

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH, Week 8

The Intrinsic Significance of Gideon as God's Valiant Warrior

Scripture Reading: Judg. Judg. 6—9

Day 1

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

Revelation 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.

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.

In the Old Testament there was a judge whose name was Gideon, and he took only three hundred to form an army to fight the battle. The Lord even told him not to have too many. We are not burdened to stir up a kind of movement. What we are burdened to do is to sound a trumpet, letting the children of God know what the Lord is doing today. **The Lord is calling His dear saints, the ones who would be willing to be brought back to the one accord, to fight the battle.** (The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 169-170)

Gideon obeyed God's word and acted on it. Gideon did not stop at obeying God's word; he also acted on it. Hebrews 11:1 gives us the definition of faith: *"Now faith is the substantiation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."* This chapter then proceeds to mention person after person in the Old Testament, recounting the things they did by faith. Verses 32 and 33 say, *"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, who through faith overcame kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions."* The writer mentions Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah; these were all judges. **Gideon was a person who did things by faith because he heard God's word.** "Faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). **By hearing God's word, faith is infused into us. Gideon heard God's word, obeyed it, and acted on it.** (*The Ministry of the Word, Vol. 25, No. 04: Crystallization-study of Joshua, Judges, Ruth*)

Day 2

Judges 6:25-26 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. 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.

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

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 god - dess); 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.

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**. The whole Israelite society was worshipping Baal and the Asherah; even Gideon's father was worshipping the idols. Consequently, Gideon had to sacrifice his natural relationship with his father and his enjoyment of society in order to follow Jehovah's word. If we could hear the testimonies of all the saints, we would realize what they have sacrificed to follow the Lord.... Because he suffered so much, he became a pillar in the Lord's recovery. **He sacrificed his own interest for what he saw of God's eternal economy.** (*The Ministry of the Word, Vol. 25, No. 04: Crystallization-study of Joshua, Judges, Ruth*)

Day 3

Judge 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.
Acts 26:19	Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.
Ezekiel 14:7	For each and every man of the house of Israel or of the sojourners who sojourn in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face and goes to the prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I, Jehovah, will be found to be answering him by Myself;

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

Judges 7:4-7

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. 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. 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. 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.

- 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).

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. **Those who left wanted to glorify themselves....** Those who left were **fearful and afraid**. In Matthew 25 the slave who received one talent buried his talent in the earth. One of the reasons he did not do anything with his talent was that he was **afraid**. In verse 25 he told the master, "I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the earth; behold, you have what is yours." Footnote 1 on this verse says, "To be afraid is negative. We should, rather, be positive and aggressive in using the Lord's gift." The Lord has given all of us something of Himself. **We should be positive and aggressive to invest that talent by preaching the gospel or ministering Christ to the saints.**

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. 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.** (*The Ministry of the Word, Vol. 25, No. 04: Crystallization-study of Joshua, Judges, Ruth*)

Day 5

Judge 7:13-14

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. 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.

1 Corinthians 10:17

Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Corinthians 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,

- 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

Romans 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?
Galatians 5:16	But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.
Judges 8:23	But Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you....Jehovah will rule over you.

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

- 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).
- 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).
- 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.
- 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:

- 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).
- 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.
- 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.

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. As we pointed out previously, when we forsake God and join ourselves to Satan, it causes chaos in our family. Consider the chaos that ensued in Gideon's family and in the society of Israel after Gideon joined himself to Satan.

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. We should pray short prayers over this point. Psalm 33:12 says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, / The people whom He has chosen as His own possession." In this message we have presented the intrinsic significance of Gideon as God's valiant warrior. (The Ministry of the Word, Vol. 25, No. 04: Crystallization-study of Joshua, Judges, Ruth)