

THE FAMOUS JUDGE IN ISRAEL

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed for wisdom and read the Bible to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes below to meet the needs of your students.

Lesson Aim: To discover how the Lord shows us His plan to us each day of our lives

Suggestion: Give next week's Student Lesson to your class to answer the questions. Let them share their answers in class. The questions below will reveal important truths you may want to emphasize.

Introduction: Forty years after Barak and Deborah delivered Israel from the Canaanites, the Israelites lapsed back into idolatry. Because they were unfaithful to the LORD, He permitted the Midianites to terrorize them for seven years. When they repented and cried to Him for help, He called Gideon to deliver them from the Midianites. Gideon resisted the LORD's call at first, like many do today when we hear that the LORD has called us to be His witnesses to lost people. Even though Gideon's task was far more dangerous than ours usually is, he did what the LORD told him to do. Jesus says to us as He told His disciples, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." And then He finished that command with this promise: "Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give it you" (Jn 15:16). We can ask the LORD whatever we need as we witness and our heavenly Father will give it to us.

Why did the LORD let the Midianites plunder Israel by taking their food for themselves? 6:1, 10

The new generation of Israelites turned from the LORD, who had blessed Israel with peace and food during their past forty years, and they worshipped the gods of the Amorites. This betrayal of the LORD made Him angry and He let Midianites rob the Israelites of their food each year at the time of harvest. Believers are warned to keep themselves from idols (1 Jn 5:21). Idols can be anything that is more important than the LORD. When money, pleasure, popularity, power, food or anything else is more desirable than the LORD, it is an idol. The LORD chastens His children as long as they love idols. No wonder such Christians are unhappy. Joy will return when they turn from their idols. Are you full of joy?

How did Gideon respond when the LORD chose him to deliver Israel from the Midianites? 6:15

He made two excuses. He said his family was poor and he was the least in his family. That was not humility; that was pride. He was telling the LORD that He did not know what He was doing. The LORD knows everything that there is to know, so when He chooses someone to do a job for Him, He is not acting with ignorance. When the LORD tells believers that He has chosen them to go and produce fruit (Jn 15:16), He is telling them to be soul-winners. A study of "fruit" in John confirms this. It is first found in John 4:36. Jesus is telling His disciples to reap a harvest of souls among the Samaritans. It is found next in 12:24 where Jesus is talking about His death, which will save many souls. Then Jesus uses "fruit" in 15:2, 4, 5, and 8. He calls Himself the vine and the believer a branch on the vine which will bear fruit by His energy. The purpose of disciples was to bring others to Jesus and this brings glory to the Father. Finally, Jesus tells His disciples that He chose and ordained them to go and bring forth fruit in 15:16. These words apply best to the fruit of soul-winning, not to the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

How did the LORD show Gideon that he would deliver Israel from the Midianites? 6:16-17:15

He promised Gideon, "Surely I will be with you, and you will strike the Midianites as one man" (6:16). As a sign, He touched Gideon's offering with his staff and fire came from the rock to burn it (16:17-24). He was protected from men that wanted to kill him for destroying their altar to Baal (16:25-35). The LORD gave him two signs with the fleece that He would save Israel by his hand (16:36-40). Then He sent Gideon to secretly listen to a Midianite tell about his dream and what it meant (17:9-15). The LORD will confirm his call to you as well, if you are willing to obey Him (Jer 33:3).