

## The God of Peace

Judges 6:1-24

- I wonder what some of today's popular definitions of "peace" might be?
- How does the world see "peace?"
- I came up with a few options.
- As it regards society, a possible definition may be:

"An end to hostilities - no more armed conflict, no more war"

- As it regards my life personally, another definition might be:

"An ease or a satisfaction with my current circumstances"

- In considering the environment we live in, we may define peace as:

"A relative calm - no confusion, no commotion, relative quiet"

- No doubt many desire this kind of peace - to live in a world at peace, at peace with their circumstances, and with a little peace and quiet
- There is nothing (necessarily) wrong with these definitions - or these desires
- In fact, this all sounds pretty good
- Still, something is missing
- Wouldn't you agree?
- Today, we'll talk about what's missing from Judges 6
- Our theme?
- "The God of Peace"

- We started by defining peace according to the world's standards
- Those definitions are fine - good even - but something is missing
- I would assert strongly, based on what we observe in the word of God
- That "someone" rather than "something" is missing
- And that is "The God of Peace"

- It should also be mentioned that the worldly definitions of peace merely represent temporary favorable conditions
- When armed conflict resumes, when my satisfaction with circumstances wanes, and when the environment I live in returns to chaos - this brand of peace is gone!
- Lasting peace, eternal peace, peace that is not based upon conditions, events, occurrences, or my current state of affairs is found in a person: Jehovah-shalom
- This name for the One True God, the God of the Bible appears in Judges 6
- This is where we also find a man named Gideon

- I want to relate to you the setting into which the God of peace is introduced...

Judges 6:1-6

1 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD [a few more details on that later]: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.  
2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel [that is the Midianites overpowered Israel]: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. [they were hiding and hiding food in these dens and caves]  
3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them;  
4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. [they destroyed all of their crops, and did not even leave them any sheep, cattle, or donkeys]  
5 For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it.  
6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

- I don't think there is any way for us to observe these events and come to the conclusion that the children of Israel were in a period of peace
- A hostile power [hostile powers] are unjustly attacking and oppressing them
- And no one that doesn't have any food, having their livelihood repeatedly stolen from them, is satisfied with their lot in life
- There is no calm here - no rest for the weary
- The Midianites and the Amelekites keep coming and keep coming and keep coming
- There is no respite
- Certainly no peace
- The passage goes on...

#### Judges 6:7-10

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites,  
8 That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage;  
9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;  
10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

- Israel, in this not-so-peaceful period for them, is reminded of the faithfulness God
- In another time of "no peace," God intervened and altered their situation
- And while deliverance is a key part of the story, the Deliverer is a much bigger part of the story
- In fact, the Lord says: if you had trusted me - obeyed my voice - your circumstances would be different
- But this is about who He is, not just what He has done or can do for them
- "I am the LORD your God," He reminds them
- Trust and follow me!
- How does Gideon then react?...

#### Judges 6:11-13

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

- Where is the lack of personal peace (if there is any) in this exchange?
- Is it in the events of Gideon's life?
- I mean, is Gideon lacking personal peace because his life, the life of his family, and the life of his countrymen are constantly in danger?
- Does he lack peace because they are under attack?
- Or does he lack peace because He is failing to recognize the God of Peace?
- Because he is failing in his faith toward the Deliverer?
- Because he is failing to acknowledge the power of His (of Israel's) God?
- The real question: would He have peace if He trusted Jehovah-shalom?
- Let's go on...

Judges 6:14-16

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

- Upon whom is the emphasis placed in this promise of changing circumstances?
- Most certainly in the Lord!
- "Have not I sent thee?" God said
- "Surely I will be with thee" said the Lord
- Gideon says "my family group is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh, and I am the youngest one in my family"
- All of this may be true, but...the Lord

Judges 6:17-18

17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

- There is a slight shift, now, in perspective
- Gideon wants, it seems he needs, to know
- Does this message come to me from the God of my fathers?

- Is this the Deliverer?
- Is this the One who has all power?
- What's more, who is this "angel of the Lord," the One bringing this message from God?
- The keen observer will have already recognized from the text, in verse 14, the word LORD is in all caps
- This is the visual cue in our written scriptures that the word is Jehovah, the proper name of the one true God
- It says "Jehovah looked upon him, and said..."
- Furthermore, in verse 16, did you see it?
- Jehovah said unto him "I will be with thee"
- The One who stood before him - the pre-incarnate Christ, Jesus our Messiah - would be with him

#### Judges 6:19-21

19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.

20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so.

21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

- Can, by any natural process, fire come forth of an ordinary rock? (That is apart from God's personal intervention?)
- Certainly not
- And this understanding served as a sign to Gideon that the messenger in His presence was very God

#### Judges 6:22-24

22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

- Gideon declared "Alas, Lord Jehovah!"
- He praised His God, referring to Him as Jehovah-shalom, the God of Peace
- The key question of the lesson is: has anything changed?
- Have the Midianites and the Amalekites been defeated?
- Is the food safe?
- Are the hardships and the troubles and the constant threats gone?
- Are hostilities ended?
- Is Gideon now living in calm? With no confusion, no commotion, in quiet?
- Or has he simply realized, understood, acknowledged, believed God?
- It will be left up to you to read the remainder of this story, beginning in Judges 6:25

- I can assure you of this: His name - Jehovah-shalom - means something to Gideon and to us
- In days of genuine pain and distress and even oppression, don't settle for "temporary favorable conditions"
- Look to, rest upon, be satisfied in the One which provides lasting peace, eternal peace, peace that is not based upon conditions, events, occurrences, or my current state of affairs
- Rest in: Jehovah-shalom, the God of Peace

*Christopher Harper, Take Note 2023*