

JUDGES 6-7

REVIEW...

- **CHAPTER 1-2 - THE CYCLE OF SIN...**
 - The cycle of sin - God let them be conquered by their enemies - they would repent...
 - God would raise up a Judge to save them - they would follow God - for a while...
- **CHAPTER 4-5 - DEBORAH THE JUDGE...**
 - Israel rebelled a 4th time - God called a woman to be the judge of Israel...
 - She called on Barak to raise up an army of 10,000 to free Israel from bondage...
 - Barak with Deborah at his side - defeated the armies of Sisera...
 - Sisera fled to the tent of Jael - was killed in his sleep by a tent peg - peace for 40 years!

GIDEON - THE 5TH JUDGE OF ISRAEL... (5 THINGS)

- **1ST - THE 5TH TIME AROUND... VS. 1- READ: JUDGES 6:1-6**
 - 1st - Israel rebelled against the Lord - so God let Midian conquer them for 7 years...vs. 1-6
 - In the first 4 rebellions - Israel had been in captivity anywhere from 8 to 20 years...
 - Each time they rebelled the term of the captivity had increased - until now...
 - Yet even though this was the shortest of the captivities - it was by far the worst...
 - The Midianites were so cruel - Israel resorted to hiding in the mountains and in caves...
 - And whenever they planted - raiding parties would come and steal their harvest...
 - They would swarm in like locusts and devour all the food in the land!
 - Starving to death - Israel finally cried out to the Lord to save them...
 - Trials can come in many different shapes and sizes...
 - The worst trials of life - may not necessarily be the longest trials...
 - Going a day without food can be much worse than a cold that lasts for a week...
 - But no matter what the shape or size - every trial always has only one purpose...
 - To get our attention - and get us to turn our lives back to Jesus!
 - 2nd - God sent a prophet to Israel... vs. 7-10
 - He spoke to them for God - showing them why they were starving...
 - God had brought Israel out of Egypt - and conquered the people in the Promised Land...
 - But God warned them not to bow down to the pagan gods - and they did not listen...
 - Just as God had promised in **Leviticus 26** - they were suffering the consequences...
 - **Haggai 1:6** - "Wages disappear as though putting them in pockets filled with holes."
 - When things go wrong in life - we are quick to blame others...
 - When the consequences of our sin find us – we often look to blame others...
 - If we are unfriendly – find we have no friends – we blame others for not liking us...
 - If we are not being blessed - we think it is God's fault for not giving us more...
 - It is far easier to see the faults in others – then to look at our own shortcomings...
 - If the problem is with others – than we do not have to change / repent...
 - But until we admit we are the problem – there is nothing God can do to save us!

- **2ND - THE MAKING OF A MIGHTY WARRIOR... vs. 11-24** **READ: JUDGES 6:11-16**
 - 1st - An Israelite named Gideon was threshing wheat in a wine press... vs. 11-13
 - The only reason to 'thresh' in a 'wine press' - is to hide because you are scared...
 - You thresh wheat on top of a hill to catch the wind - separate wheat from chaff...
 - A wine press is at the bottom of a hill - so that it can catch the grape juice...
 - God sent an angel to this terrified man and said - 'Mighty hero, the Lord is with you!'
 - He replied - 'My family is the least in my tribe / I am the least of my family!'
 - Often when the Lord calls us to serve Him - we wonder 'why choose me'...
 - We look at ourselves and think we have nothing to offer the Lord - we are 'nobody'...
 - But God does not see us as we are - He sees us in light of what He can do through us!
 - Gideon added - 'If the Lord is with us - why has all this happened to us'...
 - When we face the consequences of our actions - it can feel like God has left us...
 - I remember when I did something bad when I was a child - my Dad would spank me...
 - I thought for sure he did it because he hated me - in anger I would even tell him so...
 - The truth was he punished me because he loved me - wanted me to learn to be good...
 - We are 'punished' by the Lord - because we are His kids - **Hebrews 12:5-6**
 - God desires to teach us - His kids - how to live a pure and holy life!
 - 2nd - Then the LORD turned to Gideon and said... vs. 14-16
 - Notice it is no longer 'an angel' who is talking - this is Jesus talking to Gideon...
 - The Lord was not only 'with' him - He was right there talking to him!
 - God never leaves us - we do not see God because we are too focused on our problems
 - Even in the darkest hour - if we look up - we will find Jesus is right there beside us!
 - Go with the strength you have - you will rescue Israel - because I am sending you!
 - Most people assume before God can use you - you have to be perfect (or close to it)...
 - Before I teach a Bible study - I need to be doing everything I am teaching...
 - But God does not look for a perfect person to use for His purposes...
 - Like Gideon - God just looks for someone who is willing to go...
 - God is more than able to do the work He wants through us - in spite of us...
 - The only thing that can stop God - is us being unwilling to step out in faith!
 - 3rd - Seeking a sign... vs. 17-24
 - Gideon wanted a 'sign' to prove what the LORD was telling him...
 - He asked the angel to stay while he went and prepared a meal for him...
 - The angel waited while Gideon cooked a goat / soup / and bread without leaven...
 - Gideon placed them on a rock - the angel touched it with his staff - burnt it all up!
 - The angel disappeared - Gideon realized then it was an angel of the LORD!
 - Gideon built an altar there called - YAHWEH SHALOM - God is our peace...
 - If we are not sure of our calling - want to find out what purpose God has given to us...
 - You could try cooking and placing it on a rock - but my guess is it will not burn up...
 - A better option is to step out and try - try to teach / try to evangelize / try to help...
 - If it does not work - if there is no fruit - no problem just try something else!
 - But keep in mind it takes time to grow in any calling - you are not perfect in a day...
 - When we are doing what God has called us to do - it will be obvious!

- **3RD - STANDING UP FOR GOD... vs. 25-40** **READ: JUDGES 6:25-26, 36-39**

- o 1st - The LORD told Gideon to tear down his father's pagan altars... vs. 15-32
 - The Canaanite religion centered on 3 gods - El / Asherah / and Baal...
 - El was the 'father' / Asherah was the 'mother' / and Baal was their son...
 - There were the false gods Israel had begun to worship instead of the Lord...
 - Gideon was to replace the pagan altar with one to the LORD – offer a sacrifice...
 - The wood for the fire was to come from the pagan Asherah poles...
 - Gideon did as the LORD commanded - but at night - for fear of his family...
 - Before Gideon could free a nation - he first had to free his family...
 - We look around and see a world caught up in sin - and wonder what we can do...
 - The answer is often - start at home - reach out to those who are closest to you...
 - Acts 1:8 - "Be witnesses [of Jesus] in Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria, to the end of the earth."
 - We start in our backyard - and go out from there - till the whole world knows!
 - When the people of the town found out - they wanted to kill Gideon...
 - But the father of Gideon - Joash - defended his son (*remember they were his idols*)...
 - 'Why are you defending Baal - let him defend himself if he can...'
 - From then on Gideon was known as 'Jerub-baal' - let Baal defend himself...
 - It can be scary to stand up for Jesus before family - they will not like it at first...
 - They WILL make accusations - attack us - try to convince us WE are wrong...
 - But as God is with us - there will be some (*maybe just one*) who will stand with us!
- o 2nd - Having reached his family - it was time for Gideon to save a nation... vs. 33-40
 - Midian and the children of the east gathered in the Jezreel valley (*Armageddon*)...
 - The spirit of the Lord came on Gideon and he called Israel to gather for war...
 - But Gideon still doubted - and he asked the Lord to prove Himself...
 - He put out a fleece - 'he wanted it to be wet in the morning but the ground dry'...
 - The next night he put out the fleece - 'he wanted it to be dry but the ground was wet'...
 - The Lord did as Gideon asked - then he had the confidence the Lord was with him!
 - I like that Gideon - full of the spirit - still had doubts and needed to be reassured...
 - No matter how long you have been walking with the Lord - there are always bad days...
 - And God is always willing to meet us where we are - and build us up in our faith!
 - But - the Lord makes it clear - as a rule we are not to 'test' the Lord...
 - Matthew 4:7 / Deuteronomy 6:16 - "Do not test the Lord your God."
 - The only reason why we would test God - is because we doubt God / His Word...
 - When we find ourselves questioning our calling - we do not need to 'lay out a fleece'...
 - We go back to the Lord - back to His Word - to get our faith strengthened!
- 4TH - CHOOSING AN ARMY...VS. 1-7 READ: JUDGES 7:2-6
 - o 1st - Gideon gathered with 32,000 men at Mt. Gilboa - at the spring of Ein Harod...
 - The spring overlooks the plains of Jezreel - also called the Megiddo valley...
 - The Lord told Gideon there were too many men- some had to go home...
 - If God gave the victory - they would take the credit and think they won the battle...
 - Gideon gave the order for anyone who was scared to go home - 22,000 left...
 - This is understandable - they were facing an army like 'the sands of the sea'...
 - If they entered into the battle and in fear ran - it would mean defeat for Israel...
 - o 2nd - God said - 'there were still too many men' (*I am sure Gideon disagreed*)...

- Gideon had all the men take a drink from the spring...
 - Those who lapped the water - went home / those who scooped the water - stayed...
 - Two possibilities - those who scooped kept a watchful eye - better soldiers...
 - Or those who scooped were too old to bend down - they were the least of the men!
 - God does not pick the youngest / strongest - He chose the old guys! **I Corinthians 1:26**
 - There is a common misconception that God only uses the 'elite'...
 - In order to be used by God you have to have a 4-year degree - PhD in theology...
 - That is the wisdom of men - a worldly idea that has crept into the church...
 - You do not see any Bible colleges or seminaries in the Bible - you just see sinners...
 - Sinners are exactly who God chooses to go and preach the message of the cross!
 - In the end there were only 300 men left to fight an army of hundreds of thousands...
 - God will often allow a situation we are facing to look impossible...
 - That way when He gives us the victory - there is no doubt it was all God!
- **5TH - VICTORY FOR ISRAEL... vs. 8-25 READ: JUDGES 7:16-21**
- 1ST - Dreaming of the victory... vs. 8-15
 - That night Gideon snuck down into the enemies camp - overheard a conversation....
 - A soldier had a dream - a loaf of bread rolling down the hill knocking over his tent...
 - His friend interpreted his dream - 'this can only mean God has given Gideon the victory!'
 - When Gideon heard the interpretation - he worshiped the Lord...
 - The dream was not important - 'dreams about rolling bread' - do not mean much...
 - What was important was the interpretation - it showed the fear of the enemy!
 - God can speak through dreams...
 - Joseph - Had two dreams that he would rule over his brothers and family...
 - Daniel - Interpreted the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar - **Daniel 2**
 - And it is not just limited to the men of the Bible - God says He will give us dreams...
 - **Joel 2:28** - "I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions."
 - So I suppose that means if you admit to having dream from the Lord - you are old...
 - For myself - I only have 'visions' - though sometimes with my eyes closed...
 - In truth - I cannot say I have ever personally been directed by visions or dreams
 - But we need to be careful of dreams...
 - God speak to us through dreams - but that does not mean all dreams are from God...
 - **Ecclesiastes 5:7** - "Much dreaming and many words are meaningless."
 - Your dream from last night might be from the Lord - or from pancit canton...
 - If the dream contradicts the Word of God in any way - reject it - it is not from the Lord...
 - Before you make any rash decision based on dreams - make sure they are from God!
 - 2ND - Winning the battle without a fight... vs. 16-25
 - Gideon divided the 300 men - giving each horn and a jar with a torch inside...
 - They encircled the enemies camp - and just after midnight / at the signal...
 - They all broke their jars - blew their horns - and shouted 'For the Lord and for Gideon!'
 - The enemy assumed they were surrounded - and in confusion turned on each other...
 - And God conquered an army like the sand of the sea - with just 300 men!
 - God does not need an army to accomplish His work - He just needs those who are willing...