

Gideon's Altar

Judg 6:24

1

24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and named it The Lord is Peace.

The book of Judges is full of vastly interesting stories. Stories of how God uses even the most unsophisticated and simple of people to accomplish His will. In the story of Gideon, in verses 11-18 of this chapter, we see him up in the hills, threshing out a little wheat, trying to hide it from the Midianites. Then we see how the angel of the Lord, seemingly unrecognized at first, appears to him and tells him he has been chosen to free the children of God from the Midianites. It seems pretty natural that Gideon would question this. The implication is that he doesn't yet recognize this messenger from God, and not only that but this man is addressing him as a mighty warrior. Gideon begins to ask the questions that were burning in his mind. Where is the God of our forefathers that led us out of the oppression of Egypt? Where are the miracles that God performs? Why has God abandoned us? Why has God given us over to the Midianites? The response from the angel of the Lord was as pointed and clear as it could be...

Judg 6:14-15

2

14 The Lord looked at him and said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?"

What a statement from the Lord. GO, DELIVER,

3

"Have I not sent you?"

Hear now Gideon's words and see if maybe we don't see a little of ourselves in them...

Judg 6:15

4

15 He said to Him, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house."

Gideon's question was "How can I do what you ask?" "My family is the least in Manasseh and I am the youngest," "Who am I that you should send me?" Friends, this is our dilemma. God asks great things of us. He wants us to live righteously, He wants us to love Him as well as love each other and our neighbors. He wants us to give ourselves as living sacrifices to Him, and He wants us to carry his word to everyone that we can. Who am I Lord, that you would send me? Then the Lord gives Gideon the definitive answer to all his questions...

Judg 6:16

5

16 But the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man."

The Lord answers Gideon; Who are you Gideon, why, you are the one that I have chosen and I will be with you. If we get no other point from this lesson, please get this one...

6

God will be with those He chooses

2 Tim 1:8-9

7

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, **9** who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

Just as the Lord promised that He would be with Gideon because He called him to free the Israelites, the Lord will be with all those He has called, through the Word of Truth, to come to Him through Christ and be His.

Gideon was still very unsure of what this stranger was telling and thought to test him.

Judg 6:17-18

8

17 So Gideon said to Him, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. **18** “Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You.” And He said, “I will remain until you return.”

This is not an unusual reaction. We are not to blindly believe what someone teaches. We are to test their word and what they teach...

1 John 4:1

9

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

We are fortunate that we have God’s word to test anyone’s teaching. I have said this many times, do not accept anything I say, just because I say it, test my words. Confirm they come from God, search them, test them, so that you can know for yourself whether they are the truth. If they are, apply them and the point they make to yourselves, if they are not, keep God’s commandment to love a brother and come to me in that love and correct my error. This is where it becomes tricky. We search the scriptures and come to conclusions based on what we see. Because we have studied and arrived at our opinion, that opinion becomes to us, like doctrine. The danger is that we don’t try to bind our opinion as doctrine on others. Gideon didn’t have the word of God at his fingertips to test the words of this stranger against, so he devised a different test...

Judg 6:19-21

10

19 Then Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour; he put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought them out to him under the oak and presented them. **20** The angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so. **21** Then the angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight.

Gideon wanted to see proof, the Lord gave him proof and then vanished.

Judg 6:22

11

22 When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the Lord, he said, “Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face.”

This is why it seems that at first Gideon did not recognize the angel as being from God. After the fire consumes the bread and the meat we are told that when Gideon “saw that he was an angel of the Lord.” Then he calls on the Lord and says...

12

“I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face”

This statement is important in that Gideon obviously knew that anyone who saw the face of the Lord would die, and he thought he had seen the Lord’s face, and he thought he was going to die.

Judg 6:23

13

23 The Lord said to him, “Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die.”

Gideon thought that he would die, but the Lord told him to not fear, he would not die...

14

“Peace to you”

Remember what we talked about in our earlier lesson, the idea of “Peace” here comes from the Hebrew...

15

Shalom OT:7965, "peace; completeness; welfare; health."

Calmness, welfare, health, completeness. These thoughts all speak to being whole. Whole in body, health; Whole mentally, welfare; Whole in unity with the world, calmness; and ultimately Whole spiritually and with God, completeness.

Judg 6:24

16

24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and named it The Lord is Peace.

Gideon follows the offering and the discovery because of the fire that this was an angel of the Lord by building an altar, an altar he calls

17

“The Lord is Peace”

The Lord is the source of all “Peace”, all which can make man whole. The Lord is the source of everything that can make man whole. That is what the Lord offers to all who will come to Him through faithful obedience. This has been a long introduction to the thoughts that I would like to draw from Gideon and his altar here...

18

1) Gideon’s discovery which led to the naming of his altar
That the sight of God is not necessarily death, but **Life and Peace**

2) The truth and power in the name, “The Lord is Peace”

3) The “HOPE” that is found in the fact of the name

First then...

- 19** 1) Gideon's discovery which led to the naming of his altar
That the sight of God is not necessarily death, but **Life and Peace**

When man finally realizes that God is, that Christ is, that the Holy Spirit is, then and only then, can man begin to come to the understanding of what God can and will do for him. Gideon expected death, but received life. This is important, death was Gideon's fate, but God brought him back from the dark precipice to stand before Him in the light of His grace and mercy. Man's fate is death, spiritual death, because of his sin and only God can bring him back from the precipice of eternal death to stand in His light and that only happens through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the revelation of the Truth of God through the Spirit. This is the gift of God to all men...

Rom 6:23

20

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What a wonderful gift that has been given to man, what a blessing that is freely offered. All man has to do is receive it...

1 Tim 6:12-14

21

12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. **13** I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, **14** that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

In his letter to Timothy Paul speaks of fighting the good fight, of making the good confession to all that will hear it and charges him with keeping the commandments until Christ returns. God gives His free gift to all that receive it, all that will keep the commandments until Christ comes. That is the Peace that only is offered in God, through God, and is found in Christ. That is...

- 22** 2) The truth and power in the name, "The Lord is Peace"

Acts 4:12

23

12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Salvation is found in Christ. That is the power of God at work, that through Jesus Christ the free gift of God's salvation can be found.

Rom 1:16-17

24

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Therein is the truth in the name found,

Rom 3:21-26

25

21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22** even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; **25** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; **26** for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Jesus was sent and sacrificed to bring peace to man, to pay the price for the debt that was owed because of sin, to remove the fate of eternal death and to make man whole by removing that debt, the penalty of sin.

This brings us to the last thought we want to explore for a moment...

26

3) The **“HOPE”** that is found in the fact of the name

1 Peter 3:13-15

27

13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? **14** But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. **AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, 15** but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

Peter writes that we are to ready to defend the hope that is within us to all that ask. Then we see Paul writing to Titus...

Titus 3:5-7

28

5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

That is the story of Gideon. He recognized the Lord in the power that was shown to him. He acknowledged the lord as God. He received the power of the Lord to bring him peace, to restore him to his creator God. He humbled himself before that power and built an altar to the Lord. He accepted the task the Lord placed before him.

What is our story? Do we recognize the Lord in the power that has been revealed to us? Do we acknowledge God as our Lord? Do we receive the power of the Lord and accept the peace He offers and return to our creator? Do we humble ourselves before the Lord and worship before Him in faithful obedience? Do we accept the task, whatever it might be, God gives to us?

What is our story?