

Judges Chapter 6 Part 6

Tonight we will deal with the fabric of Scripture.

Abraham->Jacob->Moses->Gideon->kings->Jesus

**Judges 6:20 And the angel of God said to him,
“Take the meat and the unleavened bread and
lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.”
And he did so.**

Gideon apparently prepared a meal for the visitor. Now, this visitor wants me to put it on a rock and pour out the liquid. What’s going on here?

Angel of God. This is worded differently than before. Here we have Angel of Elohim, not Yahweh. I don’t have a definitive reason for this difference. It has to be significant for the writer to change the title. Was this to show that the whole Trinity is involved? God the Father sent God the Son who then imparts the Holy Spirit? Then in verse 21, we are back to the Angel of Yahweh.

Meat. Gideon had prepared a whole goat for his visitor. This is referred to here as “meat.” This is analogous to the meat of the burnt offering.

Unleavened bread. Gideon prepared unleavened bread as part of the meal. This could be analogous to the cereal/grain offering.

Pour out the broth. The word for “pour out” is often used for pouring out blood, both as shedding human blood (as in Genesis 9:6, the establishment of capital punishment) and in the Levitical sacrifices (as in Leviticus 4:7).

Gideon presented his offering as a meal for an important guest. But the Angel of the Lord appears to have converted it into a sacrifice.

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Judges 6:21 Then the angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire came up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight.

Came up. As I mentioned last week, this is a play on the word for “burnt offering,” which is called the “going up” offering. The smoke was to be a “soothing aroma” to God.

Leviticus 1:9b ...And the priest shall offer all of it up in smoke on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering by fire as a soothing aroma to the Lord.

Consumed. This is perhaps the intent of the context. However, the Hebrew is more graphic. It is literally, the fire “ate” the meat and the unleavened bread. So the meal was in fact “eaten,” just not in the way Gideon had expected. Perhaps this is another double entendre.

Vanished. Once again, the translation is OK, but causes the reader to think that there was some hocus pocus at work here. The verb is literally “walk.” It can mean departed or left.

His sight. Literally, his eye. So the Angel of the Lord “walked from his eye/sight.”

Since the meal was not eaten by the “man” Gideon thought he was serving and instead it was “eaten” by a sudden miraculous fire, we have to understand what the Angel of the Lord was actually doing. If He had eaten the meal, Gideon would have said, OK, He is just a man. But the

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“man” had a staff with “magical” powers somewhat like Moses and his staff.

And here we just stepped into multiple threads of the fabric of Scripture simultaneously. We will deal with them separately, one at a time. First, let us look at the apparent symbolic sacrifice. Then we will look at Gideon as “the new Moses.” But as we know, Moses and Gideon are in some respects, foreshadowing the work of Jesus Christ on earth.

Assuming the “meal” was converted into a sacrifice, then we have three components:

1. **Meat:** A whole young goat. It was consumed (literally, “eaten”) completely by the fire. This may meet the requirements for a burnt offering.
2. **Unleavened bread:** It was consumed (again, literally, “eaten”) completely by the fire. This may meet the requirements for a cereal or grain offering.
3. **Broth:** The liquid was poured out. This may meet the requirement for a drink offering, although this was a broth and not wine. In the case of David, in 2 Samuel chapter 23, water was poured out before the Lord.
4. **Rock:** This may have sufficed for a temporary altar. Later in verse 24, Gideon builds an altar. From the context, it could be this rock that became an altar to the God (is) Peace. Interesting to note that this word for rock is the same word used in Numbers chapter 20 when Moses sinned by taking his staff and striking the rock twice instead of speaking to it.
5. **Angel of the Lord:** He appears to function as the priest in the sacrifice.
6. **Gideon:** As such, Gideon is the penitent believer offering the sacrifice on his own behalf.

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From Wenham's commentary on Leviticus concerning the burnt offering, "Yet because they understood the purpose of the burnt offering so well, the men of ancient Israel have left this most common OT sacrifice largely without explanation. This chapter of Leviticus (chapter 1) is like an extract from a prayer book from which the prayers have been omitted, leaving just the rubrics, i.e., the instructions for the conduct of the service. It is in the prayers that the purpose of ritual becomes clear; by themselves rubrics tend to be ambiguous. There are a few cryptic hints in this chapter about the purpose of the sacrifice, but in themselves they are insufficient to answer our questions."

The burnt offering

The burnt offering taught propitiation or expiation with emphasis on the work of Christ, therefore, animal blood was used to teach His propitiation. (Herman Mattox)

Wenham says something similar, "The burnt offering was the commonest of all the OT sacrifices. Its main function was to atone for man's sin by propitiating God's wrath.

Again from Wenham, "The idea that man is always in danger of angering God runs through the whole Pentateuch. Sacrifice is the appointed means whereby peaceful coexistence between a holy God and sinful man becomes a possibility."

And further, "In bringing a sacrifice a man acknowledged his sinfulness and guilt. He also publicly confessed his faith in the Lord, his thankfulness for past blessing, and his resolve to live according to God's holy will all the days of his life."

The cereal/grain/food offering

The food offering taught propitiation with emphasis on the unique Person of Christ; therefore, animal blood was *not* used. (Herman Mattox).

Wenham: “The cereal offering then was a gift by the worshipper to God. It normally followed the burnt offering. God having granted forgiveness of sins through the burnt offering the worshipper responded by giving to God some of the produce of his hands in cereal offering. It was an act of dedication and consecration to God as Savior and covenant King. It expressed not only thankfulness but obedience and a willingness to keep the law.”

And again, “The cereal offering symbolized the dedication of a man’s life and work to God.”

Note that all of Gideon’s unleavened bread went up in flames. Normally, the cereal offering is in part burned and in part given to the priest to eat.

The Drink Offering

Normally, the drink offering is poured into the fire. Here it is not. And apparently in 2 Samuel 23, David poured it out onto the ground like here.

Philippians 2:17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

Moving right along.

Judges 6:22 When Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord, he said, “Oh, Lord God! For I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!”

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perceived. OK translation. Literally, he saw.

Gideon must have known this was a possibility, even if most improbable. If there was any doubt prior to this miracle from the Angel of the Lord, there can be no doubt here. Gideon believes. In the New Testament there is a similar kind of scene in which Thomas wants proof that Jesus was resurrected. His answer in John 20:

**John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him,
“My Lord and my God!”**

So here Gideon says, “**Oh, Lord God!**” It is interesting to note that in one version of the LXX the translation is *kyrie mou kyrie*: My Lord God. The Fabric of Scripture on display! OK, at this point in my study I got goose bumps.

Oh. As a side note, it is interesting to note what this word is in Hebrew:

162 [e]

'ă·hāh

אָהָה

Alas

Interjection

Ahah!

Face to face. This is similar to Moses:

**Exodus 33:11a So the LORD used to speak to
Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to
his friend...**

Assume that Gideon knows his Torah. Then he is aware that Moses talked face to face with God.

And also with Jacob:

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Genesis 33:20 So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared.”

The Angel of the Lord, now identified as Lord/Yahweh responds.

Judges 6:23 But the Lord said to him, “Peace to you, do not be afraid; you shall not die.”

Literally, And says to him Yahweh, “Peace to you, not (subjective) you will fear, not (objective) you will die.

Peace to you. The Lord God has already greeted Gideon, but then He left. So, perhaps you can make this into a kind of greeting. But I think, since God is talking, there is a theological significance.

I suggested, that the effect of the Angel of the Lord burning up the dead animal is to signify the “burnt offering.” Literally, a burnt offering is the offering that “goes up.” And it totally consumes the offering. That is the same root for the fire went up and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. The play on the word “go up” is more than coincidental. Gideon meant this to be a meal for his visitor. The visitor, God, had turned it into a “burnt offering” for Gideon.

Dr. Wenham in his commentary on Leviticus expresses the purpose of the burnt offering. He is commenting on Leviticus 1:3

Leviticus 1:3 If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, so that he may be accepted before the Lord.

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“In these phrases the general aim of the sacrifice is indicated. It is that the offerer may be accepted (rātsāh) by God. Peace with God is the goal of the sacrifice.” My underline.

Please don't tell me this is a coincidence.

Gideon understands there is someone of note visiting him. He trusts Him, not realizing it was God. Gideon prepares a meal for Him. The Angel of the Lord accepts the meal as a burnt offering by bringing up fire to consume it. He, The Angel of the Lord/God, then “greeted him” by saying “Peace to you.”

Here are additional comments on the burnt offering by Dr. Wenham. “Whereas the purification offering is concerned with cleansing the different parts of the tabernacle from the uncleanness caused by sin, the burnt offering makes atonement for sin in a more general sense. The atoning value of the burnt offering is also hinted at in Lev. 14:20 and 16:24 and even more explicitly outside the laws. In Gen. 8:21 God's attitude to man is reversed by the burnt offering.”

In a sense, Gideon has, because of his trust in the Angel of the Lord, made symbolic atonement for his own sins. In the following verses, the Angel of the Lord specifically commands him to offer a burnt offering.

Here is the point. Peace to you is like a greeting. But like the first greeting, it is a double entendre. A greeting yes. But from a theological perspective, because of Gideon's faith, the wrath of God has been appeased through a symbolic propitiatory sacrifice. So now he has peace with God. In the words of Paul concerning justification:

**Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified
by faith, we have peace with God through our
Lord Jesus Christ,**

BAM!!!

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Not you will fear. There are two different words for “no” or “not” used by Yahweh. The first is sometimes called the subjective no because it expresses a negative that should not happen, but doesn’t preclude it from happening. That is the “no” used here. The verb is not an imperative. The manner in which this is used does have the effect of a command. But we know that a command is not something the recipient will necessarily obey. It is the desire of God.

Not you will die. The “no” used here is the objective “no.” When God said, “You will not die,” this is a guarantee applicable in this context to mean Gideon will not die as a result of seeing the Angel of the Lord, God. He joins Moses and Jacob in having seen the Lord face to face and not dying.

**Judges 6:24 Then Gideon built an altar there
to the Lord and named it The Lord is Peace.
To this day it is still in Ophrah of the
Abiezrites.**

Built an altar. Jacob did the same thing after seeing God face to face. Jacob named his altar Peniel: the Face of God (from note in NASB). Here Gideon names the altar The Lord is Peace. At some level he understands that God has been propitiated. God said “Peace to you.”

To this day. Here is another reminder of God’s actions in history. I did not find any reference to Gideon’s altar being visited by Jews today. Perhaps it was lost or destroyed. But at some point in the past, it existed as a memorial to the Jews of God’s grace to them. They could visit it and be reminded that these events actually took place. God acted in history.

Let us look at Gideon as the “New Moses.” The following information is from an article by Gregory T. K. Wong entitled “Gideon: A New Moses?”

“It will be argued that similarities between the two, especially between the call narrative of Moses in Exodus 3-4 and the call narrative of Gideon

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in Judges 6, are indeed similarities by design, and that the latter was in fact consciously crafted to allude to the former for specific rhetorical purposes.”

Here are some points Gregory Wong expounds upon. I am only giving you the main points rather than entangle you with various Hebrew phrases.

1. The calls of both Moses and Gideon are presented in the immediate context as a response to Israel’s distress because of foreign oppression.
2. At the beginning of the respective call narratives in Exodus 3.2 and Judg 6.11-12, Moses and Gideon are met by the angel of YHWH, who is said in both cases to appear to the protagonist in question. (removed Hebrew from the quote).
3. Not only do the call narratives of Moses and Gideon have in common the appearance of the angel of YHWH, but in both cases, a switch between the angel of YHWH and YHWH within the narrative can also be discerned, so that by the time the commission is given, it is YHWH himself and not the angel who is presented as carrying on the dialogue with the respective protagonists.
4. The protagonists in both cases appear to be tending to their father or father-in-law’s business when the angel appeared to them.
5. Both father figures seem to be connected to non-YHWHistic cults.
6. In both commissioning scenes, the verbs ‘to go’ and ‘to send’ are present. (Hebrew words removed from the quote.)
7. In both cases, Yhwh immediately counters the protagonists’ objections with a promise of his presence.”

Additionally, Wong states, “First, the author of the Gideon narrative openly refers to the exodus tradition in Judg 6.8-9, 13.”

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Another item he adds concerns the use of a specific word for locusts found in both narratives. “Given the almost meticulous structural parallels in the description of the two invading forces, one can certainly argue that the author of the Gideon narrative was consciously equating Israel’s Midianite oppressors with the locusts sent by YHWH against Egypt.”

He goes on to show that instead of maintaining his integrity against idols, he actually produces an ephod of gold which becomes a snare for him and Israel. This is shown to be parallel to Aaron’s golden calf.

So, it appears that at the height of the battle against the Midianites, Gideon and the “300” stand and watch the deliverance of the Lord, much as the Israelites of the Exodus stand and watch the deliverance of the Lord. Then, very quickly, both fall back into idolatry. From this point on in the book of Judges, the situations go down hill.

The point of all this is really the story of the thread of God’s grace throughout the Bible. God is constantly raising up deliverers when there is even a small amount of faith. At times, as in the case with Lot, the situation has deteriorated so badly, that God just removes the believers from the situation rather than save everyone on behalf of the believers. In other words, if there is not enough salt to preserve a nation, God will move believers to a position of safety. And perhaps that is where we are in the US today. Are there enough believers to save the nation, or will God just pick up believers and move them somewhere safe?

Judges 6:25 Now on the same night the Lord said to him, “Take your father’s bull and a second bull seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it;

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Judges 6:26 and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly way, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down.”

Judges 6:27 Then Gideon took ten men from his servants and did as the Lord had spoken to him; and because he was too afraid of his father’s household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night.

Judges 6:28 When the people of the city got up early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal had been torn down, and the Asherah which had been beside it had been cut down, and the second bull had been offered on the altar which had been built.

Judges 6:29 So they said to one another, “Who did this thing?” And when they searched and inquired, they said, “Gideon the son of Joash did this thing.”

Judges 6:30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it.”

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Judges 6:31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal, or will you save him? Whoever will contend for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, since someone has torn down his altar!”

Judges 6:32 Therefore on that day he named Gideon Jerubbaal, that is to say, “Let Baal contend against him,” because he had torn down his altar.