

(Judges 6:1-10) - Gideon is listed in *Hebrews 11:32-34* as one of the Old Testament judges appointed, called, and equipped by God to lead and protect Israel. He was a man to whom God gave faith to rest in the LORD and the promise of the Messiah for eternal salvation. Gideon's life as a judge in Israel is recorded in *Judges 6:11-8:32*. God's judgment was on Israel because of their idolatry. For seven years they had suffered invasions from foreigners. They cried out to God, and He sent them a prophet to remind them of how He had provided for them in the past and yet they had forsaken Him (*6:8-10*). Again, the nation Israel is a picture of all of us by nature in our sin and depravity. Even as sinners saved by grace, we need the power and goodness of God in Christ to save, preserve us, and keep us from falling (*Jude 24-25*). Thank God for His grace in Christ in Whom we have His righteousness imputed to justify us and His Spirit to give us life and keep us believing and resting in Him (*Psa. 32:1-2; Rom. 4:6-8*).

(Judges 6:11-23) - The "Angel of the LORD" appeared to Gideon. This Angel was preincarnate visitation of Christ (*6:14,22-24*). He called Gideon to be a judge in Israel. The source of Gideon's courage and strength was "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (*6:12*). Like Moses, Gideon knew that his only hope was the grace and power of God (*6:17; cf. Exod. 33:15-17*). As sinners saved by grace, we know that God's presence and grace are found in Christ. Christ is our preserver and our strength Who saves and preserves us from all enemies and obstacles (*Php. 4:13*). To assure him of God's grace and presence, Gideon asked the LORD for a sign (*6:17*). It was common in the Old Testament to ask for signs as the full revelation of God was not yet given as we have now in the Holy Scriptures. Even in the early days of the church, the message was accompanied with signs and wonders. Now we have the full Word of God, and these things are no longer needed (*1 Cor. 13:8-10; 2 Tim. 3:14-17*). Seeking signs and wonders in the last days is attributed to Satan and his followers (*2 Thess. 2:7-10; Rev. 12:3; 13:13-14*). How can we be assured of God's saving grace and presence? It is by looking to and resting in the risen Christ for all righteousness and salvation upon the authority of God's written Word (*ex. 1 John 5:10-13*).

Gideon prepared a meal for this Divine Guest. The LORD did not eat the food but told Gideon to put it on a rock and pour broth over it. The LORD then took His staff and touched the soaked meal. Fire came out of the rock, consumed the meal, and the LORD disappeared. Miraculously, Gideon had seen "the LORD face to face" and lived (*6:22*). The LORD then spoke to Gideon a word of peace and life (*6:23*). This reminds us of how God gives eternal life and speaks peace to all of His people when He brings them to see His glory in the face of Jesus Christ (*2 Cor. 4:6*). This is the glory of God as both a just God and a Savior based on the glorious Person and finished work of Christ. To approach God without Christ (without being washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness imputed) is death.

(6:23-27) - To worship and honor the LORD, Gideon built an altar and named in "Jehovah-shalom," i.e. the LORD is our peace. Here we see a picture of peace with God based on the just ground of the blood of Christ as pictured in the sacrifice of a young bullock of seven years old, which signifies the finished work of Christ as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. There is much speculation about why this bullock is specifically called the "second bullock." It may be that the first bullock of his father's herd had already been taken by his father to sacrifice at the altar of Baal, which God commanded Gideon to destroy. The LORD commanded Gideon to sacrifice the young bullock upon the altar and use the wood used to burn sacrifices to Baal. Gideon and ten of his servants destroyed the altar of Baal, cut down the grove of trees, and worshipped the LORD there by the proper altar and sacrifice.

(Judges 6:28-35) - Here is a picture of God's true ministers standing in the truth against the pagan world. These idolaters were so captivated by their idol that they wanted to kill the one who tore it down. We preach the truth of Christ Who is the one and only way of salvation for sinners, of Christ Who alone is God manifest in the flesh and Who alone accomplished redemption to secure the complete salvation of all for whom He died and arose again. We preach this truth to a lost, idolatrous, and dying world. The Bible tells us that this is the light that man by nature hates and will not receive (*John 3:19-20; Rom. 3:10-12; 1 Cor. 2:14*). But this is the Gospel that God uses to bring His people to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works and idolatry (*John 3:21; Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Pet. 3:9*). The men who worshiped Baal gave Gideon a new name - "*Jerubbaal*," which means "let Baal plead." This name proved the helplessness of their idol (*cf. Isa. 45:20-25*).

(Judges 6:36-40) - We see here both Gideon's weak faith and God's incredible grace and patience towards His people. Gideon knew he was treading on dangerous ground by asking for multiple signs. But our God is merciful and patient with us. He knows our weaknesses. However, the story of Gideon should be for our instruction and not serve as a model for our own behavior. Christ said, "*a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign*" (*Matt. 12:39; 16:1-4*). The Word of God itself is enough to assure us of God's way of salvation by His grace in Christ. Our advantage today over Gideon is that we have the full revelation of God in the Bible. The assurances of God-given faith in Christ are founded upon something much greater than signs. They are founded upon God's Word which cannot fail.

Chapters 7 - 8 tells us of Gideon's victories over the Midianites and others. Before the battles, Gideon's troops numbered 32,000, but in obedience to God, he reduced them to just 300 men (*7:7-8*). This was against an enemy that is described as "*thick as locusts*" with "*camels as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore*" (*7:12*). There was no doubt that Gideon's victories were not accomplished by the strength and cunning of men. It was truly the work of Almighty God. This is the way of our eternal salvation from sin, Satan, and death. SALVATION IS ALL OF THE LORD IN AND BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST! It is all of grace based on Christ's righteousness imputed by which God's people are justified in His sight and from which His people are given spiritual life and glory (*Rom. 5:21; Eph. 1:3*).

With the battle finally won, the people suggested that Gideon rule over them as king, but he declined their accolades and told them the Lord would rule over them (*8:22-23*). But Gideon was not perfect in himself. He was a sinner saved by grace, justified by Christ's righteousness imputed to him. He proved his sinfulness when he went on to compromise his faith by requesting that they all contribute gold from the plunder of the battle so he could create an "*ephod*," a breastplate or mask to use in cultic worship (*8:24-26*). And, as we see in *verse 27*, it became a snare to Gideon and his family. But the LORD had already done the work. Midian was defeated, "*so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon*" (*8:28*). This is the case of all true children of God concerning eternal salvation. Christ's work is the work of righteousness which overcomes our sins and insures our peace and safety spiritually and eternally (*Isa. 32:17-18*).

Notice what happened after Gideon's death (*8:33-35*). We see here another proof of how the law and temporal blessings cannot save us or keep us from sin. The Old Covenant had no power to put away sin, nor could it make them righteous in God's sight (*Heb. 10:1-4*). The law could not them life or a heart to obey God. The people turned away from the living and true God to serve another idol. Again, if the LORD does not save us and keep us faithful to Him, we will all turn away from Him and worship idols. Christ is our complete victory over sin, Satan, and all enemies of His church.