

Title: Gideon: the one who bruises and breaks: a destroyer

Scripture Reading: Judges 6:1-14

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. 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; 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. 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. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, 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; 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; 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. 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. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 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. 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?"

Gideon is a strange mixture of doubt and fear.

1. Our Extremity

Judges 6:1-4 says, "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and

the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. 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; 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. ‘

The Israelites had to:

- (1) live in hide-aways
- (2) hide their food in the mountains because of the pressure of the Midianites in the valleys.

Three groups of people terrorize the Israelites:

- (a) The Midianites.
- (b) The Amalekites.
- (c) The sons of the East.

Psalms 55:12-14 says, 'If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it: if a foe were rising against me, I could hide. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God.'

The phrase 'destroy the produce of the earth' means 'gazed' and involving the over-gazing of the invaders' herds.

The KJV translated 'locust' as 'grasshoppers.'

So these people supposedly came and took away everything you treasured from you. They

took away your reputation, your source of livelihood. They did what oft quoted idiom, 'they hang you up to dry.

2. Fruit of ingratitude cause of extremity

They were helpless because they had cast off him who had helped them so wondrously, and who would have been their help in every time of need if they had not so wantonly forsaken him.

What is seen in the fruit of ingratitude?

- a. Israel's abandonment of Jehovah is punished by an apparent abandonment of Israel by YAHWEH.**

b. The manner and extend of their discipline are suggestive of the heinousness of their offence.

c. It was a salutary discipline because it led them to repentance and prayer.

The bible says, 'it is of the LORD's mercy that I am chastened.'

3. God was sought and found in times of trouble

We are told that the children of Israel 'cried to the LORD'. This is part of the recurrent cycle of sin, judgment and repentance which characterizes many of our lives. The LORD sent an unnamed prophet.

Canaan was YHWH's land. Canaan is present day Israel.

What can trouble teach us?

- a. Troubles drives men to God.**
- b. If God is truly sought in trouble he will certainly be found.**
- c. When God is found in trouble, He does not always bring immediate deliverance.**
- d. The consciousness of sin which must precede deliverance is produced by a prophet's message in the midst of trouble.**

The call to repentance consists

(1) in recounting the ancient mercy of God, for it is in the light of God's goodness that we see most clearly our own wickedness; and
(2) in directly charging Israel with ingratitude and apostasy. All sin includes the sin of ingratitude.

4. Gideon, the one who bruises or breaks became a destroyer

Gideon means 'He that bruises or breaks; a destroyer.

He is a simple man living a simple life.

Gideon is a man filled with doubts and fears.

This shows two things:

- a. He was hiding his crops from the annual raid

- b. There was not a very large crop so that it could be thrashed in a wine press.

Then the angel came and said 'the LORD is with you' and calls him 'O valiant warrior.'

YHWH gives us a mandate. This is similar to God sending Moses.

- a. YHWH's uses human instrumentality
- b. YHWH's personal presence is the key to victory

He asks, 'How shall I deliver Israel?' This sense of inadequacy is similar to that of Moses and Jeremiah. Gideon includes this 'Behold my family is the least in Manasseh'.

HE MUST THEN BE PREPARED.

And two things were necessary in the first place: one *to awaken in him a thorough trust in God*; the other *to inspire him with a proper trust in himself*, springing from his trust in God.