



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Judges 6:11-18 New Revised Standard Version June 11, 2017

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, June 11, 2017**, is from **Judges 6:11-18**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Judges 6:11) Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press, to hide it from the Midianites.

“The LORD” is the personal name of God, which God gave to Moses (see Exodus 3:14). “The angel of the LORD” is most often interpreted as being the Lord Jesus Christ prior to His conception by the Holy Spirit and being born. “The angel of the LORD” accepted Gideon’s offering, instead of refusing the offering as a typical angel would refuse worship (see Judges 6:21-24). The oak of Ophrah was a place of worship, but Joash (Gideon’s father) had also erected an altar to Baal and a pole to Asherah that the Lord commanded Gideon to destroy (see Judges 6:25-32). Gideon probably came from a wealthy and influential family: the family had wheat, goats, cattle, and could afford to erect altars for the townspeople (who also obeyed Joash when he saved Gideon’s life after Gideon did as the LORD commanded). The Midianites were relatives of the Hebrews who lived to the east of the twelve tribes of Israel. Midian was the son of Abraham and his wife after Sarah, Keturah (see Genesis 25:1-6). Ophrah means “a fawn.” Joash means either “Fire of Yahweh” or “Yahweh has given.” Abiezrite means “father of help.” Gideon means “hewer” (see Judges 6:25), and his new name became, Jerubbaal which means “Baal will contend.” (See Judges 6:30-31). Gideon had a threshing floor, but was in the winepress to hide from the Midianites (see Gideon 6:37).

(Judges 6:12) The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, you mighty warrior.”

The story of Gideon reveals Gideon’s fear of the Midianites, his fear of his father and the townspeople, and most importantly and appropriately his fear of the LORD. Gideon also wanted to be certain that he was following the LORD and asked for signs he was talking to the LORD and doing God’s will. When the angel of the LORD appeared, he reassured Gideon and called him by what he was not yet but would be “mighty warrior.”

(Judges 6:13) Gideon answered him, “But sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has cast us off, and given us into the hand of Midian.”

Literally, “my lord” (Adoni) was a polite form of addressing someone; therefore, it can be translated “Pardon me, my Lord” or “Please, sir.” Though he did not immediately know he was speaking to a divine messenger, Gideon showed deep respect for others when he addressed him. He boldly, but respectfully, disagreed with the messenger, referring him to Israel’s history of the Exodus. Earlier, God had prepared Israel (and Gideon) for His actions by sending a prophet to proclaim what Gideon told the angel about their history and why they were suffering (see Judges 6:7-10). Gideon did not mention that they had been suffering from seven years of oppression by the Midianites.

(Judges 6:14) Then the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you.”

“The LORD” in this verse strongly indicates that the Person talking directly to Gideon is the Lord Jesus prior to His birth, because the inspired writer changes from “the angel of the LORD” to “the LORD” in the middle of the conversation. The LORD commanded “go in the strength you have” which indicates that he could go as he was because “the LORD” was sending him. He did not need to wait for some special experience to fill him with power and emboldened him. He could go in his own strength, because the LORD would be with him in everything He was sending him to do. With God’s encouragement and guidance, Gideon did everything he did with the strength he had; therefore, God was right to call him “mighty warrior.” God would give Gideon all the instructions he needed to save Israel from the Midianites. He should not have any worries about success, because the LORD himself was sending him to do what the LORD wanted done to save His children (who finally in desperation had called out Him (see Judges 1:6).

(Judges 6:15) He responded, “But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

Gideon knew his own abilities in and of himself. He said his family was the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh, and he was the least in the family. Moses, Jeremiah, and Isaiah also expressed their humility, unworthiness, and personal inability to serve the LORD, but the LORD used all of them in mighty ways. But God declared that Gideon would be a successful leader because He would be with him; as the Scriptures teach, “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Corinthians 1:27).

(Judges 6:16) The LORD said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike down the Midianites, every one of them.”

In Judges 6:12, Gideon is told “the LORD, ‘Yahweh’ is with you.” In this verse, “the LORD” speaks to him again and says: “I will be with you.” God was with Gideon then, and God would be with Gideon in the future. God told Gideon what he would do, because God would be with him and make certain he accomplished everything exactly as the LORD planned. The LORD did not doubt what Gideon would do, because He would be with him, and everything Gideon did he did in the strength he had (Judges 6:14). Of course, all the existence and strength Gideon had was from God, but God did not want Gideon to delay his obedience while waiting for some special strength (as Samson would have later). What Gideon needed was assurance, courage, and obedience. The LORD did not want Gideon to doubt what He would do either, because He assured him twice that He was with him. Through Gideon, God would accomplish His will.

(Judges 6:17) Then he said to him, “If now I have found favor with you, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me.”

Gideon wanted to make absolutely certain that it was the LORD’s messenger who was speaking to him, because God had appeared to him as an ordinary man: “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2). The LORD did not immediately appear to Gideon in a dazzling divine display that would make Gideon think he was about to die for having seen God (see Judges 6:22-24). Gideon asked for a sign, but did not specify the sign as he would later do with the fleece (see Judges 6:36-20). In Gideon’s circumstances, God did not reprimand him for asking for a sign of certainty for doing a dangerous but needed task. In a similar way, God gave Moses signs when He called him. God gave the Hebrews and the Egyptians many signs that He was God over all. Today,

we have the Bible to teach us how to behave morally and spiritually (see John 20:30),

(Judges 6:18) Do not depart from here until I come to you, and bring out my present, and set it before you.” And he said, “I will stay until you return.”

The LORD agreed to accept an offering from Gideon, and the LORD agreed to wait until Gideon returned with the offering. Then, the LORD gave him a sign when He touched the offering with His staff and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the offering; immediately thereafter God disappeared. Gideon then knew he had seen the LORD and though unseen the LORD spoke to Gideon again and said “Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die” (see Judges 6:19-24). In a similar way, the LORD appeared to Moses in a burning bush and the bush was not consumed (see also Elijah’s offering to the LORD in 1 Kings 18:30-40 where the fire of God consumed the offering).

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. From your reading and study of Judges 6:11-18, who appeared to Gideon at the oak?
2. From reading Judges 6:1-18, how did God prepare the people and Gideon for their salvation through Gideon?
3. Do you think Gideon and his family were rich or poor? Give a reason for your answer.
4. How did God encourage Gideon?
5. When would it be wrong to ask God for a sign?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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