

# CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF JUDGES

## Week Eight

### The Intrinsic Significance of Gideon as God's Valiant Warrior

Hymns: E890 · E904 (E899)

Scripture Reading: Judg. 6—9

## OUTLINE

### §Day 1

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

## **§Day 2**

- 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.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 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.**

## **§Day 3**

### **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:**

- 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.**
  - 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.**
  - 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.**
  - 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.**

## **§Day 4**

- 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.**
  - 2. Those who left were fearful and afraid—Judg. 7:3; Matt. 25:25; cf.**

**Deut. 20:5-8.**

- 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:**
- 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.**
  - 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).**

## **§Day 5**

- 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:**
- 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).**
  - 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).**
  - 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.**

- 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.**
- 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).**

## **§Day 6**

### **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).**
- 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).**
- 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.

- 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:**

- 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).
- 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.
- 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).**

- 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.**
- 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.**

## WEEK 8 — DAY 1

### Morning Nourishment

**Judg. 6:12 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him and said to him, Jehovah is with you, valiant warrior.**

**Rev. 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches...**

The intrinsic significance of...Judges [6:1—8:32] is...first, the secret of Gideon's success and then the secret of his failure. Gideon, a marvelous judge who was called by Jehovah in a very particular way, was successful because of four things. First, he listened carefully to the word of God, something that was rare among the children of Israel at that time. Second, Gideon obeyed God's word and acted on it. (Life-study of Judges, p. 23)

Although our angle and position may be right, we still may not have the proper ear to hear. Revelation 1 emphasizes seeing and chapters 2 and 3 emphasize hearing. In spiritual things, seeing depends on hearing. The writer of Revelation first heard the voice (1:10) and then saw the vision (1:12). If our ears are dull and cannot hear, then we cannot see (Isa. 6:9-10). The Jews would not hear the word of the Lord, so they could not see what the Lord was doing according to the new testament (Matt. 13:15; Acts 28:27). The Lord always wants to open our ears to hear His voice (Job 33:14-16; Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6) that we may see things according to His economy. The dull ears need to be circumcised (Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51). The sinners' ears need to be cleansed with the redeeming blood and anointed with the Spirit (Lev. 14:14,17,28). To serve the Lord as priests, we must have our ears cleansed with the redeeming blood (Exo. 29:20; Lev. 8:23-24). According to Revelation, as the Spirit is speaking to the churches, we all need an opened, circumcised, cleansed, and anointed ear to hear the Spirit's speaking. (Rev. 2:7, footnote 1)

### Today's Reading

Hebrews 5:8 tells us that the Lord's obedience was learned through

suffering....True submission is found when there is still obedience in spite of suffering. A man's usefulness is not in whether he has suffered, but in whether he has learned obedience in suffering. Only those who are obedient to God are useful. If the heart is not softened, the suffering will not go away. Our way is the way of manifold sufferings. A man who yearns after ease and enjoyment is of no use. We must all learn to be obedient in sufferings. When the Lord came to the earth, He did not bring obedience with Him; rather, He learned it through sufferings. (CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," p. 146)

[The law's righteous requirement is] not consciously kept by us through our outward endeavoring but spontaneously and unconsciously fulfilled in us by the inward working of the Spirit of life. The Spirit of life is the Spirit of Christ, and Christ corresponds with the law of God. This Spirit within us spontaneously fulfills all the righteous requirements of the law through us when we walk according to Him. (Rom. 8:4, footnote 1)

There are two aspects of the law—the aspect of the letter and the aspect of the Spirit. "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). 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—all the commandments, ordinances, statutes, precepts, and judgments—as the word breathed out by the God whom we love, we will have the law in the aspect of the life-giving Spirit. The function of the law also has two aspects. On the negative side, the law exposes man's sin (Rom. 3:20b; 7:7b) and subdues sinners before God (Rom. 3:19). It also guards God's chosen people in its custody that they might be conducted to Christ (Gal. 3:23-24). On the positive side, as God's living testimony, the law functions to minister the living God to His seekers (Psa. 119:2, 88), and as God's living word, the law functions to dispense God Himself as life and light into those who love the law (vv. 25, 116, 130). (Psa. 119:50, footnote 1)

Further Reading: Life-study of Judges, msg. 5; CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," ch. 5; CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, "The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move," chs. 2, 6

## WEEK 8 — DAY 2

### Morning Nourishment

**Judg. 6:25-26 And that night Jehovah said to him,...Tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it. And build an altar to Jehovah your God upon the top of this stronghold in the ordered manner...**

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

[The third factor of Gideon's success was that] he tore down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah (Judg. 6:25-28). This touched God's heart. In the degradation of Israel, God hated the idols to the uttermost. God as the genuine Husband regarded all the idols as men with whom His wife Israel had committed harlotry. Fourth, 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. Because of what he had done, the men of the city of Ophrah contended with him and even wanted to kill him (vv. 28-30). For Gideon to do such a thing for God required that he sacrifice his own interests, and his sacrifice was a strong factor of his success. (Life-study of Judges, p. 23)

### Today's Reading

As a result of these four factors, Gideon received a reward: the economical Spirit came upon him (Judg. 6:34). Hence, he became powerful and with only three hundred men defeated two princes and two kings (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. 6:27, footnote 1)

After one has consecrated himself in his heart, he still needs to tear down the idols as an outward testimony. We need to be aware of ourselves, our family, and those with whom we have contact. Anything that occupies equal standing with God should be torn down. Only those who have seen

God know what an idol is. Only those who have seen the Angel of God, who is the Lord, know that anything besides the Lord is an idol. Only after one has seen the Angel of God will he realize that the wooden image is not God.

After having passed through these four steps, the Holy Spirit came upon Gideon. The filling of the Holy Spirit does not come as a result of prayer for power. When a man stands in the proper condition, the Holy Spirit will come upon him. (CWWN, vol. 11, p. 772)

[One] point of the up-to-date way to practice the Lord's present move is to be filled..., not with culture, religion, or education but with the Spirit, who is the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God. We need to be filled with such a Spirit inwardly and outwardly, essentially and economically, for life and for work. We should remember that we are not filled once for all. What Christ has accomplished is once for all, but what we have to experience is not. Time after time, day after day, morning after morning, evening after evening, all day long, we have to experience being filled with this wonderful, all-inclusive, processed, consummated Spirit for our entire lives. Every day in the morning the first thing we have to pray is, "Lord, fill me afresh. Fill me, Lord. Fill me with Yourself as the consummated Spirit. I like to have You filling me up within and without. I want to be wrapped up and mingled with You."

We preach the gospel and teach the truths by diving into the Word. By diving into "the gold bar" we will be enabled and equipped to preach and to teach. Whatever we are filled with inwardly is what we will utter...We have the Recovery Version of the New Testament, the Life-studies, The Conclusion of the New Testament, and the Truth Lessons....We need to get ourselves saturated, infused, filled, and soaked with all the truths contained in these writings. Then whenever we speak, we will speak the truth. (CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, "The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move," pp. 484-486)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 11, pp. 743-753, 757-760, 770-774

## WEEK 8 — DAY 3

### Morning Nourishment

**Judg. 6:15 ...[Gideon] 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.**

**Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.**

**Ezek. 14:7 ...Every man...who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart...**

[To] enter into this victorious life...we must know the self thoroughly. We must see that the self deserves only to die.... Our end is God's beginning. We cannot receive the victory of Christ if we still have hope in our self. Christ is living in us, but we have not given Him the ground to rule over us and reign within us.

It is easy to be humble before God, but it is very difficult to be humble before man in comparison with others. Saying, "I am the least" is easy, but saying, "I am the least in my father's house" is not easy. Saying, "My family is poor" is easy, but saying, "My family is poor in Manasseh" is not easy (Judg. 6:15). The overcomers do not see the shining on their own faces, though others may see it. All those who see the shining on their own faces through a mirror are not overcomers.... The overcomers have the reality of an overcomer rather than the name of an overcomer. (CWWN, vol. 11, pp. 745, 771)

### Today's Reading

No one can work without seeing a vision, [a heavenly vision of the Lord]. If one has the vision, though he may encounter difficulties, he will still reach his goal. When we have the Lord's word, we can cross to the other side.

We need to offer up ourselves, even what we regard to be the least, to the hand of God. It does not matter whether we see ourselves as big or as

small. If we do not put ourselves in the hand of God, both are equally futile. All living sacrifices that are according to God's will are acceptable to God. The overcomers were called by God.

The blowing of the trumpet (Judg. 6:34) is a call for others to join the ranks of the overcomers. Overcomers should not act independently. We should separate ourselves from the defeated ones, but we should not separate ourselves from the other overcomers.

In general all believers have financial difficulties. Perhaps this is because the things they formerly did were improper, things they now can no longer do. Or perhaps it is because of spiritual reasons, where God is behind the scene directing matters with some specific goal. God takes away our material possessions so that we will seek Christ that He may have the first place in all things. It is not impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, but it is difficult. It is not impossible for him to serve the Lord, but it is difficult. Cast your treasure in the dust, and Jehovah will be your treasure (Job 22:24-25). In the wilderness God dealt with the children of Israel by stripping them of all the earthly supply of food and clothing in order that they might know God's riches. When the earthly supply stops, the heavenly supply comes. Difficulty in material supplies comes for the purpose that we may seek to have Christ take the first place in all things and learn the lessons of faith. When difficulty comes, we should believe that it is from God and rejoice. But we should not hope for difficulties to come. If we do, Satan also can cause difficulties to be added to us.

The reason we lose our parents, husband, wife, children, and relatives is that God wants us to take Christ as our satisfaction. God takes these away from us in order that we would take Christ as Lord and allow Him to have the first place in us. God has no intention to deal with us severely; His intention is only for us to take Christ as Lord. To weep before the Lord is more precious than to be happy before men. What we find in the Lord is what cannot be found in our parents, wife, and children. (CWWN, vol. 11, pp. 771-772, 748-749)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1954, vol. 1, pp. 417-418; CWWL, 1954, vol. 4, pp. 517-521

## WEEK 8 — DAY 4

### Morning Nourishment

**Judg. 7:4-7 Then Jehovah said to Gideon, The people are still too many....So he brought the people down to the water.... And the number of those who lapped the water into their mouth with their hand was three hundred men.... 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...**

The selection of the three hundred in Judges 7:2-7 also stresses the sacrifice of our personal interests and enjoyment for God's purpose. When Gideon blew the trumpet to call the people to fight against the Midianites, thirty-two thousand responded. God said that those who were with Gideon were too many for God to deliver Midian into their hand, for Israel might have vaunted himself against God, saying, "My own hand has saved me" (v. 2). By telling Gideon that he had too many people, God was indicating that He would fight for them. First, twenty-two thousand went home because they were afraid (v. 3). Then Jehovah tested the remaining ten thousand by bringing them to the water to drink. Those who bowed down on their knees and lapped as a dog laps were sent home (v. 5). Only the three hundred who lapped the water into their mouths with their hands were chosen by God for the battle against Midian (v. 6). Jehovah told Gideon that through the three hundred men who lapped in that way, He would save them from Midian. Like Gideon, these three hundred were willing to sacrifice in order to be used by God. (Life-study of Judges, pp. 23-24)

### Today's Reading

The first selection resulted in twenty-two thousand people leaving. They left because...they wanted to glorify themselves. We are willing to give up our life but not to give up our glory. Not only do we have to overcome Satan, we have to overcome ourselves as well. God wants only those who

will work for Him without boasting about it. After working for God, we should merely say, “We are unprofitable slaves” (Luke 17:10)...God cannot divide His glory between Him and us. If we still expect anything for ourselves, we will be eliminated. These ones also left...because they were fearful and afraid (Judg. 7:3)...One must not love himself but must endure suffering. The greatest suffering is not material but spiritual. Whoever wants to glorify himself and is fearful and afraid will be eliminated. Overcoming does not depend on the number of people but on knowing God.

The [second] selection...was based on a very small matter, that of drinking. A small matter always exposes what we are. In those days both the Jews and the Arabs carried their luggage on their backs when they traveled. There were two ways to drink water along the way. One was to put down the luggage and kneel, bowing down to the ground to drink with the mouth. The other was to leave the luggage on the back and drink by putting the hand to the mouth.... Among the ten thousand, nine thousand and seven hundred drank with their mouths directly to the water, while three hundred drank by putting water in their hand to the mouth. Those who drank directly with their mouths were eliminated by God. Those who drank by bringing water in their hand to the mouth were selected by God. A person who has the chance to indulge himself but who will not do so is one who has been dealt with by the cross. This kind of person can be used by God. God can only use those who are willing to be unconditionally dealt with by the cross.

The three conditions by which God selects the overcomers are: (1) being absolute for God’s glory, (2) being afraid of nothing, and (3) allowing the cross to deal with the self. One can judge for himself if he is an overcomer. God will test us, and we will be exposed as to whether or not we are overcomers. Only those who know the victory of the cross will be able to maintain the victory of the cross. (CWWN, vol. 11, pp. 772-774)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1986, vol. 1, “Elders’ Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord’s Move,” chs. 1, 6, 8; CWWL, 1965, vol. 3, “The Heavenly Vision,” ch. 6

## WEEK 8 — DAY 5

### Morning Nourishment

**Judg. 7:13-14 ...There was this round loaf of barley bread tumbling through the camp of Midian....This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon....God has delivered Midian and all the camp into his hand.**

**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.**

**12:24...But God has blended the body together...**

According to Judges 7:9 through 15, Gideon heard the account of a dream in the camp of Midian. [In verses 13-14] one of the Midianites recounted a dream to his companion.... His companion responded by saying that this was nothing else than the sword of Gideon and that God had delivered Midian and all the camp into Gideon's hand. When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped, returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for Jehovah has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand" (v. 15).

Gideon divided the three hundred men into three companies and put trumpets into their hands, as well as empty pitchers, with torches inside the pitchers (v. 16). They blew the trumpets and shattered the pitchers. Then, holding the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands, they cried out, "A sword for Jehovah and for Gideon!" (vv. 19-20). Then the whole camp of the Midianites ran off, and they shouted and fled. (Life-study of Judges, p. 29)

### Today's Reading

God gave Gideon three hundred men and made them one body. Individual victory is not proper. Gideon and those three hundred men moved together and acted in one accord. All of their flesh was cut off, so they could be one. This is the oneness in the Spirit and a living in the Body. (CWWN, vol. 11, p. 774)

A barley loaf...is a loaf of the resurrected Christ who can never be

limited....You say that you cannot meet the situation. This is right. You surely cannot. But there is One who can—the One who is the barley. A barley loaf is within you; a little bit of the resurrected Christ is in you—that is good enough. (CWWL, 1961-1962, vol. 4, “The All-inclusive Christ,” p. 236)

Paul’s thought of the church being one bread [1 Cor. 10:17] was not his own invention; rather, it was taken from the Old Testament. The meal offering in Leviticus 2:4 consisted of cakes made of fine flour mingled with oil. Every part of the flour was mixed, or mingled, with the oil. That is blending. Paul tells us that the church is a bread, a cake, made of fine flour... John 12:24 says that Christ is the one grain of wheat who fell into the earth and died and grew up in resurrection to produce many grains, which are we, His believers. We are the many grains so that we may be ground into fine flour for making the cake, the bread, of the church. Here we can see the thought of blending in the Bible.

[First Corinthians 12:24] says clearly that God has blended all the believers together. But where is the blending in the recovery? We may think that the coordination in the church is the reality of the blending. However, I must tell you that even the coordination in the church is not the reality of the Body of Christ. To be in the reality of the Body of Christ, we need to be absolutely in the resurrection life of Christ. We do have some good coordination in the local churches. However, I would ask, “Is this kind of coordination carried out by the natural life or in resurrection?” To be in resurrection means that our natural life is crucified, and then the God-created part of our being is uplifted in resurrection to be one with Christ in resurrection. It is common today that in the local churches what we can see is mostly the “church” in its meetings, activities, works, and services. But we cannot see much of the reality of the Body of Christ in resurrection, that is, in the Spirit, in the pneumatic Christ, and in the consummated God. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 1, “The Practical Points concerning Blending,” pp. 112-113)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1961-1962, vol. 4, “The All-inclusive Christ,” chs. 5-6; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 1, “The Practical Points concerning Blending,” chs. 2-4

## WEEK 8 — DAY 6

### Morning Nourishment

**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?**

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

**Judg. 8:23 But Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you.... Jehovah will rule over you.**

After his great success—the greatest success in all the cycles of Israel's history recorded in Judges—Gideon had a terrible failure. The secret of his failure comprises three factors. 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). Second, he indulged in the lust of the flesh, 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). Third, although he did a good thing in refusing to rule over the people (Judg. 8:22-23), he coveted the spoil of his people, and they surrendered it to him (v. 24). (Life-study of Judges, p. 24)

### Today's Reading

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). Even King Solomon, who began as a God-fearing and God-loving person, eventually became an idol worshipper through his many foreign wives (1 Kings 11:4). Gideon made an ephod with the gold he had taken from the people, and this ephod became an idol to the children of Israel (Judg. 8:27). As a result, Gideon's family and the entire society of Israel were corrupted. Gideon began by tearing down the altar of

Baal and its idol, but after his success he built something idolatrous. This failure canceled all his success.... His failure shows us that we need to exercise strict control in dealing with the matters of sex and wealth.... Any indulgence in these things will cause our enjoyment of Christ to be annulled.

The intrinsic significance of the fifth and sixth cycles of Israel's miserable history (8:33—10:5; 10:6—12:15) consists of Israel's forsaking God and joining herself to idols. This means that Israel divorced God, her legitimate Husband, and went after many idols. Man's forsaking of God began in Genesis 3....To take the tree of knowledge is actually to marry Satan and divorce God.

Gideon's failure was due to his forsaking of God and his joining himself to Satan....When he joined himself to Satan, the issue was murder. He also indulged in the flesh, coveted, and committed idolatry. This issued in the corruption of his family and the entire society of Israel. To go along with Satan is to enter into the ambition that was present in Satan when he fell. He wanted to ascend to the throne; he wanted to be like the Most High (Isa. 14:13-14). Hence, to forsake God and join with Satan is to enter into the intrinsic ambition within this evil one.

In family life, whenever a husband and a wife love the Lord and reject everything other than Him, their married life will be wonderful. But once a husband or wife begins to love something else in place of the Lord, their married life and family life become chaotic.

We have no right to divorce the Lord; we have no basis 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. If we love the Lord and hate Satan, we will be blessed.... Psalm 33:12 says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah." Blessed is everyone—nation, society, group, and individual—whose Lord, Head, King, and Husband is Jehovah. (Life-study of Judges, pp. 24-25, 33-35)

Further Reading: Life-study of Judges, msgs. 6-8

## « WEEK 8 — HYMN »

### Hymns, #899 The work is Thine, O Christ our Lord

#### Service — By being Buried

1

The work is Thine, O Christ our Lord,  
The cause for which we stand;  
And being Thine, 'twill overcome  
Its foes on every hand.  
Yet grains of wheat, before they grow,  
Are buried in the earth below;  
All that is old doth perish there  
To form a life both new and fair:  
So too are we from self and sin made free.

2

Through suff'ring Thou, O Christ, didst go  
Unto Thy throne above,  
And ledest now the selfsame way  
Those true in faith and love;  
So lead us, then, though suff'rings wait,  
To share Thy kingdom's heav'nly state;  
Thy death has broken Satan's might,  
And leads the faithful to the light;  
Eternal light, from darkness into light.

3

Thou hast, O Savior, led the way  
Through agony and death;  
O give, we pray, yet more and more  
Thy Spirit's living breath!  
Send messengers o'er land and sea  
To bring Thy children all to Thee;

Thy name can save, Thy name makes free;  
We consecrate ourselves to Thee  
As servants true, as warriors brave and true.