

ENCORE | Judges 6:1-40: Gideon: Courage in Fearful Times

01) These were fearful times in Israel, fears of war or death by invaders, fears of not having enough to eat; the people even retreated into caves to live. How did the people respond to these fearful times (v. 6-7)?

02) How widespread were the economic problems in Israel?

03) Why do you think God included verses 6:7-10 in this narrative?

04) Gideon was hiding in a winepress and treading out grain. He was looking out for his family and trying to eek out some subsistence for them.

a) What does the Angel of the Lord call Gideon in verse 12?

b) What else did the Lord say to him in verse 14?

c) What do you think the Lord was doing by talking to Gideon in this way?

d) Did Gideon disagree with the Lord about his own courage?

e) Did Gideon disagree with the Lord about his own ability?

05) Read verses 11-17. What was Gideon's main concern (or problem)?

06) By all accounts (or most, if you prefer) we are in some pretty hard economic times right now, by American standards.

a) How does God want His people to react to fearful times?

b) What will it take for you to be a mighty man or woman of valor today?

07) Gideon "tested" God (the offering in v. 17-24, the fleece in v. 33-40). Does this mean that it is okay for Christians to test God?

08) What was Gideon really doubting (v. 36-37)?

09) If testing God (fleece) is not the answer, then how do we obey Ephesians 5:17?

a) Psalms 73:23-24 -

b) Proverbs 11:14 -

c) Psalms 37:3-4 -

d) John 14:21 -

e) Philippians 4:6-7 -

f) Romans 12:1-2 -

g) Other places where the Bible says this is "the will of God" -

Looking Ahead | Isaiah 52:13- 53:12: The Lamb of God

Monday – Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Who do you think of when you read all of that in one sitting? This passage clearly talks about Jesus Christ (It has been called the gospel of Isaiah). It is so clear that even the Orthodox Jews wanted to remove the entire book of Isaiah from the Torah (Jewish Bible consisting of the same books as our Old Testament). They were convinced that Christians had concocted this portion of Scripture; it was not from God and therefore should be thrown out. God in His sovereignty had other plans. You may have heard of the “Dead Sea Scrolls” they were found in caves in the Dead Sea area from 1947-1956. There were many wonderful manuscripts and pieces of the Old Testament found; among these was a copy of the entire book of Isaiah dating 100 B.C. Guess what; Isaiah 52:13-53:12 was there exactly as we have it today. One hundred years before Jesus Christ walked the earth the people of Qumran were reading this passage about God’s coming Messiah.

Daily Bible Reading: Duet. 17:19; Lk. 5:17-39

Tuesday (v. 52:12-15) – We begin this wonderful passage talking about God’s coming Messiah; Jesus Christ. It is not hard for us to see Jesus in these verses because now Jesus has come in the flesh. In Isaiah’s day or during Jesus time, it was hard for people to reconcile all the apparently conflicting descriptions of Messiah in this passage. Many Jews came to the conclusion that there would have to be three different Messiah’s; a suffering Messiah, a conquering King Messiah, and a prophet / priest Messiah. Notice how The Messiah is described in this passage; He would be prudent, exalted and yet marred and hard to look at. The word translated “sprinkle” in most translations could be translated “startled.” You can imagine what Jesus looked like hanging on the cross after the cruel punishment and abuse of the Romans. His body was brutalized and broken, His face was barely recognizable, His bones were all out of joint – gaunt and hideous to look at.

Daily Bible Reading: Duet. 20:22; Lk. 6:1-26

Wednesday (v. 53:1-3) – “Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” The prophets were used to having their messages rejected. It’s interesting that people would often come to the prophets and ask them what God is saying or what He has said and then in the next breath they would reject the message from God. People have a tendency to only see life through fleshly eyes, not seeing the big picture and certainly not seeing as God sees. When people looked at Jesus He looked like an ordinary man, in-fact He didn’t even look like anyone special at all. Jesus experienced much sorrow and grief while He walked this earth. Anyone that has tried to help people has experienced the heart-ache that always accompanies sin. Jesus gave Himself fully to everyone, He poured Himself into the lives of people, He even poured Himself out for people; yet while He hung on that cross taking the sin of mankind on Himself, shamefully we hid our faces from Him. Many people hated and jeered Him even as He hung there paying for their sin.

Daily Bible Reading: Duet. 23:25; Lk. 6:27-49

Thursday (v. 53:4-7) – Isn’t it interesting how the human mind works sometimes? People stood there witness to the torture and crucifixion of Jesus and immediately they thought; “Ah ha! That Jesus got what was coming to Him, God has dealt with Him.” But...the reality is that He was “wounded for our transgressions” in other words all of that punishment was meant for you & me. Jesus took that all that pain and humiliation for you! Now as a side note; some people today claim that this passage teaches how to bring about physical healing “by His stripes we are healed.” The thinking goes... Jesus already has healed you by being whipped now you just have to accept the physical healing by faith, and some will add the Lord’s Supper to this equation. Let’s investigate that premise: Read the context of this entire passage, and then read the near context (53:4-7) is there any mention of physical healing or physical sickness in this passage? No? Then should we assume that “by His stripes we are healed” has anything to do with physical healing? What then are we healed of “by His stripes”?

Daily Bible Reading: Duet. 26:27; Lk. 7:1-30

Friday (v. 53:6-9) – People have the tendency to wander. We also have the sin nature inherited from Adam which is basically the same thing. To deal with our sin and to make a way for people to be right with God again someone had to be punished. That punishment was laid upon the only sinless man Jesus Christ. As we read the account of the crucifixion in the Bible or study accounts of Roman scourging or torture it becomes very clear that Jesus suffered greatly (real physical suffering). But the more amazing thing is that didn’t complain about it. That is absolutely amazing. Here the perfect sinless man, God in the flesh, not deserving of any punishment, not deserving of any pain, certainly not deserving of death, the very Creator of the puny beings that were hurting Him and He didn’t say one contrary word. How do you tend to react when life isn’t going your way or you face difficult circumstances? Why do you think Jesus “opened not His mouth”?

Daily Bible Reading: Duet. 28:29; Lk. 7:31-50

Saturday (v. 53:10-12) – So the Messiah was to suffer, and not be anything special, and to be hurt, and to die all by the will of God yet “He shall prolong His days.” Can you see why some of these Messianic passages were confusing before Jesus came? No one would have had reason to think that the Messiah might be raised from the dead. Notice that these last verses about the Messiah are all about justification. Jesus death, burial and resurrection have provided total “justification.” In other words, if Jesus Christ is your Savior then you are right with God your account is settled, Jesus has paid any and all of your debts, you have no unpaid balance! Understanding that the Lamb of God has paid the penalty for your sin; what is the only right response?

Daily Bible Reading: Duet. 30:31; Lk. 8:1-25

Sunday –

Daily Bible Reading: Duet. 32:34; Lk. 8:26-56