

## Reflections on the message by Nolan Bradshaw, 17th January 2010

### "Gideon and the Angel" Judges 6

It's the same old story. This sort of thing happens over and over again, but this time the Lord uses the tribe of the Midianites to drive Israel back to the Lord. They came at harvest time for seven years, and they stripped the land bare. This once-favoured nation of Israel was forced to retreat into the mountains, and into caves from their God-given land, promised to them by God.

Verse 7. They cried to the Lord. They wanted God to do a miracle. But what does God do? He sends them a prophet! Verses 8-10. God said to them, "You have not obeyed me." Did they say, "we know all about the history" ? "We want God to act now. We want a miracle."

Are we looking for a miracle? The Lord says, "Do you want your life changing today?" Well, remember the past. Remember the blood that was shed and the body that was broken. We need to realise what God has done for us in the past. It will change our lives. It still stands when we gather round the Lord's table. Remember what He has done for us. It is history and we know all about it, but what difference is it making to us? If that doesn't change our lives, then nothing will. Revival will come when we realise what Christ has done for us.

Before Israel can be delivered from the Midianites, He tells them why they need delivering (verse 10). But surely God is a loving God. He will surely sweep up after the mess I have made, and clean up my trail of bad attitudes and choices. No, we need to repent of what we have done., and repent of who we have become.

Verse 11. Secondly, He sent an angel. Did the angel get ready for a long session? Angels usually stood. This angel sat down. He came to persuade Gideon, and coax him. Is there a verse missing between verse 10 and 11? Should it have said, "... so this is what I'm going to do to you", or, "This is what will happen to you". But here is the grace of God instead. When God has reason to destroy, He sends a deliverer,. What a wonderful God! He prefers to save. That is our God! Psalm 103:10-11. When I mess up He doesn't throw me out. Thank you Lord! There is no God like Jehovah. No one could invent a God like that. It would be too much to hope for. This Jehovah is ready to pardon. He is slow to anger (Exodus 30 4:6).

In the Old Testament, in spite of Israel having the attitude "I know better", God holds out his hand and sends an angel. In the New Testament, He sends a Saviour (Ephesians 2:13). Jesus holds out his hand.

Verses 12-13. Gideon's response is, "If the Lord is with us, why... If, why, where, but... He raises objections. In verse 15 he says, "I can't do it". He says his background is against him doing it. What will it take to turn this man around to take up the challenge and do what God has called him to do? Gideon needs an "I will be with you" to make him adequate to do this. It is like Jacob. He had this I-will-be-with-you when he dreamt about the ladder going up to heaven. Moses had his I-will-be-with-you when he encountered God in the desert at the burning bush, when God sent him to set the Israelites free. The Apostles had this I-will-be-with-you (Matthew 28:20) and so did Paul. They were told not be afraid. Here Gideon also needs it.

Verse 16. "Surely I will be with you and you shall smite the Midianites." Is he saying the same to us in whatever circumstances we are in? We say, "I want a miracle." "I want to be out of this. I can't go on." But God says, "I will be with you". This is the greatest promise from the God of Israel. But what is Gideon's response. "Show me a sign!" He wanted to make a meal for the angel. He wanted to make sure his message was God's will for his life, but he was "faffing". As Christians, do we faff, or mess about, or dilly-dally?

Verse 19. Gideon brought the angel a meal having prepared a kid, some broth and some unleavened bread. How long have you waited in a restaurant for a meal to be brought? Was it like that? Was Gideon still delaying? What more do you want, Gideon? Then the angel touched the food with his staff and fire came out of the rock and consumed it. Then the angel disappeared from Gideon's sight. At first this person who Gideon met is described as the angel of the Lord but a few verses later in the passage the conversation is described as the Lord speaking. Someone has said that this angel was God himself appearing in human form.

And so Gideon saw another sign but it frightened him to death, rather than encouraged him. Perhaps he was thinking of Exodus 33:20 ("You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."). Perhaps this is what he was frightened of. But the Lord said to him, "You will not die". Do we spend the rest of our

lives dwelling on the experience but not what the Lord is showing us through the experience? Do we want to be really, really sure before we do anything for God? Be careful!

Verses 25-26. Destroy the idols and build an altar to God! Do it tonight! Are we ready to do something for God? Get rid of your old idols tonight. You can't serve two masters. You can't have a phased withdrawal from Baal. God says, "I will be with you."

Verse 27. He did it but he was scared. God didn't say he had to do it by day. His fear doesn't make Gideon a failure, just because he did it by night. Did he sleep that night? Did his heart race in the morning when people started moving about? "No turning back" as the chorus goes.

God calls everyone to be obedient, but only a few to be heroes. It took some time, but Gideon was convinced now. Gideon made a break. He was afraid, but who is not.