

Lesson 5: Judges 6 – 7:1-8 Midianite Oppression, Call of Gideon, Sign of the Fleece, Gideon’s Army
Again, in this lesson we see again the pattern of Israel’s sin, the consequences of sin, repentance, “calling out to the Lord” and the return of God’s blessings. A prophet is sent to Israel and another judge is chosen to save Israel. This is **part I** of the story of Gideon.

1. Read Judges 6:1-6 and footnotes in your bible.

What were the consequences of “doing “what is evil in the sight of the Lord” this time?

2. Reflection: Why was it so hard for *the nation* to follow the Word of the Lord from one generation to the next?

What makes it difficult to be united in faith and to do what is “good in the eyes of the Lord” in 2022?

What *should* make it easier for us today than it was in the age of the Judges? See Hebrews 1:1-3 below. How does communal prayer and Mass help?

Hebrews 1:1-3 1 In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; 2 in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe,³ who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word.

3. Read Judges 6:7-10. When the text says “*Israel* cried out to the Lord” what does this mean? How did the Lord respond?

4. Read Judges 6:11-18.

What do we know about Gideon from these verses?

Why does he have doubts about the message of the prophet?

What does Gideon ask of the Lord’s messenger/prophet?

5. Read Judges 6:19-24 and footnotes in your Bible. Also Read Exodus 3:6 and Exodus 33:18-20 below. What did Gideon prepare as an offering to the Lord?

What sign did he receive?

Why was Gideon so afraid in verse 22, that he required the Lord’s reassurance? (see Exododus)

Exodus 3:6 I am the God of your father, he continued, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses hid his face, for **he was afraid to look at God.**

Exodus 33:19-20 The LORD answered (Moses): I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim my name, “LORD,” before you; I who show favor to whom I will, I who grant mercy to whom I will. ²⁰ **But you cannot see my face, for no one can see me and live.**

6. Read Judges 6:25-32 and footnotes. Share any interesting or helpful information found in your footnotes with your group.

What is Gideon's first task?

Why did he decide to carry out his task at night?

What is an "Asherah" mentioned in verses 25, 26, 28 and 30?

7. How did the townspeople react to Gideon's actions?

How were the townspeople made calm?

8. Read 1 Kings 18:22-28. How are the events in 1 Kings similar to the events in Judges 6?

1 Kings 18:22-28 Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. ²³ Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. ²⁴ And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all the people answered, "It is well spoken." ²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it." ²⁶ And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. ²⁷ And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." ²⁸ And they cried aloud.

9. Read Judges 6:32-40. Gideon asks again for a sign from God, not once, but twice.

What does this tell us about Gideon?

What are the "fleece tests"?

10. Read Judges 7:1-8 Why does God limit the size of Gideon's army before they go into battle?