

Judges Chapter 6 Part 4

Below is a link to a conversation in the movie “The Island.” It is on the website Youtube. I think that the “patient” named Lincoln Six Echo (L6E) portrays the emotional state of Gideon in Judges chapter six verse 13. Imagine L6E as Gideon and Dr. Merrick as the Angel of the Lord.

<https://youtu.be/XpCkvyQ6vjE>

Here is some added background information on chapter 6.

There is an abundance of “two’s” similar to what we saw in chapter 3 associated with Ehud. Here is Trent Butler’s comment on the “two’s” for Gideon.

“This messenger paired with the prophet of 6:8 also serves as the first of several people and things paired together in the Gideon narrative. These include Gideon’s two names (with Jerubbaal), two names for God (Yahweh and Elohim), Gideon’s two fleece tests, two buildings of the altar in 6:24-32, two pairs of Midianite officers executed (7:25;8:21), two tests of assurance of Yahweh’s support (6:36-38, 39-40), and two tests God uses to reduce Gideon’s army (7:2-3, 4-8).”

Constable’s comment on this relates to Gideon’s and Israel’s doublemindedness. Perhaps it is more fundamental than that. There is the evil against God and there is trust in God. Cursing versus blessing. Choose one.

Let me go back and make a comment about

Judges 6:12 And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, valiant warrior.”

Angel of the Lord. We identified the Angel of the Lord as the second person of the Trinity. We do not know what He looked like to Gideon.

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Did He appear like a man? So how does Gideon know who he is? At this point, we, the readers know because the text tells us so. But Gideon apparently is not sure. In his day, and even in our day, people present themselves as someone they are not. The Angel of the Lord did not identify Himself. How do we verify the truth?

Appeared to him. This is the passive of the verb to see. Literally, “was seen.” The Angel of the Lord was visible to Gideon.

The Lord is with you. There is no verb. The “is” is implied. This is perhaps a double entendre. The Angel of the Lord is physically present with Gideon, and says “The Lord/God is with you (singular).” Yet, in the next verse Gideon addresses him as “Adonai” or “sir” indicating that Gideon has missed this. Instead, Gideon apparently understands “with me” as something closer to “on our side.” He misunderstands, not realizing that he is talking to God Himself Who is “with you,” Gideon. This may explain some of what Gideon does later.

I find myself defending Gideon against a host of critics. He certainly was far from perfect. Just like everyone of us. Yet, in the end he becomes a faith hero. We know that because the Bible tells us so in Hebrews chapter 11. Gideon had many questions which his corrupted society would not allow him even to ask and certainly could not answer. But where there is positive volition, even a little, God will respond with what we need.

**Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all
your needs according to His riches in glory in
Christ Jesus.**

What He supplies will not necessarily be what you expect or what you want, but what you need.

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Slowly it is dawning on me that the narrative around Gideon is important in Israel's history. There are some specific events which set the standard for future leaders in Israel.

Valiant warrior. I mentioned some movie quotes from last week. There is one that may be appropriate here: "Are you talking to me?" At this point, Gideon is anything but a valiant warrior. From a western perspective, he is hesitant, doubtful, anything but valiant. Some commentators do not want to say anything good about Gideon. And then they read Hebrews chapter 11. It is hard to escape that at some level, at some point, Gideon believes. Reminds me of the movie "Matrix" in which Morpheus says at one point about Neo, "He is beginning to believe." At some point, Gideon believes Yahweh and he becomes a faith hero delivering Israel from the Midianites. But not without complications. And certainly not perfectly.

Judges 6:13 (NASB) Then Gideon said to him, "O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did the Lord not bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian."

Judges 6:13 (YLT) And Gideon saith unto him, 'O, my lord -- and Jehovah is with us! -- and why hath all this found us? and where [are] all His wonders which our fathers recounted to us, saying, Hath not Jehovah brought us up out of Egypt? and now Jehovah hath left us, and doth give us into the hand of Midian.'

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I included the Young's Literal Translation (YLT) to highlight some surprises in the Hebrew text.

O. This word can be translated "O." It can also be translated into English as "pardon me" or "excuse me." NIV translates it "pardon me."

My lord. Here the word is "adonai," lord, master or sir, not "Yahweh" or "God." It is often used of God, but the context indicates Gideon does not realize he is speaking to God until verse 22.

If. This is not the Hebrew word I would expect for the word "if." Indeed, the YLT does not have "if." The word in Hebrew means existence. It is not a verb. Indeed there is no verb for "is" here. Instead you have a word that is used for "is" but does not require number or tense. Gesenius gives another passage as an example of its usage:

Genesis 28:16 (YLT) And Jacob awaketh out of his sleep, and saith, `Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew not;'

Strong's Concordance via Biblehub.com says it means "being, substance, existence, is."

Translating the word for a form of "is," changes the tenor of what Gideon is saying. "He is here with us. But..."

If we were to couch this discussion in terms of Greek, this might be similar to the Greek 1st class condition. If and it is true. But this sentence, in the Hebrew, is not set up as an if/then statement.

Happened. The YLT says "found." That is what the Hebrew says. From a literal perspective the NASB did a poor job. However, the NASB is trying to make the English easily readable to an average reader. So it may not be a bad translation. It just doesn't express the intensity of what is happening here. I'm not sure any translation in English could do that.

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Hence, I played the movie clip from “The Island” to illustrate the intensity of what Gideon is saying.

The Lord has abandoned us. “Lord” here is Yahweh, in the third person more or less confirming that Gideon does not yet understand he is talking to God. Otherwise, he might have said, “Why did you abandon us...?” You notice in at least the NASB, there is “lord” that is not capitalized and a “Lord” that is capitalized. This is how the NASB distinguishes between “adonai” lord and “Yahweh” Lord (God). The word for “abandoned” is not the same one used in Judges chapter 2 when Israel abandons God. I explained last week that the sons of Israel abandoned Yahweh, so why wouldn’t they expect Yahweh to abandon them? We have a similar problem in our society. When the “God is dead” movement died, people decided to kick Him out of schools and government documents. As a result, children are not taught absolute right and absolute wrong.

But, God didn’t abandon Israel. He sent a prophet, then the second person of the Trinity Himself and eventually He empowered Gideon with the Holy Spirit. So, the very conversation that Gideon is having with God proves He did not abandon Israel. He did allow them to be disciplined as per Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28. God is just being faithful. You turn away from me and my blessings, I will discipline you with the purpose of bringing you back to God and His blessings.

Gideon is aware of the history of the sons of Israel, as the prophet reminded the sons of Israel. It is obvious that the teaching of the stories of the Torah is still active. What apparently is missing is the spiritual aspect of those stories. He does not understand the importance of walking by faith. He does not understand the spiritual perspective of Israel’s history or the grace provision of God. But he did at least have a framework within which God could teach him.

I get the sense that we have a déjà vu from Job. There Job did not understand the doctrine of suffering and the Angelic Conflict. Here in

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Judges, perhaps Gideon did not understand divine discipline and its purpose.

An aside here on the emphasis in the Hebrew. One method of adding emphasis is to use the Hebrew form of the verb known as the “piel.” This is the intensive form of the verb. There are ten piel verbs in this chapter. Many of the are from the word to talk or say, “dabar.” The conversation between the Angel of the Lord and Gideon was intense. I suspect that Gideon was very animated and very emotional in verse 13. His sense of helplessness has been smoldering in his soul for a long time. Now it comes bursting out. God answers him in the next verse.

Have you ever had an argument with someone and they say the very truth you are trying to tell them, except perhaps using different words? And they do not yet realize that they are saying what you are saying? You then say, “listen to what you just said.”

Judges 6:14 And the Lord looked at him and said, “Go in this strength of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?”

The Lord. Yahweh, the manifest person of the Trinity, the second person of the Trinity.

Looked at him. Here is one of those two verb combinations. God “looked” and “said.” But “look” is not the verb here. It is “turned.” The thrust of the verb is that God “turned toward” or “looked at” him. But, this is an intense moment. This is as if to say, God “focused” on Gideon in order to establish that face to face blocking out all but that rapport between the two speakers. From the reader’s perspective, God Almighty Himself has just come down from Heaven and has focused His attention on Gideon.

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Go. Here is one of our favorite words: walk. It means, in the imperative, go. OOOppps. Did the Angel of the Lord, God, visible to Gideon just give him a direct command? This exact command is used by Deborah to relay God's command to Barak. In both cases, the deliverer is being commissioned. In the military, and in other jobs, someone who goes to his supervisor and complains about something sometimes gets "voluntold" to fix it. That person knows there is a problem and has some idea of what needs to be fixed and perhaps some idea of how to do that. So the supervisor says, you fix it. But we also understand there is a spiritual perspective to everything happening here. In this case, walk also means the way you run your life, how you order it, what concepts drive it.

There is a related concept. You are that guy as in the movie Live Free or Die Hard. Here is a John McClain quote from that movie.

"John McClane: Do you know what you get for being a hero? Nothin'. You get shot at. Pat on the back, blah blah blah. 'Attaboy.' You get divorced... Your wife can't remember your last name, kids don't want to talk to you... You get to eat a lot of meals by yourself. Trust me kid, nobody wants to be that guy. (I do this) because there is nobody else to do it right now. Believe me if there was somebody else to do it, I would let them do it. There's not, so (I'm) doing it. That's what makes you that guy." https://diehard.fandom.com/wiki/Quotes:_John_McClane

So God says, "Gideon, you are that guy."

In your strength. The commentators are not clear here. My take is that He is pointing to Gideon's understanding of the problem and his willingness to do something about it if given an opportunity. He is a faith candidate.

Save. Here is the word for deliver. He has been appointed a deliverer. Rather than say, "You are the deliverer," God uses the verb to appoint him. This is not an imperative. It is in the causative form. Be caused to

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deliver. In a little bit, Gideon will be endowed with the Holy Spirit and God will deliver Israel using Gideon. Gideon will become an active participant in God's plan.

Let me take you aside on another short excursion. I told you last week, and used Hagar as an example to show that the Angel of the Lord is the Lord God. Our passage, in verse 22 can also be used to show that fact. But, I have not said anything about the purpose of the Angel of the Lord. Why not bring back the cloud from Exodus? Or just the Word of the Lord as happens to Samuel? What is the purpose of having a visible manifestation of God in human form?

I remember seeing some science fiction movie in which an alien is talking to a human. The alien just looks like another human. When the human realizes he is talking to an alien, he asks why he took on human form. The answer is something like, "If you saw me the way I really am, you would have concentrated on what I look like instead of listening to my message."

Angel is from the Hebrew word that can be translated as "messenger." The Angel of the Lord is presented in visible human form so the person being addressed will concentrate on the message. In three cases we will look at, the message is presented before the revelation that the speaker is the Angel of the Lord/God.

First, let us re-read the story of Hagar and the Angel of the Lord.

Genesis 16:7 Now the angel of the Lord found her (Hagar) by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

Genesis 16:8 He said, "Hagar, Sarai's slave woman, from where have you come, and where are you going?" And she said, "I am

fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”

Genesis 16:9 So the angel of the Lord said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority.”

Genesis 16:10 The angel of the Lord also said to her, “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.”

Genesis 16:11 The angel of the Lord said to her further, “Behold, you are pregnant, And you will give birth to a son; And you shall name him Ishmael, Because the Lord has heard your affliction.

Genesis 16:12 But he will be a wild donkey of a man; His hand will be against everyone, And everyone’s hand will be against him; And he will live in defiance of all his brothers.”

Genesis 16:13 Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God who sees me”; for she said, “Have I even seen Him here and lived after He saw me?”

Genesis 16:14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

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In this Genesis passage, the Angel of the Lord gives Hagar some information and two commands upon which she must act. As a result of belief/trust in the Angel of the Lord, she is blessed.

In Judges chapter 6, Gideon is given a command by the Angel of the Lord, “go,” on which he must act. He is blessed as a result of his belief/faith.

Now we will look at a New Testament passage. You might say, but the Angel of the Lord is Old Testament only. Yes and no. Remember who the Angel of the Lord is: the pre-existent Christ. In the New Testament, He is no longer “pre” but real flesh and blood. There is a passage that is similar to what we have seen in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ, in John chapter 4, converses with a woman. He starts out provoking her to talk by saying, “Give me to drink.”

In the other passages, Hagar is provoked when the Angel of the Lord asks where she is going. That is a sore subject with her and she responds. The Angel of the Lord commands her to return and submit. Those are both imperatives.

In Judges 6, the Angel of the Lord provokes Gideon by saying “Yahweh is with you valiant warrior. He then commands him to take action promising success.

Turn to John 4 in your Bible and let us read it.

Judges 6:15 But he said to Him, “O Lord, how am I to save Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s house.”

he. Gideon

said to Him. To God. Yet, Gideon does not know He is God, yet. Here is some irony. We know it is the second person of the Trinity. Gideon is

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more concerned that God has abandoned Israel. Yet, we read further and he finally gets it.

O Lord. Now the NASB is making me out to be a liar. I told you that when the NASB writes “lord,” it is translating the Hebrew “adonai.” When it writes “Lord,” it is translating “Yahweh.” Except here the word is again “adonai.” So, Gideon is still not recognizing the Angel of the Lord as God.

My family is the least. The Hebrew word for “least” is the same root as the word used of Israel in verse 6. A repeated concept to indicate the poorest of the poor.

How am I to save Israel. Gideon is facing an impossible task. Many of us have faced impossible tasks in life. There is only one avenue to success: Trust God. In our case we must depend upon the power of God the Holy Spirit.

Let me revisit verse 11. We may have missed something that factors into our current verse.

Judges 6:11 Then the angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites.

Gideon was beating out when in the wine press. It does not say that this was the “new normal.” It is possible from this verse to surmise that Gideon is smart and not satisfied with the status quo. He was willing to act. He may have been the one to devise using the wine press to beat out the wheat. This may in part be what the Angel of the Lord was referring to when he referenced Gideon’s “strength.”