### Judges

## Chapter 6

1However, the sons of IsraEl kept doing evil things in the eyes of Jehovah, so He put them under the hand of the However, the sons of IsraEl kept doing evil things in the eyes of Jehovah, so He put them under the hand of the <span class="placename">MidiAnitesHowever, the sons of IsraEl kept doing evil things in the eyes of Jehovah, so He put them under the hand of the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span> for 7 years. 2They proved to be so strong against IsraEl that the IsraElites took up living in mountain caves, in [animal] dens, and in holes in the rocks.  
  
3And whenever the sons of IsraEl would plant anything, the And whenever the sons of IsraEl would plant anything, the <span class="placename">MidiAnitesAnd whenever the sons of IsraEl would plant anything, the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span>, And whenever the sons of IsraEl would plant anything, the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span>, <span class="placename">AmaLechitesAnd whenever the sons of IsraEl would plant anything, the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span>, <span class="placename">AmaLechites</span>, and sons of the east would get together 4to [fight] against them and destroy their crops.  
  
Also in Gaza, they stole all their [cattle], leaving nothing to support life in the land.  
  
5So [the IsraElites] moved into temporary shelters along with their livestock and camels, living like locusts, as their land was being destroyed... 6And because they’d been driven into such an impoverished state by And because they’d been driven into such an impoverished state by <span class="placename">MidiAnAnd because they’d been driven into such an impoverished state by <span class="placename">MidiAn</span>, 7the sons of IsraEl once again started calling to Jehovah.  
  
8As a result, Jehovah sent a Prophet to the sons of IsraEl, who told them:  
  
 ‘This is what Jehovah the God of IsraEl says:  
  
 ‘I’m the One who brought you out of the land of Egypt… Out of that house of slavery!  
  
 9‘Yes, I saved you from the hands of the Egyptians, then I saved you from these people who are now persecuting you… These whom I once drove away and whose land I gave to you.  
  
 10‘Then I told you that because I am Jehovah your God, you shouldn’t fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live…  
  
 ‘But you refused to listen to Me!’  
  
11Well thereafter, a messenger from Jehovah came and sat down under the fir tree at EphRatha (Well thereafter, a messenger from Jehovah came and sat down under the fir tree at EphRatha (<span class="placename">BethLehemWell thereafter, a messenger from Jehovah came and sat down under the fir tree at EphRatha (<span class="placename">BethLehem</span>) in the land of JoAs (of the line of ObiEzri) where his son [Judge #5] GideOn was threshing wheat in a wine press, so that the MidiAnites wouldn’t notice [what he was doing].  
  
12The messenger appeared to him and said:  
  
 ‘Jehovah is with you, you mighty [man].’  
  
13And GideOn replied:  
  
 ‘Please be patient with me, my lord; for if Jehovah is really with us, then, why are all these bad things happening to us?  
  
 ‘Where are all His miracles that our ancestors told us about, as when He brought them out of Egypt?  
  
 ‘But He’s obviously rejected us now, for He’s given us into the hands of the MidiAnites!’  
  
14Then the messenger of Jehovah turned to him and said:  
  
 ‘Go and use your strength to save IsraEl from the hands of MidiAn...  
  
 ‘Look! I’m sending you!’  
  
15But GideOn replied:  
  
 ‘Be patient with me my lord... How can I save IsraEl?  
  
 ‘For look, even though there are thousands in [the tribe of] ManasSeh, they’re all weak… And I’m the very least one in the house of my father!’  
  
16And the messenger of Jehovah said to him:  
  
 ‘Because Jehovah will be with you, you’ll cut the MidiAnites down like [they’re] just one man.’  
  
17But GideOn said:  
  
 ‘If I’ve found mercy in your eyes and if you’re really going to do all these things that you told me about today... 18Don’t leave this place until I return with an offering and lay it before you.’  
  
And [the messenger] replied:  
  
 ‘I’ll stay here until you return.’  
  
19So, GideOn went back and prepared a kid goat and a quart of fine fermentation-free flour. Then he put the [cooked] meat in a basket, poured its gravy into a jar, and he carried it to [the messenger, who was still sitting] under the fir tree.  
  
20And God’s messenger said to him:  
  
 ‘Now, take the meat and the fermentation-free cakes and lay them on that rock, then pour the gravy over it.’  
  
So that’s what he did.  
  
21Then Jehovah’s messenger stuck out the walking stick that was in his hand and touched the meat and the fermentation-free bread, and fire came out of the rock, which consumed it all!  
  
And at that, the messenger of Jehovah vanished from his sight!  
  
22Well, that was when GideOn realized that this [really] was a messenger from Jehovah.  
  
So he said:  
  
 ‘Ah… Ah… Jehovah my God!  
  
 ‘I’ve seen a messenger from Jehovah face to face!’  
  
23And the Lord replied:  
  
 ‘May you have peace.  
  
 ‘Now, don’t be afraid, for you’re not going to die.’  
  
24And so GideOn built an altar to Jehovah there and called it, ‘And so GideOn built an altar to Jehovah there and called it, ‘<span class="placename">The Peace of JehovahAnd so GideOn built an altar to Jehovah there and called it, ‘<span class="placename">The Peace of Jehovah</span>.’ It’s still there today in And so GideOn built an altar to Jehovah there and called it, ‘<span class="placename">The Peace of Jehovah</span>.’ It’s still there today in <span class="placename">EphRathaAnd so GideOn built an altar to Jehovah there and called it, ‘<span class="placename">The Peace of Jehovah</span>.’ It’s still there today in <span class="placename">EphRatha</span>, [at the home of his] father EsDri.  
  
25Then that night, the Lord said to him:  
  
 ‘Now, take the [second bull] that belongs to your father, the seven year old one. And thereafter, you must destroy your father’s altar to BaAl along with his sacred poles.  
  
 26‘Then you must build an altar to Jehovah your God on the top of this hill, and get everything ready… Then, take the calf and sacrifice it as a whole burnt offering, using the wood from the sacred poles that you are to cut down.’  
  
27So GideOn took 10 of his servants and did just as the Lord said. However, because he was afraid of the house of his father and the men of the city, he did it at night.  
  
28Well, when the men of the city woke up early the next morning and saw that the altar of BaAl and the nearby sacred poles had been demolished, and they saw the calf that GideOn had offered on an altar that he had built, 29they each started asking their neighbors:  
  
 ‘Who did this?’  
  
So after asking around, they found out that it was GideOn (son of JoAs).  
  
30Then the men of the city went and told JoAs to send out his son so they could kill him for destroying their altar of BaAl and their sacred poles.  
  
31But GideOn asked the men who had come for him:  
  
 ‘Are you now pleading for BaAl, and are you trying to save him?  
  
 ‘If so, may all those who have come to plead on his behalf die this morning!  
  
 ‘Yes, if he’s really a god, let him plead for himself [before the one] who’s torn down his altar!’  
  
32Well, from that day on, [they started calling GideOn] JeroBaAl [meaning, May BaAl Plead], since he said:  
  
 ‘Let BaAl plead for himself [before the one] that has torn down his altar.’  
  
  
33Meanwhile, all the Meanwhile, all the <span class="placename">MidiAnitesMeanwhile, all the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span>, Meanwhile, all the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span>, <span class="placename">AmaLechitesMeanwhile, all the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span>, <span class="placename">AmaLechites</span>, and sons of the east had gathered and set up camp in the Meanwhile, all the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span>, <span class="placename">AmaLechites</span>, and sons of the east had gathered and set up camp in the <span class="placename">JezreEl ValleyMeanwhile, all the <span class="placename">MidiAnites</span>, <span class="placename">AmaLechites</span>, and sons of the east had gathered and set up camp in the <span class="placename">JezreEl Valley</span>.  
  
34Then the Breath of Jehovah came over GideOn and he blew his [battle] horn, and he called for the Then the Breath of Jehovah came over GideOn and he blew his [battle] horn, and he called for the <span class="placename">AbiEzeritesThen the Breath of Jehovah came over GideOn and he blew his [battle] horn, and he called for the <span class="placename">AbiEzerites</span> to come with him.  
  
35GideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] GideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] <span class="placename">ManasSehGideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] <span class="placename">ManasSeh</span>, GideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] <span class="placename">ManasSeh</span>, <span class="placename">AsherGideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] <span class="placename">ManasSeh</span>, <span class="placename">Asher</span>, GideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] <span class="placename">ManasSeh</span>, <span class="placename">Asher</span>, <span class="placename">ZebuLonGideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] <span class="placename">ManasSeh</span>, <span class="placename">Asher</span>, <span class="placename">ZebuLon</span>, and GideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] <span class="placename">ManasSeh</span>, <span class="placename">Asher</span>, <span class="placename">ZebuLon</span>, and <span class="placename">NaphTaliGideOn also sent messengers throughout [the lands of] <span class="placename">ManasSeh</span>, <span class="placename">Asher</span>, <span class="placename">ZebuLon</span>, and <span class="placename">NaphTali</span>, calling for them to join him.  
  
36And GideOn said to God:  
  
 ‘If You’re really going to use me to save IsraEl, as You said...  
  
 37‘Look, I’ve put some wool fleece on the threshing floor.  
  
 ‘If only this fleece is covered with dew and the ground all around it’s dry [in the morning], I’ll know that You’re going to use me to save IsraEl, as You said.’  
  
  
38Well, when he got up early the next morning, he wrung out the fleece, and a full bowl of water poured from it!  
  
39But GideOn then said to God:  
  
 ‘Please don’t be angry, but allow me to ask for just one more thing...  
  
 ‘So I can be sure, let the fleece be dry [in the morning], while dew is all over the ground.’  
  
40And this is what God did that night… There was dew all over the ground, but the fleece was dry!