

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 03-Jun..... Joshua 1:1-18
- 2) 10-Jun..... Joshua 2:1 – 6:27
- 3) 17-Jun..... Joshua 7:2 – 12:24
- 4) 24-Jun..... Joshua 13:1 – 22:34
- 5) 01-Jul..... Joshua 23:1 – 24:33
- 6) 08-Jul..... Judges 1:1 – 3:6
- 7) 15-Jul..... Judges 3:7 – 5:31
- 8) 22-Jul..... **Judges 6:1 – 8:21**
- 9) 29-Jul..... Judges 8:22 – 12:15
- 10) 05-Aug..... Judges 13:1 – 16:31
- 11) 12-Aug..... Judges 17:1 – 21:25
- 12) 19-Aug..... Ruth 1:1 – 2:23
- 13) 26-Aug..... Ruth 3:1 – 4:22

INTRODUCTION

- One of the most notable judges, Gideon, was also one of the most questioning – “Where are God’s miracles?” Was Gideon faithless?
- Should we lay out fleeces or trust in dreams to find God’s will?

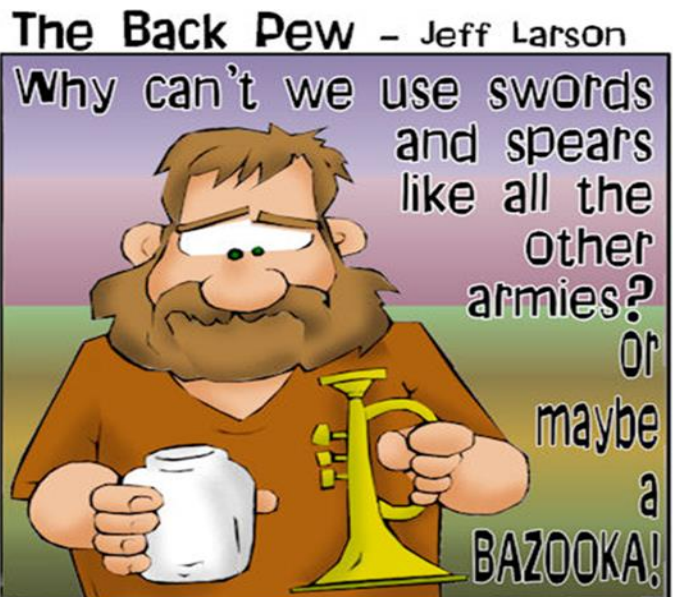
Passage	Comments
Judges 6:1-40	<p><b>God uses the Few, the Doubtful to Show His Might</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vv1-7. Israel did what was evil again. Overran by sheer numbers they had to dig out caves to hide in</li> <li>• v8. An unnamed prophet explains the reason why - SIN</li> <li>• vv11-12. A Theophany (God appears in human form)</li> <li>• v13. Gideon asks questions still being asked today:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ “If God exists why is there evil in the world?”</li> <li>♦ And “Where are all His miracles?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• vv14-21. God reveals His plan to Gideon – “Go &amp; Deliver!” But Gideon makes excuses and asks for a sign, so the Angel of the Lord revealed He was God by accepting Gideon’s worship of an offering</li> <li>• v25. God again speaks to Gideon, and commands him to tear down his father’s altar of Baal &amp; Asherah pole, which was a tree stump carved into a phallic symbol</li> <li>• vv34-39. Gideon did not move against the Midianites until the Spirit of God came upon him, and he requests for tangible evidence from God by using a fleece</li> </ul>
A Few Words on Laying Down Fleeces Today.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If God were to appear to us in person, or give us a phone call or send us an email, then asking for tangible proof, as Gideon did, would be a reasonable request</li> <li>• Since God conveys His will to us in more subtle ways today (Heb 1:1-2) through His Son (or His Word), then “laying down a fleece” involves a providential answer and not something that breaks the laws of physics</li> <li>• Remember – unbelievers seek signs/wonders... Jn 4:48</li> <li>• If we lack something, such as wisdom, then ask for it. This includes asking for confirmation of God’s leading. But know this - the answer will be a providential answer</li> <li>• For example: “Lord, please confirm you are leading me into full time missions work?” The answer won’t involve the Sun standing still, but it might involve a providential answer to financial support, or a long-closed door of opportunity finally opens up</li> </ul>
Should we expect to see a Miracle or Providence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6:11. Gideon is hiding &amp; threshing wheat in a wine vat</li> <li>• 6:15. Gideon makes excuses of his smallness</li> <li>• 6:27. Gideon destroys his father’s altar at night for fear</li> <li>• 6:36-40. Gideon asked for tangible evidence from God</li> <li>• 7:10. Gideon checks out the enemy’s camp with Purah</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b> – Gideon was just like many of us – doubtful about directly seeing and hearing from God, but he was willing to do what needed to be done once he received confirmation – He truly proved all things ..... 1Thes 5:21</p>
Was Gideon a Coward?	<p>Not per Hebrews 11:32</p>

Passage	Comments
7:1-25	<p><b>God defeats 135,000 men with 300 (45:1 ratio)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• v6. What is the spiritual significance of the 300 men who lapped water like a dog over those who knelt down to drink? Were they any braver, smarter, or stronger?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Probably no spiritual significance. God just wanted 300 men and no more, and the water test did it</li> <li>♦ God could’ve chosen only the left-hand warriors – but we would’ve conjured up all kinds of unwarranted spiritual ramifications from that exercise. God knew what He was doing with using the drinking water test</li> </ul> </li> <li>• v11-15. Gideon is motivated after hearing confirmation of impending doom for the Midianites from a dream</li> </ul>
A Few Words on Dreams	<p><b>Are dreams reliable?</b> Can dreams motivate or confirm for us any decisions we need to make?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dreams may be of God (Joel 2:28); or may be “lying” dreams (Zech 10:2); or just from weariness (Ec 5:3)</li> <li>• Solomon says fear God &amp; don’t trust dreams..... Ec 5:7</li> <li>• God holds His word above man’s dreams..... Jer 23:28</li> <li>• Like Gideon, be sure to prove all things ..... 1Thes 5:21</li> <li>• <b>ALSO NOTE</b>, God-invoked dreams along with accurate dream interpretations are extremely rare, even in the Bible – so don’t use dreams to help make decisions, especially after eating pizza and spicy buffalo wings</li> </ul>
8:1-21	<p><b>To Kill or Not to Kill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• v10. An army of 135,000 where only 15,000 escape</li> <li>• v20. Gideon asked his oldest son to slay the 2 Midian kings, but Jether refused, being young &amp; afraid                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Was it right or wrong for Gideon to ask his son to slay these 2 men, possibly thinking he was training his son in the art of war?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- God’s Word is reliable under all conditions, even after eating pizza late at night. But dreams and fleeces are not as rock solid

NEXT WEEK: **Judges 8-12.** We look at some less notable judges (Tola, Jair, Ibzon, Elon, Abdon) and then some notorious judges (Abimelech and Jephthah) before we get to Samson



After the Lord trims a 32,000 man army down to a lean mean 300, He arms them with trumpets and clay jars (Judges 7:8)