

Judges 6

Gideon: The Fifth Judge:

Part I: The Setup

I. Review

A. Prologues

1. Background (1:1 - 2:5)
2. Overview (2:6 - 3:11)

B. The Major Judges:

1. Ehud Ben-Gera, the Left-Handed Benjamite, assassinated Eglon, King of Moab and captured the Fords of Jordan (3:12-31)
2. Deborah and Barak Ben-Abinoam defeated Jabin, King of Canaan's army, and Sisera, the commander, was killed by Jael (4 - 5)

II. Details

A. The Sin (6:1)

B. The Enemies

1. Midianites¹ (6:2)
2. Amalekites² (6:3)
3. Other Eastern Tribes (6:3)
4. Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmunna, Kings of Midian (7:25; 8:5; Ps 83:11-12)

C. The Oppression (6:2-6)

D. The Cry (6:7-10)

E. The Deliverer: Gideon Ben-Joash (6:11-15)

1. An Abiezrite from the tribe of Manasseh
2. From Ophrah in the Valley of Jezreel

¹ Midianites: also called Medanites and Ishmaelites (Gen 37:25, 28, 36); Midian, Medan, and Ishmael were all sons of Abraham (Gen 25:2, 12); originally settled in the Sinai peninsula and in the Aramean Desert east of Israel, Moab, and Ammon; they were a nomadic people; Moses' father-in-law was a Midianite

² Amalekites: originally settled in the Sinai peninsula and in the Negev; here appear to have also migrated to Aramean Desert along with the Midianites

3. Youngest Son
4. One of the “Heroes of Faith” (See Heb 11:32.)
5. Also named Jerubbaal³ and Jerubbesheth⁴ (See 6:32 and 2 Sam 11:21.)

F. The Deliverance

1. The Call of Gideon (6:11-16)
2. Gideon tests God the first time. (6:17-24)
3. Religious Reform Within His Own Family (6:25-32)
4. The Gathering of Troops (6:33-35; 7:1)
 - i. Midianites and Allies (135,000): Valley of Jezreel⁵ north of the Hill of Moreh near En-Dor
 - ii. Israel (32,000 from Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali): En-Harod, 4 miles south of the Midianites
5. Gideon tests God the second and third times. (6:36-40)

III. Application and Discussion

- A. Was Gideon right to question God in 6:13? Do his questions show a lack of faith?**
- B. Why did God not answer Gideon’s questions in 6:13?**
- C. How was Gideon able to see God’s face and still live?**
- D. Was Gideon right to test God not once, not twice, but three times?**
- E. What can we learn from Gideon’s religious reform and preparations before battle? Could it be significant that the Spirit of the Lord did not come on Gideon until after he had reformed his house?**
- F. Was Gideon right to be afraid? Did his fear show a lack of faith?**
- G. Did Joash repent or was he only trying to spare his son’s life?**

³ Jerubbaal: “Let Baal defend himself”

⁴ Jerubbesheth: “Let the shameful one defend himself”; a substitution for Jerubbaal

⁵ Valley of Jezreel: Jezreel means “God scatters” or “God sows”; also known as the Plain of Meggido; King Ahab later kept a palace somewhere in this plain and he and Jezebel died there; site of numerous battles in history: Pharaoh Thutmose III defeated a Canaanite army there in 1468 BC; Barak earlier defeated the Canaanites there (4:13); King Josiah of Judah died in battle against Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt there in 609 BC (2 Ki 23:29; 2 Ch 35:20-24); Napoleon defeated the Turks there in 1799 (taking advantage of the flooding of the Kishon River); British General Allenby defeated the Palestinian Turks there in 1917