likewise everyone who bows down on his knees to drink.
- Judg. 7:6 And the number of those who lapped the water into their mouth with their hand was three hundred men, but the rest of the people bowed down on their knees to drink water.
- Judg. 7:7 And Jehovah said to Gideon, Through the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and I will deliver Midian into your hand. But let all the other people go, each to his own place.
- Judg. 7:8 Then the people took provisions in their hand and their trumpets; and he sent all the men of Israel away, each to his own tent, but retained the three hundred men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.
- Judg. 7:19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch. They had just then posted the watch. And they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.
- Judg. 7:20 And the three companies blew the trumpets and shattered the pitchers; and they held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets were in their right hands to blow. And they cried out, A sword for Jehovah and for Gideon!
- Judg. 7:21 And each man stood in his place around the camp. Then the whole camp ran off, and they shouted and fled.
- Judg. 7:22 And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and Jehovah set each man's sword against his companion and against the whole camp. And the camp fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.
- Judg. 7:23 And the men of Israel were called up from Naphtali and from Asher and from all of Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.
- Judg. 7:24 Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, Come down against Midian, and seize the waters against them as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. And every man of Ephraim was called up, and they seized the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.
- Judg. 7:25 And they captured two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine press of Zeeb; and they pursued Midian. And they

- brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.
- Judg. 8:1 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, Why have you done this thing to us, that you did not call us when you went to battle against Midian? And they contended with him sharply.
- Judg. 8:2 And he said to them, What have I done now to compare with you? Are not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?
- Judg. 8:3 It was into your hand that God gave the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you? Then their hostile spirit toward him subsided when he said this word.
- Judg. 8:4 Then Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the three hundred men with him, weary yet pursuing.

A. The account of Gideon shows us how to be an overcomer:

1. We must know the self, realizing ourselves to be the least—6:15; Eph. 3:8; Matt. 20:27-28; Gal. 6:3.

- Judg. 6:15 And he said to Him, Please, Lord, by what way can I save Israel? My clan here is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.
- Eph. 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- Matt. 20:27 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;
- Matt. 20:28 Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.
- Gal. 6:3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

2. We must see the heavenly vision of Christ as the centrality and universality of God's eternal economy—Judg. 6:12; Acts 26:16-22; Col. 1:17b, 18b; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Phil. 3:8, 10.

- Judg. 6:12 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said to him, Jehovah is with you, valiant warrior.
- Acts 26:16 But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;
- Acts 26:17 Delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you,
- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
- Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
- Acts 26:20 But declared both to those in Damascus first and in Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea and to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.
- Acts 26:21 Because of these things certain Jews seized me while I was in the temple and tried to slay me.
- Acts 26:22 Having therefore obtained the help which is from God, I have stood unto this day, testifying both to small and great, saying nothing apart from the things which both the prophets and Moses have said would take place,
- Col. 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
- Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- 1 Tim. 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
- 1 Tim. 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

- Phil. 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
- Phil. 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

3. We must offer up ourselves to God as a living sacrifice according to His good, well-pleasing, and perfect will to have the reality and living of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:1-5; cf. Judg. 6:21-24); we must be those who hear and answer the Lord's call in Revelation 2 and 3 for the overcomers—2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 20-21; Hymns, #894.

- Rom. 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
- Rom. 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom. 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.
- Rom. 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Judg. 6:21 And the Angel of Jehovah put forth the end of the staff that was in His hand and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And fire came up from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And the Angel of Jehovah went from his sight.
- Judg. 6:22 And Gideon saw that He was the Angel of Jehovah. And Gideon said, Alas, O Lord Jehovah! For I have seen the Angel of Jehovah face to face.
- Judg. 6:23 And Jehovah said to him, Peace be with you. Do not be afraid; you shall not die.
- Judg. 6:24 Then Gideon built an altar there to Jehovah, and he called it Jehovah-shalom. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
- Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- Rev. 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall by no means be hurt of the second death.
- Rev. 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it.
- Rev. 2:26 And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;
- Rev. 2:27 And he will shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father;
- Rev. 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.
- Rev. 3:5 He who overcomes will be clothed thus, in white garments, and I shall by no means erase his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
- Rev. 3:12 He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the

name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.

Rev. 3:21 He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

Hymns, #894

(1) Will you be an overcomer? Will you then be such a follower,	Christ is calling now! Though you know not how?
(Chorus) Will you be an overcomer? Christ is calling, Christ is calling,	Will you make this choice? Listen to His voice!
(2) Will you be an overcomer? Keep the "first love," never leave it,	To the Lord be drawn! Till the break of dawn.
(3) Will you be an overcomer? Dare to suffer persecution,	On His life depend! Faithful to the end.
(4) Will you be an overcomer? Keep away from false religion,	Testimony bear! "Hidden manna" share.
(5) Will you be an overcomer, Overcome all evil mixture,	Simple, real, and pure? Ruling pow'r secure.
(6) Will you be an overcomer? Keep your "garments" from the deadness,	Trust the living Lord! Win the life-reward.
(7) Will you be an overcomer? Ne'er content with what you've gotten,	Never lukewarm be, More you need to see.
(8) Will you be an overcomer? Will you now be loyal to Him,	Christ is calling still! His demand fulfill.

4. We must tear down the idols in our heart, in our life, and in our work for the Lord's testimony, realizing that on the one hand, God leads us into the enjoyment of Christ as life, light, and power, and on the other hand, God is faithful to allow us to have financial difficulties, emotional sufferings, physical sufferings, and the loss of natural goodness in order that we would take Christ as our satisfaction, be filled with Christ, and allow Him to have the first place in all things—Judg. 6:25-28; John 10:10; 8:12; 2 Tim. 2:1; Col. 1:17b, 18b; 1 John 5:21; Job 22:24-26; Matt. 10:35-39; 2 Cor. 12:7-9; Job 1:1, 22; 2:9-10; 3:1, 11; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 2:2.

Judg. 6:25 And that night Jehovah said to him, Take your father's bull, that is, the second bull, seven years old; and tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it.

Judg. 6:26 And build an altar to Jehovah your God upon the top of this stronghold in the ordered manner. Then take that second bull, and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you will cut down.

Judg. 6:27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as Jehovah had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's house and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it at night.

Judg. 6:28 And when the men of the city rose up early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, broken down; and the Asherah beside it was cut down. And the second bull had been offered upon the altar that had been built.

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

2 Tim. 2:1 You therefore, my child, be empowered in the grace which is in Christ Jesus;

Col. 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
1 John 5:21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.
Job 22:24 And place your gold nuggets in the dust / And your gold of Ophir in the stones of the brooks,
Job 22:25 Then the Almighty will be your gold nuggets / And precious silver to you.
Job 22:26 For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, / And you will lift up your countenance to God.
Matt. 10:35 For I have come to set men at variance: a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
Matt. 10:36 And a man's enemies will be those of his household.
Matt. 10:37 He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me;
Matt. 10:38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.
Matt. 10:39 He who finds his soul-life shall lose it, and he who loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
2 Cor. 12:7 And because of the transcendence of the revelations, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up.
2 Cor. 12:8 Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me.
2 Cor. 12:9 And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.
Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and this man was perfect and upright, and he feared God and turned away from evil.
Job 1:22 In all this Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with unseemliness.
Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.
Job 2:10 But he said to her, You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Should we receive the good from God but not receive the ill? In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
Job 3:1 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.
Job 3:11 Why did I not die at birth, / Come forth from the womb and expire?
2 Cor. 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.
1 Cor. 2:2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.

B. How the overcomers are selected is seen with the selection of the three hundred; by telling Gideon that he had too many people, God was indicating that He would fight for Israel; the first selection resulted in twenty-two thousand leaving:

1. Those who left wanted to glorify themselves—Judg. 7:1-2; John 5:41, 44.

Judg. 7:1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was to their north, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.
Judg. 7:2 And Jehovah said to Gideon, The people with you are too many for Me to deliver Midian into their hand; Israel might vaunt himself against Me, saying, My own hand has saved me.
John 5:41 I do not receive glory from men.
John 5:44 How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that is from the only God?

2. Those who left were fearful and afraid—Judg. 7:3; Matt. 25:25; cf. Deut. 20:5-8.

- Judg. 7:3 Now then proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, Whoever is afraid and trembling should return and depart from here. And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.
- Matt. 25:25 And I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the earth; behold, you have what is yours.
- Deut. 20:5 And the officers shall speak to the people, saying, Is there any man who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.
- Deut. 20:6 Is there any man who has planted a vineyard and has not partaken of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man partake of it.
- Deut. 20:7 Is there any man who has gotten engaged to a woman and has not taken her to himself? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her to himself.
- Deut. 20:8 And the officers shall speak further to the people and say, Is there any man who is afraid and whose heart fails? Let him go and return to his house, so that the heart of his brothers does not melt like his heart.

C. The second selection was determined by how the people drank; those who drank directly with their mouth were eliminated by God; those who drank by bringing water in their hand to their mouth were selected by God because they were self-denying persons; by drinking in this way, they were able to watch diligently for any attack by the enemy—Judg. 7:4-6:

- Judg. 7:4 Then Jehovah said to Gideon, The people are still too many. Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. And he of whom I say to you, This one shall go with you, he shall go with you. And every one of whom I say to you, This one shall not go with you, he shall not go.
- Judg. 7:5 So he brought the people down to the water. And Jehovah said to Gideon, Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart; likewise everyone who bows down on his knees to drink.
- Judg. 7:6 And the number of those who lapped the water into their mouth with their hand was three hundred men, but the rest of the people bowed down on their knees to drink water.

1. Those who have the chance to indulge themselves but will not do so are self-denying persons who have been dealt with by the cross, sacrificing their personal rest and comfort for the sake of God's purpose in the day of His warfare—v. 7; Psa. 110:3.

- Judg. 7:7 And Jehovah said to Gideon, Through the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and I will deliver Midian into your hand. But let all the other people go, each to his own place.
- Psa. 110:3 Your people will offer themselves willingly / In the day of Your warfare, / In the splendor of their consecration. / Your young men will be to You / Like the dew from the womb of the dawn.

2. The overcomers are absolute for God's glory and are afraid of nothing except offending the Lord and losing His presence (Exo. 33:14-16); they allow the cross to deal with the self (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14; Rom. 6:23; Gal. 2:20).

- Exo. 33:14 And He said, My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.

- Exo. 33:15 And he said to Him, If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.
- Exo. 33:16 For how then shall it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, are distinct from all the other people who are on the face of the earth?
- 1 John 3:8 He who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
- Heb. 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,
- Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

D. God gave Gideon three hundred men and made them one body, signified by a “round loaf of barley bread” tumbling through the camp of the Midianites for their defeat and God’s victory—Judg. 7:9-25:

- Judg. 7:9 And that night Jehovah said to him, Arise; go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand.
- Judg. 7:10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down with Purah your young man into the camp;
- Judg. 7:11 And you will hear what they are saying. Then afterward your hands will be strengthened so that you can go down against the camp. So he went down with Purah his young man to the edge of the battle array that was in the camp.
- Judg. 7:12 Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay in the valley like a locust swarm in multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand on the seashore is in multitude.
- Judg. 7:13 And when Gideon came, at that moment a man was recounting a dream to his companion; and he said, I have just had a dream. There was this round loaf of barley bread tumbling through the camp of Midian. And it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and it turned it upside down. And the tent collapsed.
- Judg. 7:14 And his companion answered and said, This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. God has delivered Midian and all the camp into his hand.
- Judg. 7:15 And when Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, Arise, for Jehovah has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.
- Judg. 7:16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies; and he put trumpets into the hands of them all, as well as empty pitchers, with torches inside the pitchers.
- Judg. 7:17 And he said to them, Look at me, and do as I do. Right when I come to the edge of the camp, you shall do just as I do.
- Judg. 7:18 When I and all who are with me blow the trumpet, you also blow the trumpets around all the camp and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon!
- Judg. 7:19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch. They had just then posted the watch. And they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.

- Judg. 7:20 And the three companies blew the trumpets and shattered the pitchers; and they held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets were in their right hands to blow. And they cried out, A sword for Jehovah and for Gideon!
- Judg. 7:21 And each man stood in his place around the camp. Then the whole camp ran off, and they shouted and fled.
- Judg. 7:22 And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and Jehovah set each man's sword against his companion and against the whole camp. And the camp fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.
- Judg. 7:23 And the men of Israel were called up from Naphtali and from Asher and from all of Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.
- Judg. 7:24 Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, Come down against Midian, and seize the waters against them as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. And every man of Ephraim was called up, and they seized the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.
- Judg. 7:25 And they captured two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine press of Zeeb; and they pursued Midian. And they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.

1. Gideon and his men moved and acted together in one accord as one man, signifying the oneness in the Spirit and the living in the Body; they were blended together in resurrection, signified by barley, the first-ripe grain (6:16; 2 Sam. 21:9; Lev. 23:10; 1 Cor. 15:20), to be one bread, signifying the church (10:17).

- Judg. 6:16 And Jehovah said to him, Surely I will be with you, and you will strike the Midianites as one man.
- 2 Sam. 21:9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites. And they hanged them on the mountain before Jehovah, and the seven perished together. And they were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, at the beginning of the barley harvest.
- Lev. 23:10 Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you come into the land which I am giving you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest;
- 1 Cor. 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- 1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

2. Paul's thought of the church being one bread was taken from the Old Testament with the meal offering (Lev. 2:4-5); we are the many grains (John 12:24) so that we may be ground into fine flour mingled with oil for making the cake, the bread, of the church (1 Cor. 12:24-25).

- Lev. 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.
- Lev. 2:5 And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.
- John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- 1 Cor. 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,
- 1 Cor. 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

3. All the co-workers and elders should shepherd one another and love one another to be a model of the Body life, a model of those who are learning to be tempered, blended, and crossed out in order to do everything by the Spirit to dispense Christ into one another for the practical Body life—Rom. 12:1-5; cf. 2 Chron. 1:10.

Rom. 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.

Rom. 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

Rom. 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.

Rom. 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

2 Chron. 1:10 Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?

E. Gideon and his three hundred men fought the battle and labored, yet the whole congregation chased the enemy and reaped the harvest, signifying that when we overcome, the whole Body is revived until Jehovah as peace, Jehovah-shalom (Judg. 6:24), reigns on the earth—7:22-25; 8:1-4; Col. 1:24; Psa. 128:5; Isa. 32:17; 66:12.

Judg. 6:24 Then Gideon built an altar there to Jehovah, and he called it Jehovah-shalom. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Judg. 7:22 And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and Jehovah set each man's sword against his companion and against the whole camp. And the camp fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.

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Judg. 7:25 And they captured two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine press of Zeeb; and they pursued Midian. And they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.

Judg. 8:1 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, Why have you done this thing to us, that you did not call us when you went to battle against Midian? And they contended with him sharply.

Judg. 8:2 And he said to them, What have I done now to compare with you? Are not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?

Judg. 8:3 It was into your hand that God gave the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you? Then their hostile spirit toward him subsided when he said this word.

Judg. 8:4 Then Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the three hundred men with him, weary yet pursuing.

Col. 1:24 I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;
Psa. 128:5 Jehovah bless you from Zion; / And may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem / All the days of your life.
Isa. 32:17 And the work of righteousness will be peace, / And the result of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.
Isa. 66:12 For thus says Jehovah, / I now am extending to her / Peace like a river, / And the glory of the nations / Like an overflowing stream; / And you will nurse, you will be carried on the hip, / And you will be bounced on the knees.

- F. As Gideon and his men were pursuing the kings of Midian, they were “weary yet pursuing” (Judg. 8:4b); because we have received God’s mercy to minister and live in the reality of God’s eternal economy, we do not lose heart (2 Cor. 4:1, 16-18); we may labor to the point of exhaustion, but our labor is according to God’s operation, which operates in us in power (Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:58).

Judg. 8:4 Then Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the three hundred men with him, weary yet pursuing.
2 Cor. 4:1 Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;
2 Cor. 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
2 Cor. 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
2 Cor. 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
Col. 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
Col. 1:29 For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.
1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

III. We must see the intrinsic significance of the secret of Gideon’s failure:

- A. First, Gideon was not kind; he killed those countrymen who did not support him (Judg. 8:16-17), breaking the sixth commandment of God (Exo. 20:13); Christ as the kindness of God led us to repentance (Rom. 2:4; Titus 3:4; Eph. 2:7).

Judg. 8:16 And he took the elders of the city and the thorns of the wilderness and the briers, and with them he trampled the men of Succoth.
Judg. 8:17 And he broke down the tower of Penuel and slew the men of the city.
Exo. 20:13 You shall not kill.
Rom. 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that God’s kindness is leading you to repentance?
Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and the love to man of our Savior God appeared,
Eph. 2:7 That He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

- B. Second, he indulged in the lust of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:4), not exercising any restriction over his fleshly lust; this is indicated by Judges 8:30,

which tells us that Gideon had seventy sons, “for he had many wives”; in addition, his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son (v. 31); by this Gideon broke the seventh commandment (Exo. 20:14).

Gal. 5:16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Rom. 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Judg. 8:30 And Gideon had seventy sons, the issue of his loins, for he had many wives.

Judg. 8:31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech.

Exo. 20:14 You shall not commit adultery.

- C. Third, although Gideon did a good thing in refusing to rule over the people (Judg. 8:22-23), he coveted the spoil of his people (their golden earrings), thereby breaking the tenth commandment, and they surrendered it to him; Gideon made an ephod with the gold he had taken from the people, and this ephod became an idol to the children of Israel (vv. 24-27; Exo. 32:1-4 and footnote 1 on v. 2); as a result, Gideon’s family and the entire society of Israel were corrupted.

Judg. 8:22 And the men of Israel said to Gideon, Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson as well; for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.

Judg. 8:23 But Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Jehovah will rule over you.

Judg. 8:24 And Gideon said to them, Let me make a request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his spoil. (The Midianites had golden earrings, for they were Ishmaelites.)

Judg. 8:25 And they said, We will willingly give it. And they spread out a garment, and each of them threw an earring from his spoil there.

Judg. 8:26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold. This was besides the crescents and the pendants and the purple garments that were upon the kings of Midian and besides the chains that were on their camels’ necks.

Judg. 8:27 And Gideon made an ephod with it and placed it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel went as harlots to it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his house.

Exo. 32:1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aaron and said to him, Come, make a god for us who will go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.

Exo. 32:2 And Aaron said to them, Tear off the gold rings¹, which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.

Exo. 32:3 And all the people tore off the golden rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron.

Exo. 32:4 And he took the gold from their hand and fashioned it with an engraving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!

32:2 footnote 1: The gold earrings were worn by the people for self-beautification. This indicates that self-beautification leads to idolatry (cf. Gen. 35:4 and note). Furthermore, the gold in the earrings was given to the children of Israel by God before their exodus from Egypt (12:35-36) and was to be used for the building of the tabernacle (25:3; 35:5). However, before the gold could be used for God’s purpose, it was usurped by Satan and used by God’s people to make an idol. Hence, idolatry is Satan’s

usurping and man's abusing of what God has given for His purpose, in order to make it a waste.

- D. Judges is a book concerning the enjoyment of the good land, which is a type of Christ; Gideon's success indicates the gaining of an excellent opportunity to enjoy Christ, but his failure indicates the losing of the opportunity to enjoy Christ.

IV. Gideon's indulgence in sex and his greediness for gold led to idolatry; greediness is idolatry (Col. 3:5), and both fornication and greediness are linked to idol worship (Eph. 5:5); his failure shows us that we need to exercise strict control in dealing with the matters of sex and wealth:

Col. 3:5 Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and greediness, which is idolatry;

Eph. 5:5 For this you realize, knowing that every fornicator or unclean person or greedy person (who is an idolater) has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

- A. Even King Solomon, who was glorified in the kingdom of Israel with the splendor of that kingdom at its highest peak (1 Kings 4:34; 8:10-11) and began as a God-fearing and God-loving person, eventually became an idol worshipper through his many foreign wives (11:1-13; see footnote 1 on v. 43).

1 Kings 4:34 And they came from all the peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

1 Kings 8:10 And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the house of Jehovah;

1 Kings 8:11 And the priests were not able to stand and minister because of the cloud, for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah.

1 Kings 11:1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter-Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,

1 Kings 11:2 From among the nations concerning which Jehovah had said to the children of Israel, You shall not go among them, nor shall they come among you, for they will surely turn your heart after their gods. Solomon clung to these in love.

1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred princess wives and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

1 Kings 11:4 And when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect toward Jehovah his God like the heart of David his father.

1 Kings 11:5 And Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable thing of the Ammonites.

1 Kings 11:6 And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of Jehovah and did not fully follow Jehovah as David his father had done.

1 Kings 11:7 Then Solomon built a high place to Chemosh the detestable thing of Moab in the mountain that is before Jerusalem and to Molech the detestable thing of the children of Ammon.

1 Kings 11:8 And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

1 Kings 11:9 So Jehovah became angry with Solomon because his heart turned away from Jehovah the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,

1 Kings 11:10 And who had commanded him concerning this very matter, not to go after other gods; but he did not keep that which Jehovah had commanded.

1 Kings 11:11 And Jehovah said to Solomon, Because you have done this and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.

1 Kings 11:12 However I will not do it in your days, because of David your father; I will tear it out of your son's hand.

1 Kings 11:13 But I will not tear the whole kingdom away from you; I will give one tribe to your son because of David My servant and because of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.

1 Kings 11:43 And Solomon slept¹ with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

1 Kings 11:43 footnote 1: Solomon's decease (vv. 41-43) was in gloomy disappointment. His glory fell off like the flower of grass (Matt. 6:29; 1 Pet. 1:24), and his splendid career became "vanity of vanities," as he had preached (Eccl. 1:2). However, what God did through him as a type of Christ remains forever (see note 1¹ in ch. 2).

Under the light of the spiritual life, it is clear that Solomon was a wise man but not a spiritual man; a man of capability, not a man of life; a man whose wisdom was a gift, not a measure of life. The careers he accomplished were evidences of his capacity from his God-given gift of wisdom, not manifestations of the ability of the maturity of the divine life. Capability apart from life is like a snake, poisoning God's people; life is like a dove, supplying God's people with life. Cf. note 18¹ in Ruth 4.

Solomon's enjoyment of the God-given good land reached the highest level through his God-given gift. However, because of his small measure in the maturity of the spiritual life, he was cut off from the enjoyment of the good land in God's economy because of his unbridled indulgence of his lust. His father David, a man according to God's heart, failed in this same gross and ugly sin (2 Sam. 11). Solomon's failure in this satanic temptation was much greater than his father's. This caused his descendants to lose more than ninety percent of their kingdom and caused the people of God's elect to suffer division and confusion among themselves throughout many generations. Eventually, they lost the God-given land and became captives in the foreign lands of idol worship. The nation of Israel is still suffering because of Solomon's failure. What a warning and an alarm this should be to us! We must be careful. Even a little failure in the indulgence of lust can damage the church and kill the splendid aspects of the church life.

- B. After Gideon died, Israel's degradation was initiated in their forsaking of Jehovah their God and their worshipping the idols of the Canaanites, which issued in their indulgence in fleshly lust; also, the son of Gideon's concubine, Abimelech, slew seventy of Gideon's other sons, whereas Jotham, another son, escaped—Judg. 8:33—9:57.

Judg. 8:33 And as soon as Gideon died, the children of Israel turned again and went as harlots after the Baals. And they made Baal-berith their god.

Judg. 8:34 And the children of Israel did not remember Jehovah their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies all around;

Judg. 8:35 Nor did they show mercy to the house of Jerubbaal, that is, Gideon, for all the good he had done to Israel.

Judg. 9:1 Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's brothers; and he spoke to them and to all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,

Judg. 9:2 Speak now in the hearing of all the lords of Shechem, What is better for you, that all the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, rule over you, or that one man rule over you? Now remember that I am your bone and your flesh.

Judg. 9:3 And his mother's brothers spoke of him in the hearing of all the lords of Shechem with all these words; and their heart inclined toward Abimelech, for they said, He is our brother.

Judg. 9:4 And they gave him seventy pieces of silver from the house of Baal-berith. And with it Abimelech hired worthless and wanton men, and they followed after him.

Judg. 9:5 And he went to his father's house in Ophrah and slew his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone; but Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, was left, for he hid himself.

Judg. 9:6 Then all the lords of Shechem and all the house of Millo gathered, and they went and made Abimelech king at the terebinth of the pillar that was in Shechem.

Judg. 9:7 And when Jotham was told, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim and lifted up his voice and called out and said to them, Listen to me, you lords of Shechem, that God may listen to you.

Judg. 9:8 The trees once went forth to anoint a king over themselves. And they said to the olive tree, Reign over us.

Judg. 9:9 But the olive tree said to them, Shall I leave my fatness, because of which God and men are honored by me, and go to wave over the trees?

Judg. 9:10 Then the trees said to the fig tree, You come and reign over us.

Judg. 9:11 But the fig tree said to them, Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?

Judg. 9:12 Then the trees said to the vine, You come and reign over us.

Judg. 9:13 But the vine said to them, Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?

Judg. 9:14 So all the trees said to the bramble, You come and reign over us.

Judg. 9:15 And the bramble said to the trees, If you are truly anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge under my shade; but if not, may fire come forth from the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon!

Judg. 9:16 Now therefore if you have dealt truly and with integrity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt in a good way toward Jerubbaal and toward his house, and if you have dealt with him as his hands have deserved—

Judg. 9:17 (For my father fought for you and risked his life, and he delivered you from the hand of Midian.

Judg. 9:18 But you have risen up today against the house of my father and have slain his sons, seventy men, on one stone; and you have made Abimelech the son of his female servant king over the lords of Shechem, for he is your brother.)

Judg. 9:19 Now if you have dealt truly and with integrity toward Jerubbaal and toward his house today, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you.

Judg. 9:20 But if not, may fire come forth from Abimelech and devour the lords of Shechem and the house of Millo, and may fire come forth from the lords of Shechem and the house of Millo and devour Abimelech!

Judg. 9:21 And Jotham ran off and fled, and he came to Beer and remained there because of Abimelech his brother.

Judg. 9:22 And Abimelech was prince over Israel three years.

Judg. 9:23 And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem, and the lords of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,

Judg. 9:24 So that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be avenged and so that their blood might be put upon Abimelech their brother, who slew them, and upon the lords of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brothers.

- Judg. 9:25 And the lords of Shechem set men in ambush for him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed everyone who passed by them on the way; and Abimelech was told.
- Judg. 9:26 And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem, and the lords of Shechem put their trust in him.
- Judg. 9:27 And they went out into the field and gathered the grapes of their vineyards and trod them, and had a festival. And they went to the house of their god and ate and drank, and they cursed Abimelech.
- Judg. 9:28 And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech and who are we of Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem; but why should we serve this man?
- Judg. 9:29 But, oh, that this people were put in my hand; then I would remove Abimelech. And he said of Abimelech, Increase your army and come out!
- Judg. 9:30 When Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger burned.
- Judg. 9:31 And he sent messengers to Abimelech in Tormah, saying, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have now come to Shechem, and now they are stirring up the city against you.
- Judg. 9:32 And now rise up at night, you and the people with you, and wait in ambush in the field;
- Judg. 9:33 And in the morning, as soon as the sun rises, you shall rise up early and rush on the city. And right when he and the people with him come out against you, you shall do with him as you find occasion.
- Judg. 9:34 And Abimelech and all the people with him rose up at night and waited in ambush against Shechem in four companies.
- Judg. 9:35 And Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city. And Abimelech and the people with him rose up from the ambush.
- Judg. 9:36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains. But Zebul said to him, You are seeing the shadow of the mountains as though they were men.
- Judg. 9:37 And Gaal spoke again and said, Look, people are coming down from the height of the land, and one company is coming by the way of the terebinth of Meonenim.
- Judg. 9:38 Then Zebul said to him, Where is your boast now, that you said, Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? Is not this the people that you despised? Go out now, and fight them.
- Judg. 9:39 So Gaal went out before the lords of Shechem and fought with Abimelech.
- Judg. 9:40 And Abimelech pursued him, and Gaal fled from before him. And many wounded fell, up to the entrance of the gate.
- Judg. 9:41 And Abimelech dwelt in Arumah. And Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they could not dwell in Shechem.
- Judg. 9:42 Then on the next day the people went out into the field, and Abimelech was told.
- Judg. 9:43 And he took his people and divided them into three companies, and he waited in ambush in the field. And he looked, and there were the people coming out of the city. And he rose up against them and struck them.
- Judg. 9:44 And Abimelech and the companies that were with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city, and two companies rushed upon all those who were in the field and struck them.
- Judg. 9:45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day. And he took the city, and the people who were in it he slew; and he tore down the city and sowed it with salt.
- Judg. 9:46 And when all the lords of the tower of Shechem heard of it, they went to the stronghold of the house of El-berith.

- Judg. 9:47 And Abimelech was told that all the lords of the tower of Shechem had gathered together.
- Judg. 9:48 And Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him. And Abimelech took an ax in his hand and cut down a tree limb. And he lifted it up and put it on his shoulder, and he said to the people who were with him, What you see me doing, hurry and do as I have done.
- Judg. 9:49 So all the people also cut down each a limb. And they followed after Abimelech and set the limbs against the stronghold. And they set the stronghold on fire over them, so that all the men of the tower of Shechem also died, about a thousand men and women.
- Judg. 9:50 Then Abimelech went to Thebez; and he encamped against Thebez and took it.
- Judg. 9:51 But there was a strong tower in the middle of the city; and all the men and women and all the lords of the city fled there and shut themselves in; and they went up to the roof of the tower.
- Judg. 9:52 And Abimelech came up to the tower and fought against it. And he came near the entrance of the tower to burn it with fire.
- Judg. 9:53 And a certain woman threw an upper millstone upon Abimelech's head, and it cracked his skull.
- Judg. 9:54 Then he called immediately to the young man who bore his armor and said to him, Draw your sword and kill me; otherwise they will say concerning me, A woman slew him. And his young man pierced him through, and he died.
- Judg. 9:55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they went away, each to his own place.
- Judg. 9:56 And God repaid the evil of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by slaying his seventy brothers.
- Judg. 9:57 And God brought all the evil of the men of Shechem back upon their own heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal came upon them.

C. Jotham boldly declared a parable of Abimelech's reign as the reign of the bramble versus those who are like olive trees, fig trees, and vine trees, who reject ambition and become a channel of supply to God's people (vv. 8-13); God repaid the evil of Abimelech (vv. 14-55), which he had done to his father by slaying his seventy brothers; and God brought all the evil of the men of Shechem back upon their own heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal (Gideon—6:32) came upon them (9:56-57).

- Judg. 9:8 The trees once went forth to anoint a king over themselves. And they said to the olive tree, Reign over us.
- Judg. 9:9 But the olive tree said to them, Shall I leave my fatness, because of which God and men are honored by me, and go to wave over the trees?
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- Judg. 9:24 So that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be avenged and so that their blood might be put upon Abimelech their brother, who slew them, and upon the lords of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to slay his brothers.
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- Judg. 9:29 But, oh, that this people were put in my hand; then I would remove Abimelech. And he said of Abimelech, Increase your army and come out!
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Judg. 9:55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they went away, each to his own place.

Judg. 6:32 Therefore on that day he named Gideon Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal contend against him, for he has broken down his altar.

Judg. 9:56 And God repaid the evil of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by slaying his seventy brothers.

Judg. 9:57 And God brought all the evil of the men of Shechem back upon their own heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal came upon them.

- D. In Gideon's success he joined himself to God, but in his failure he joined himself to Satan; to forsake God and join with Satan is to enter into the intrinsic

ambition within this evil one—Isa. 14:13-14.

Isa. 14:13 But you, you said in your heart: / I will ascend to heaven; / Above the stars of God / I will exalt my throne. / And I will sit upon the mount of assembly / In the uttermost parts of the north.

Isa. 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High.

- E. We have no right to divorce the Lord and no reason to forsake Him; we must take Him, love Him, honor Him, respect Him, regard Him, exalt Him, and cling to Him, rejecting Satan to the uttermost; then we will be blessed; blessed is everyone—nation, society, group, and individual—whose Lord, Head, King, and Husband is Jehovah—Psa. 33:12.

Psa. 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, / The people whom He has chosen as His own possession.