

# Gideon, the General

From the ordinary to the extraordinary



# Gideon, the extraordinary General

We are look at the topic: from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

## The ordinary man

Mostly we feel ordinary - only those who reach the highest sport pinnacle, or those who have successful businesses , or ministries would think that they are extraordinary.

Generally, I venture to say that most people think of themselves as ‘less than” simply because we are always comparing.

And there are always those faster, slimmer, cleverer than we are –whatever the yardstick – someone will be better, and if we are lucky—[note not blessed] we will find a few that are worse off than we are.

Gideon, is an ordinary farmer ... nothing special, no farmer of the year awards, no super harvest ... just an ordinary farmer.

## What causes us to feel ordinary?

- ◆ The daily struggles with life.
- ◆ The problems with our children.
- ◆ The broken dreams.
- ◆ The stuck-in-the-mud stagnant life-style that we face.

All of these issues and thoughts will pull you backwards - it will be like a large rubber band that is tied to your waist. Making going forward hard or near impossible.

## History of the children of Israel

- ◆ Delivered from Pharaoh.
- ◆ Brought into the Land of Promise.

But the Canaanites, who were left behind to test them, overpowered them - not on the battle fields, but in the battle of the spirit ... they have allowed idol worship / pagan GODs and Baal worship to infiltrate into their daily lives.

What has happened to the Commandment: “***You shall not make graven images - you shall not bow down to these images***”???

What happened to the Commandment: “***You shall have no other GODs before Me***”?

Sadly, the Bible records their life choices like this ... said differently, they built their choices on anything BUT GOD.

**Judges 6:1** “Then the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian for seven years.”

And so the curse comes into play.

GOD releases the **Midianites** to oppress the Israelites.

We read in **Judges 8:21(b)** that the **Midianites** were the first people to domesticate camels for travel.

**Judges 8:21** “Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Rise up yourself and strike us; for as the man is, so is his strength.” So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent amulets that were on their camels’ necks.”

**Judges 6:2-4** “The [powerful] hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens (hideouts) which were in the mountains, and the caves and the [mountain] strongholds. For it was whenever Israel had sown [their seed] that the Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and the people of the east and go up against them. So they would camp against them and destroy the crops of the land as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey.”

**Are you oppressed - running on the spot?**

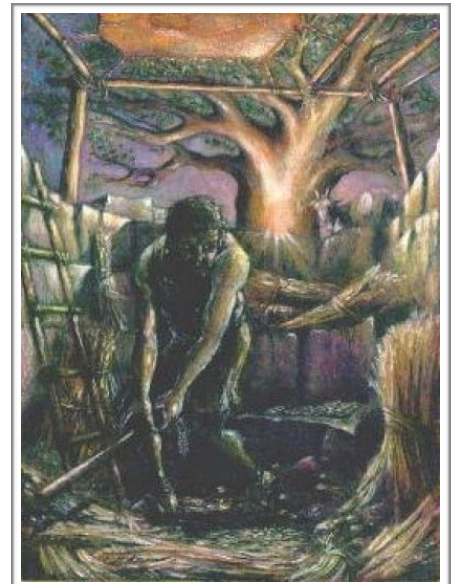
**Do you cry out for relief - hoping GOD will hear?**

**Gideon - the ordinary man**

To show how “ordinary” a man Gideon was - we get this description. He is NOT on the large open threshing floor ... instead he is beating out the grain in a **winepress!!!**

**What would a comparative example be?**

- ◆ It is like trying to drink a two liter coke out of the bottle cap!!!
- ◆ He is hiding ...



## Gideon - the extraordinary man

The angel arrives and says: “**O ... mighty man of valor!!**”

**Judges 6:12** “*And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, O brave man.”*”

### What???

**\*\*NUGGET\*\* Whatever man, in his own power, cannot accomplish ... when GOD is with you, everything is possible.**

- ◆ As soon as GOD Calls, the talents, gifting, and other abilities are magnified.
- ◆ As soon as we “stand and take courage”, we can be changed.
- ◆ As soon as we discover a new vision, we can focus on the battle.
- ◆ As soon as you step out from your hiding, place GOD can launch you forward.

### What holds the ordinary man back?

There are three things that will prevent you from becoming extraordinary.

#### A) Fear / hesitating

I think it's a no-brainer - we are all fearful from time to time ... the uncertainties of life, the threats made by groups of people, the lawlessness which abounds in most countries, the religious groups that want to take over and rule, and so forth.

However, we have to place our trust in GOD. Almost every time that we visit Israel we arrive with all sorts of threats of war and calamity. Strangely enough, although things do happen from time to time (which we read in the press or see on the TV, we are always protected – by ABBA Father's GRACE alone!)

**Judges 6:15** “*But Gideon said to Him, “Please Lord, how am I to rescue Israel? Behold, my family is the least [significant] in Manasseh, and I am the youngest (smallest) in my father's house.”*”

#### B) Insecurity

Our childhood upbringing will dramatically affect how we see life. If we have been taught to face challenges as opportunities, and been allowed to try and fail without being judged then we will have the self confidence to move forward in difficult times.

If that has not happened, then you will have to learn to trust GOD ... after all: He says: “*I will never test you beyond your means ...*”

**Judges 6:17** *“Gideon replied to Him, “If I have found any favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speaks with me.”*

**Judges 6:36-39** *“Then Gideon said to GOD, “If You are going to rescue Israel through me, as You have spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of [freshly sheared] wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece, and it is dry on all the ground [around it], then I will know that You will rescue Israel through me, as You have said.” And it was so. When he got up early the next morning and squeezed the dew out of the fleece, he wrung from it a bowl full of water. Then Gideon said to GOD, “Do not let your anger burn against me, so that I may speak once more. Please let me make a test once more with the fleece; now let only the fleece be dry, and let there be dew on all the ground.”*

### **C) Hiding**

We only hide when we do not have a solution for the problem - if we see and understand that GOD is our Source, then we will not have to hide.

It is only people who think that they can dominate, and overpower. GOD knows that they will not stand if He determines otherwise.

We have to remember, that whatever talent, ability or gifting I have, it is JUST ENOUGH for GOD TO USE.

I only have to think to stand up from behind the wall where I am hiding behind and come into the open ... and declare my position alongside GOD.

**Judges 6:11** *“Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, and his son Gideon was beating wheat in the wine press [instead of the threshing floor] to [hide it and] save it from the Midianites.”*

We develop these attributes when we begin to doubt what it is that GOD has done – when we forget that its our own fault for allowing pagan practices to take root in the land.

**Judges 6:13** *“ But Gideon said to him, “Please my lord, if the Lord is with us, then why has all this happened to us? And where are all His wondrous works which our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.”*

We can only change our views if we understand that GOD is merely keeping His promise - we should do an internal evaluation.

### **What is the condition of my own spiritual life?**

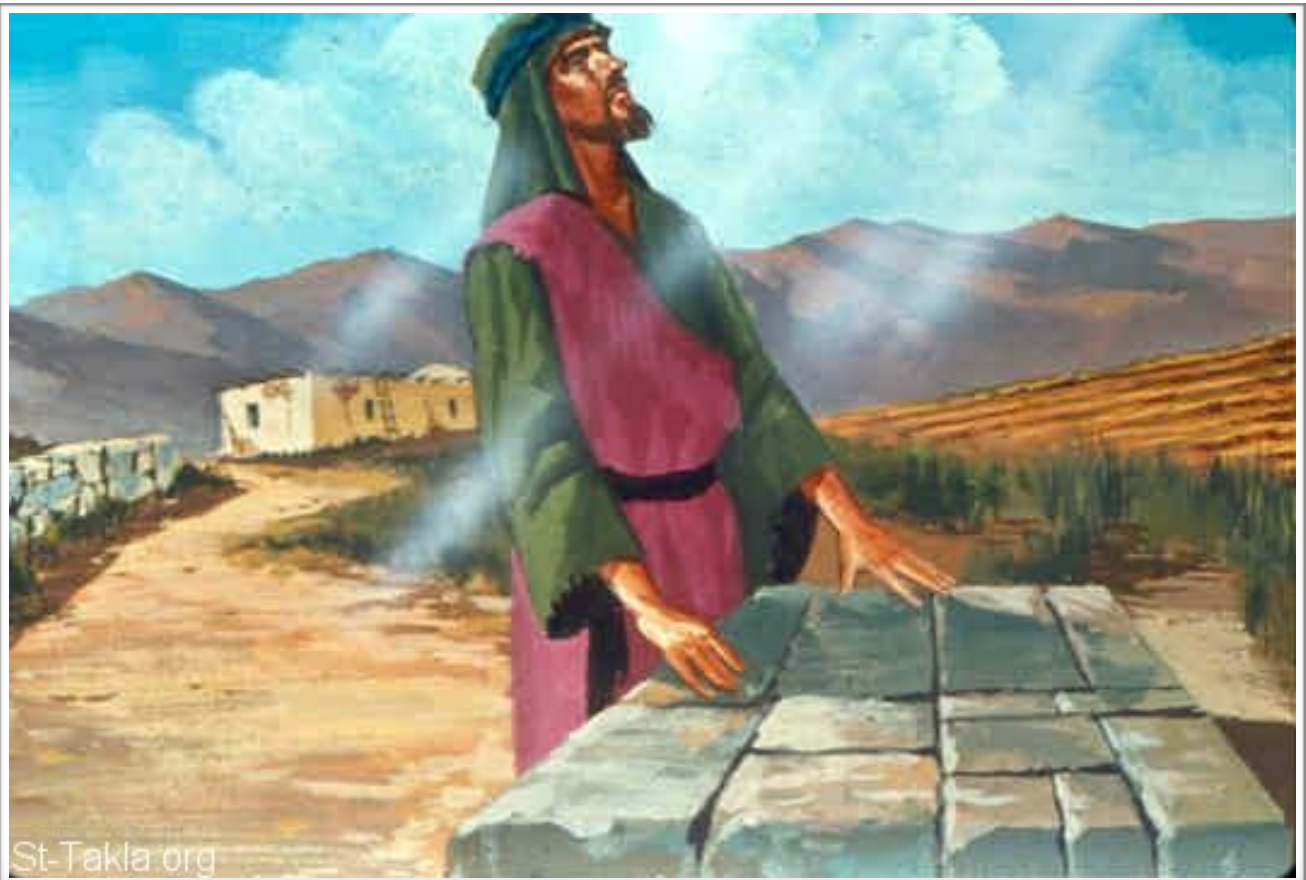
When our focus changes, and we connect between our own mistakes and the resultant judgment, then we can change our world view.

## Gideon, the beginning of an extraordinary man

- a) **Gideon deals with the pagan altars on his family line:** while he is not involved in this practice, he understands that his family is ... and that while those altars remain standing, he will not be able to become the valiant warrior.

*Judges 6:28 "Early the next morning when the men of the city got up, they discovered that the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built."*

Not only does he destroy the pagan altars, he goes further ... he re-dedicates himself to GOD by building a GODLY altar.



**Judges 6:26** " ... and build an altar to the Lord your GOD on top of this mountain stronghold [with stones laid down] in an orderly way. Then take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice using the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down."

- b) **Gideon gathers together his army**

The Midianites amount to 135,000 men - Gideon gathers 32 000 soldiers.

Then GOD says ... way too many !!! GOD knows that Gideon needs to be stretched – he needs to be aware that he is not extraordinary, WITHOUT GOD at his side.



**\*\*NUGGET\*\*** You are “just enough” so that together with GOD, you can become extraordinary.

- ◆ GOD says: “**Get rid of 22,000**”
- ◆ GOD says: “**Get rid of another 9,700**”
- ◆ To be extraordinary, we **only need 300** in order to go to war.

**Judges 7:7** “And the Lord told Gideon, “With the **three hundred men who lapped** I will rescue you, and will hand over the Midianites to you. Let all the other people go, each man to his home.”

Let us consider the odds ... Gideon has one soldier for every 447 Midianites!

## **Do you not think that these odds describe an extraordinary man??**

But before we forget, it’s not only Gideon—there were 300 soldiers that were extraordinary men—somehow they were so inspired by the leadership, integrity, and values of one man - Gideon, that they were prepared to take on that kind of battle.

### **Gideon the extraordinary man**

#### **a) Gideon listens to GOD**

GOD allows him to hear and see the fear in the enemy’s camp, but more importantly, Gideon listens. He does not just rush in and do anything - he waits and gets direction so that his course of action is in line with GOD’s Will.

**Judges 7:15** “When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down in worship. Then he returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the Lord has given the camp of Midian into your hand.”

#### **b) Gideon follows GOD’s battle plan strategy**

Once we have heard what GOD wants us to do, we can divide up the tasks into sections so that we can manage the actual plan. Importantly, the focus remains on GOD’s Will ... it is all about GOD.

**Judges 7:16-18** “He divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put trumpets and empty pitchers into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the pitchers. And he said to them, “Look at me, then do likewise. When I come to the edge of the camp, do just as I do. When I and all who are with me blow the trumpet (ram’s horn), then all around the camp you also blow the trumpets and shout, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’”

### c) Gideon worships GOD

As soon as the victory has been won, he will collect the gold ... all 42 pounds of it and makes a ritual vest - a symbol of GOD's Victory. Mankind wants to reflect the victory back to GOD.

What Gideon does is wonderful, unfortunately, it will become something that others will worship instead of the true GOD

**Judges 8:27** *"Gideon made [all the golden earrings into] an ephod [a sacred, high priest's garment], and put it in his city of Ophrah, and all Israel worshiped it as an idol there, and it became a trap for Gideon and his household."*

### d) Gideon makes the proclamation - that GOD alone can rule over mankind

The people want a king!!

The people want democracy - the voting system – they all say - rule over us!!

But the EXTRAORDINARY Gideon knows that the victory belongs to GOD and that they only achieved this because they were obedient to GOD's Commandments.

**Judges 8:22-23** *"Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule [as king] over us, both you and your son, also your son's son, for you have rescued us from the hand of Midian. But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."*





## Summary

- ❖ GOD is calling you.
- ❖ GOD knows exactly what the problems are - and has the plans and the power to defeat the enemy.
- ❖ GOD knows that He can surprise you with the level of trust that He will place in you in order to defeat the enemy.
- ❖ GOD says : ***“I am with you..”***

**Judges 6:16** *“The Lord answered him, “I will certainly be with you, and you will strike down the Midianites as [if they were only] one man.”*”

**AMEN!!!**

