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BIBLICAL STUDIES

Principles of Deliverance

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

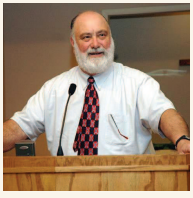
The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

PSALM 34:17

Deliverance is not merely a change in circumstances. Across these messages, John Weaver considers God's sovereignty, the need for repentance, the authority of His Word, and the obedient response of His people. Biblical examples provide a framework for examining danger, dependence, and the responsibilities that accompany rescue.

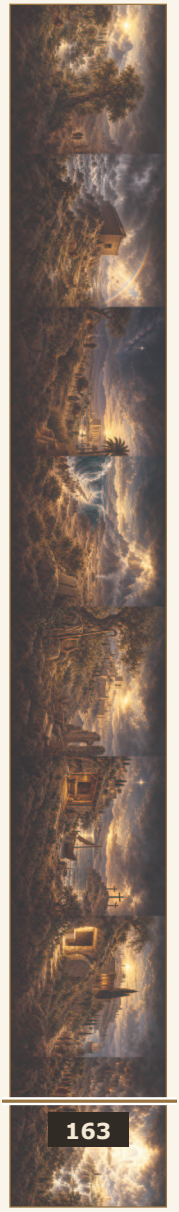
"His Word is the standard that reveals who He is and declares what He does."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.



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Principles of Deliverance

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Contents

Chapter 1: Principles of Deliverance - 1 7

Principles of Deliverance 7

Introduction to Deliverance 7

Biblical Usage of Deliverance 8

Deliverance as Negative and Positive 9

The Role of Government and Justice 11

God as the Definer of Good and Evil 12

Wicked Government and the Need for Deliverance 13

Preparation for Deliverance: Stripping 15

Application to America 21

Conclusion and Prayer 25

Chapter 2: Principles of Deliverance - 2 27

Review of Part 1: The Right to Control Borders 27

Introduction: Some to Be Received 29

America as a Covenant Nation 29

Old Testament Laws Protecting the Stranger 30

Solomon's Prayer for the God-Fearing Stranger 31

Isaiah's Promise to the Faithful Stranger 32

The Condition for Welcome: Assimilation to God's Covenant 33

One Law for Native and Stranger 33

America's Christian Foundation and Rejection of Pluralism 34

The Test of Tolerance and the Imposition of Values 36

The Stranger Who Obeys God's Law 37

Application to Modern America: One Flag, One Language, One Faith 40

Chapter 3: Principles of Deliverance - 3 47

Introduction and Scripture Reading 47

Review of Previous Points 48

The Person of Deliverance 48

The Person of Deliverance: God Uses a Man 48
Gideon's Prudence and Practicality 50
Gideon's Discernment and Perception 52
Gideon's Divine Call and Sending 54
Gideon's Meekness and Humility 57
Biblical Examples of Meek Leaders 58
Historical Example: Robert E. Lee 60
Warning Against Arrogant Leaders 61
Applications and Conclusion 62
Chapter 4: Principles of Deliverance - 4 65
Review of Previous Messages 66
Gideon: Believing and Bold 67
Gideon’s Request for a Sign 68
The Offering and the Consuming Fire 69
Gideon’s Humility and God’s Peace 71
The Command to Destroy Baal’s Altar 73
The Bullock as a Picture of Christ 76
Gideon’s Boldness and the City’s Reaction 77
The Cost of Doing Right 78
Chapter 5: Principles of Deliverance - 5 81
Introduction and Review 82
The Enemy Attacks After Reformation 84
Biblical Pattern of Attack After Blessing 84
The Spirit of the Lord Empowers Gideon 87
Called and Sent Deliverers Never Fail 87
Gamaliel's Principle and Divine Sovereignty 88
The Trumpet and the Gathering of Followers 89
Gideon's Request for Confirmation 92
The Symbolism of Dew and Fleece 93
The Fleece as a Picture of Christ 95

God's Willingness to Give Victory in Christ 96
Conclusion: Christ Alone is Our Answer 98
Chapter 6: Principles of Deliverance - 6 99
Introduction and Scripture Reading 99
Review of Previous Principles 100
God's Unchanging Character in Choosing Deliverers 101
The Power of Deliverance and the Fleece as a Picture of Christ 102
God's Reduction of Gideon's Army 102
Victory Does Not Depend on a Multitude 106
The Test at the Water 109
God Encourages Gideon's Faith 110
Applications and Conclusion 113
Chapter 7: Principles of Deliverance - 7 115
Principle Seven 115
Introduction and Review 115
God Delights in Using Small Things 117
Psychological Warfare Defined 117
Biblical Examples of Psychological Warfare 119
God Sends Delusion on the Wicked 126
The Psychological Impact on the Midianites 126
Applications and Broader Picture 129
Chapter 8: Principles of Deliverance - 8 133
Introduction and Review of the Series 133
God's Deliverance Is Complete: From Tyranny to Liberty 135
The Destruction of the Civil Rulers 136
The Destruction of Civil Rulers 137
The Destruction of Carnal Reasoning 144
The Destruction of the Criminal Rebels 147
The Destruction of Criminal Rebels 148
Deliverance Unto the Crowned Ruler 150

Applications: Thorough Deliverance and Encouragement to Persevere 151
Topical Index 155
Scripture Index 159
Study Guide Link 167

CHAPTER 1

Principles of Deliverance - 1

Principles of Deliverance

Introduction to Deliverance

I want to begin a brief series on principles of deliverance. I say brief, though I do not know how brief; I would imagine at least four or five messages. I preached from this passage a good while back, a couple of years ago, but this is something entirely different. These are certainly not the same messages, although there may occasionally be similarities, because the text is the same.

Judges 6:1 says, “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel, and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds.”

“And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou comest to Gaza, and left no

sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came up as grasshoppers for a multitude. For both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy it."

Let us stop there for today. This series is entitled Principles of Deliverance. I want to begin by pronouncing this one simple word: deliverance. What comes into your mind when you hear the word deliverance? It is indeed a very wonderful word. One would have to be in trouble, and oftentimes very deep trouble, to appreciate not just the sound of the word, but also the truth that the word conveys.

Biblical Usage of Deliverance

The word deliverance occurs sixteen times in our Bibles, and each time it is used, it refers to a remarkable salvation. For instance, the very first time the word appears is in the book of Genesis, chapter 45 and verse 7. You remember how Joseph's brethren had hated him, sold him into Egypt as a slave, and how he went from the pit to the prison to the palace. But after he was in the palace, and after his brethren found out that old Joe was second in command, he told them, "And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance." Certainly, that is exactly what God wrought through Joseph: a great deliverance, in that the sons of Jacob were not consumed in the famine, and they did live in Egypt in the best of the land for a number of years.

But when you begin to look at the word deliverance and how it is used in the Bible, you will understand that there are different kinds of deliverance. What I mean by that is this: sometimes it is a physical deliverance, sometimes spiritual, financial, political, even mental and emotional deliverances. So the word is very broad. In fact, the Bible in Psalm 32 and verse 7 speaks of "songs of deliverance." Exodus chapter 15 records such a song of deliverance there.

The children of Israel had been delivered out of Egypt. And the Bible says, beginning with verse 1, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will

prepare Him a habitation. My Father is God, and I will exalt Him." As you read on down, this song is simply singing about the deliverance that God wrought for the children of Israel. There is indeed a song of deliverance, but notice that this was a song of deliverance based not just upon salvation, but also upon political deliverance, because they were translated out of a kingdom of slavery and oppression into liberty and freedom under God.

In Luke chapter 4, our Lord begins His public ministry by quoting the words from Isaiah 61. In verse 18 He says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Look in verse 17: “And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah, and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written.” He went to Isaiah 61 and read this passage. In the middle of verse 18, He says, “to preach deliverance to the captives.” The ministry of our Lord, and the gospel that He brought, is characterized as preaching deliverance to the captives. In other words, we had been held captive by sin and by Satan, and we were delivered by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, in the book of Obadiah, chapter 1, verse 17, our salvation is indeed called a deliverance.

Deliverance is often thought of in political terms. If you mention the word deliverance today, that is usually what occurs in the minds of individuals: seeking deliverance from a tyrannical, oppressive, or immoral government. It is usually those who long for righteousness and justice who want to be free from such a wicked government.

Deliverance as Negative and Positive

But when you hear the word deliverance, remember that it is both negative and positive. What do I mean by that? Deliverance is always from something and unto something. When the children of Israel were delivered out from Egypt, they were delivered into the Canaan land. God did not bring them out of Egypt to drop them in the desert. The Bible says He brought them out that He might bring

them in. Likewise, when God delivers us from our sins, He does not just drop us. Let me read to you what the Bible says in Colossians, chapter 1, verses 12 and 13.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet, or made us suitable, to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Note that He brought us out, the Bible says, from the kingdom of darkness; that's the negative. And He translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; that's the positive. In other words, He brought us out that He might bring us in.

The point I am trying to emphasize is very simple. When we are delivered from a tyrannical government, we must be delivered unto a government of liberty and freedom. You cannot replace something with nothing. You must replace something with something. If you are not going to replace an unbiblical, ungodly, tyrannical, oppressive government with one that is free, godly, holy, and biblical, why would you even change it to begin with? The only choice that you have, if you are not going to replace it with a biblical government, is another humanistic government—one of a different flavor or kind. Humanism is humanism, however.

It does not matter its shape, name, or political party. Think about our country in the last forty to fifty years. We have swapped Republican candidates for Democratic candidates and Democratic candidates for Republican candidates. We have swapped Republican majorities for Democratic majorities and Democratic majorities for Republican majorities. We have swapped one administration for another administration, and yet we still have the same identical, unbiblical, ungodly, unconstitutional government in this country. What are we doing?

All I am trying to show you is this: humanism is humanism. It does not matter how you swap it around or what you call it. It is still the same.

The Role of Government and Justice

Now, let me tell you what the people in America have forgotten, and I want you to turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 3. I know that you know this, but I am going to read it for those who will be listening to this message. The people in America have either forgotten, or some of them have never known, that government's role according to the ordination of God is simply the role of justice and nothing else. God never gave government the authority to be a welfare government. He never gave government the authority to be an educational government in the sense that it is involved in schooling. The only priority God gave civil government is justice. Look in Romans 13, verse 3.

"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he that is the civil magistrate is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

The Bible explicitly says that there is a twofold role for civil government: the protection of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked. Whenever government assumes any role beyond justice, it becomes tyrannical and oppressive, because it enters an area where God never gave it authority to go. Remember, justice must be defined by God and no one else, because anything less is not justice.

One of the problems in our judicial system is that good and godly men are sometimes punished for what we would call noncrimes, while wicked men who commit real crimes are not punished. Yet we refer to it as the justice system, though there is no justice in the system. Murderers, rapists, kidnappers, child molesters, and others are given light and lenient sentences. Sometimes, even a life sentence does not mean life; usually, it means they can be out within seven years.

Recently, one judge up north released a child molester after he was found guilty, saying that the man was too short and would have a difficult time in prison. Too short? In other words, height matters

whether you are in prison or not, I guess. My question is, is he too short for a rope? If he is a child molester, that is what ought to happen to him.

I acknowledge that prisons are unbiblical. But you can be exceedingly wicked and vile, violate God's law, and get away with a very light or lenient sentence today. Yet you can stand against tyranny and oppression and that which is not constitutional, and be labeled a domestic terrorist and sent to prison for a hundred years. That is the point I am trying to make.

God as the Definer of Good and Evil

Whenever man tries to determine right and wrong, good and bad, or what is right and what is evil, there will always be injustice. Justice, right and wrong, good and evil are determined by God alone. Isaiah 45:6–7 makes this clear. In verse 6, the Lord says, "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else." This establishes that the speaker is the Lord. Then, in verse 7, He says, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."

Most of us have no problem understanding how God forms the light and creates the darkness. We have no problem understanding how God makes peace. But when we come to the phrase, "and create evil, I the LORD do all these things," sometimes we have a problem with that. Yet justice, right and wrong, good and evil are determined by God alone.

How can God be said to be the creator of evil in this verse? We know that God did not create evil in the sense that He made something evil and wicked. God is not the author, instigator, or infuser of evil. He does not shoot wickedness into people.

What does the Bible say in James 1? "Let no man say when he is tempted that I am tempted of God. Why? For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." In other words, God says, do not blame Me as the author of sin. We know from James 1:13-15 that God is not the author, instigator, or infuser of sin.

How then do we explain this verse? It is very simple. God says, “I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I do all these things.” How did God create evil? The answer is, by definition. God created the world, and He beheld it, and everything that He made was good. In other words, God says, this is good, this is holy, and this is right.

Once God lays down His law and tells us what is right and holy, anything opposite or contrary to that is evil, unholy, and ungodly. When God says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” we know that adultery is evil in and of itself. When God says, “Thou shalt not murder,” we know that murder is evil in and of itself. Does God make men murderers? No. Men are murderers because they are sinful, wicked, and rebellious. But God is the One who tells us what wickedness and sin are by definition.

In that sense, He created it. The interesting thing is that the word justice in the Bible and the word righteousness in the Bible are the same exact word in the Hebrew. Whatever is just is right, and whatever is right is just. Justice and righteousness are exactly the same thing.

The reason we have the problems we are having in our judicial and legal systems is that a number of men are trying to determine right and wrong for themselves. Some say, “I don’t see anything wrong with this,” or, “I don’t see anything wrong with that,” while others permit one thing but forbid another simply because they do not like it. It is not an objective standard that we now have. The objective standard is God’s Word.

Wicked Government and the Need for Deliverance

Now we have men's subjective standard, and thus they try to justify their own wickedness and many times condemn the righteous. They try to do that legally.

When men do that, they set themselves against God and against His Word. Psalm 94, verse 20, asks the question: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee which frameth mischief by a law?" This is the question that must be answered.

A throne speaks of authority and rulership. It is a throne of iniquity. What does that mean? It is a wicked throne, a wicked rulership, a wicked government. So the question is, Shall the throne of iniquity, shall a wicked civil government, have fellowship with God, which frameth mischief by law?

Mischief in the Bible is another word for sin. So here is the question: Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God when it makes sin legal? Shall a wicked civil government that makes legal that which God condemns have fellowship with God? Just answer that question in your mind. What is the answer? No.

Look at verse 21. Here is what they do: "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood." In other words, they are murderers, perverts, and destroyers. Are those people in fellowship with God? What is the answer? Absolutely not.

Government may make sin legal, but it cannot make it lawful. It may be legal to be a sodomite, but it is not lawful. It may be legal to murder babies, but it is not lawful. It may be legal to steal, but it is not lawful. Those are two totally different things.

What does this wicked civil government do? It makes sin legal. When it does that, it is defying God and sanctioning sin, wickedness, and rebellion. In doing so, it is fighting against God. Shall a wicked civil government that makes sin legal have fellowship with God? No.

So what does that mean? It means they are not of God. They are not in fellowship with God. They have no divine authority, no divine approval, and no divine approbation; therefore, they may be lawfully resisted.

Whenever godly people find themselves under an oppressive, tyrannical, unrighteous, and ungodly government, it is only natural that they long for deliverance. They want things right. It is not that we want to overthrow government. We do not. We have to have government. All we want to do is throw the wickedness out of government so that we can have a righteous and godly government. We want a God-honoring, biblical government where there is indeed real liberty and real freedom. We want real justice and not a charade.

We want real liberty and real freedom and not just a fantasy. In other words, basically, a godly person wants this.

They want to be able to live their life, work, play, worship, and do whatever they want to do without governmental interference, permission, or even knowledge of their activities. Basically, they just want to be left alone. In plain, simple language, they would like to be able to tell the government, "Bug out and leave us alone." Is that rebellion? No, that is not rebellion. That is just believing in Romans 13, verses 3 and 4, that the only reason God established government was for the protection of the righteous and the punishment of the evildoers. If government is not protecting or punishing, it has no business in our lives. Period. It is that simple.

Do you know what the Bible says in Isaiah 59, verse 4? God charges the people and indicts them, and I want you to listen to this indictment. He says, "None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth. They trust in vanity and speak lies. They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity." What is God indicting the people for? Because none call for justice. None are pleading for the truth. Remember that justice is righteousness. Whenever you are unconcerned about a just government, you are unconcerned about a righteous government. God is telling us that we must learn to stand, plead for truth, and cry out for justice.

Look back in your Bibles to the book of Judges, chapter six, because this is the introductory sermon. I am dealing with only one point today, and that is the preparation for deliverance. I have given you a number of Scriptures. We can read about deliverance in the Bible, but let me point something out: deliverance does not just happen. You do not go to bed enslaved and wake up the next morning free. There is a preparation.

Preparation for Deliverance: Stripping

I never will forget a woman who came to me while I was preaching in Louisiana. There are some strange people in Louisiana. She came weeping, really broken, and I asked what was wrong. She said, "I can't get people to believe that I'm converted." I asked, "Why not?"

She said, “I tell them about my conversion experience, and they just don’t believe me.” I asked her to tell me what had happened. I told her that I could not see her heart, but I could tell her whether or not her experience was biblical. She said, “It was very simple. I went to bed lost one night and woke up the next morning saved.” I said, “No wonder you can’t get people to believe you. I don’t believe you either.”

Salvation does not work like that. You do not go to bed lost, wake up saved, and know nothing. Yet people seem to think that deliverance will come in that way. We are a wicked, rebellious, ungodly nation; then, suddenly, we will wake up and everything will be all right. It does not work like that, folks.

There is preparation in deliverance. Look back in Judges chapter six, verse 1: “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.”

As you deal with people, you will find an interesting concept, always true of unsaved, ungodly, and unconverted people: usually, they do not want to be delivered from their sin. They want to be delivered from the penalty of their sins so they may indulge even more in the pleasures of sin. In other words, “I want to keep going the way I’m going; I just don’t have to pay the piper.”

Unhappily, there are also Christians, or at least professing Christians, who are satisfied and content to live in tyranny and under oppression. Why would any Christian, or any professing Christian, want to live under tyranny and oppression? I can think of two answers right away. The first is ignorance: ignorance of the Word of God, the power of God, the blessing of God, the deliverance of God, and what life could really be like under a godly government.

Most of us have never known or experienced real freedom in our lives. I submit to you that those my age and older—we probably tasted the last little bit of freedom in this country. Think of our children. They have never known what real freedom is. They do not know what it is like to live without governmental interference or governmental permission to exist. The generation alive today has no idea what our founding fathers bequeathed us, and cannot conceive

of the liberty and freedom that existed in this country in the beginning.

One of the problems is ignorance. The second problem is complacency. Complacency deals with the reality that the nature of people is that they do not want to rock the boat. They are content with their chains, their bondage, and their captivity, just as long as they can maintain a certain level of comfort.

In Judges chapter 15, God had called Samson to be a judge. Samson had been wronged by the Philistines, and the Philistines were after him. They wanted to destroy him, and he had already killed a lot of them. In verse 9, "Then the Philistines went up and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why are you come up against us?"

Remember, Israel at this point was under Philistine bondage, oppression, and tyranny. So they asked their captors, "Why are you come up against us?" And they answered, "To bind Samson are we come up, to do with him as he done to us." Then three thousand men of Judah, not of the Philistines, went to the top of the rock Etam and said to Samson, "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that thou hast done to us?" And he said unto them, "As they did unto me, so have I done unto them." They said unto him, "We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines." And Samson said unto them, "Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves." And they said, "No, but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand. But surely we will not kill thee." And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

Note carefully: when the Philistines came into the land, 3,000 Judahites became upset. But they did not go up to fight with Samson or help him. They went up and said, "What have you done to us? Look at the problems you have caused. The Philistines are now in our land. Our level of comfort has been disturbed. Something is wrong."

As cowardly and wicked as they were, they were willing to bind one of their own and deliver him into the hands of the enemy. Why? So they could restore their comfort zone. In other words, they were

willing to be good little subjects, to suffer oppression and tyranny, just so they could have the big-screen plasma TV, a boat, a two-week vacation every year, and a decent house with air conditioning. That is what they were saying: “Samson, no, we are not going to kill you, but we are going to turn you over to them.” They did not know that God was going to deliver him.

Most of us have our own comfort zone, and we are not upset until that comfort zone is invaded. Then we are willing to do whatever is necessary to restore it. So why are people willing to put up with what they put up with in this country? Ignorance. Complacency. When God is going to deliver a people, He has to deal with our ignorance and complacency.

Something must be done to resolve those two problems. Something must be done to awaken us to truth and to arouse us from our complacent spirit. Proverbs 16:7 says, "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." But the opposite is also true: when a man's ways displease the Lord, God will always raise up enemies against him.

This was true in the life of Solomon. Solomon sinned against God. He had married all these strange women, got all these idols into the land, and allowed the worship of these false gods. In 1 Kings 11, beginning with verse 4, "For it came to pass when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods. His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." The passage tells how he went after all these gods and allowed his wives to worship them. The Bible says in verse 9, "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice." Now verse 14: "And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite."

He was the king's seed in Edom. Notice that expression: "the Lord stirred up an adversary." Verse 23 repeats it: "And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon, the son of Eliadah, who fled from his lord, Hadadezer, king of Zobah." What is God doing? God is raising up enemies for Solomon. Why? Because his ways displease the Lord.

The same principle appears in Judges 6:1: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years." Verse 2 says, "And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel." What is God doing now? He is starting to mess up their comfort zone in such a way that they will realize, "We're in trouble. This is worse than I thought. I didn't know that we were in so deep."

When God prepares a people for deliverance, He strips them. He strips them.

God strips people of their hope, their trust, their abilities, and their power in themselves. He shows them their inability and that they cannot deliver themselves. Consider Gideon's vast army, which God cut down to three hundred. Why? Judges 7:2 says, "And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." God fixed it so they would know that He had done it. They were not going to steal His glory or His honor.

The same principle applies to spiritual salvation. First Corinthians 1:26 says, "For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Why did God not call all these wise, mighty, powerful, highfalutin men? Verse 27 answers: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised have God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." Verse 31 concludes, "That according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

God chose the poor and the weak, those who cannot, so they will know that He did it.

God did exactly the same thing when He sent Moses to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt. In the preparation of deliverance, there is a very painful experience called preparation. In that

preparation, we are stripped and brought to the realization of our impotence, our incompetence, and our inability.

Moses and Aaron had gone to Pharaoh and said, “Thus saith the Lord, let my people go.” Pharaoh’s response was, “I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, “Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick. And, behold, thy servants are beaten, but the fault is in thine own people.”

But Pharaoh said, “You are idle, you are idle. Therefore you say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord. Go therefore now and work, for there shall no straw be given you. Yet you shall deliver the tale of bricks.” The officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in an evil case after Pharaoh had said, “You shall not finish off from your bricks of your daily tasks.”

They met Moses and Aaron and said unto them, “The Lord look upon you and judge because you’ve made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants to put a sword in their hand to slay us.” Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people, neither hast thou delivered my people at all.”

Moses and Aaron had tried to deliver them, but they could not. The officers had tried to deliver them, but they could not. The officers were so upset that they told Moses and Aaron, “God judge between you and us. You told us you were going to deliver us; all you’ve done is make it worse.” Moses said, “God, why did you even send me?” Then the Lord said unto Moses, “Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh.”

"Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh." But once you realize you can't, you can see what I can do. This is not going to be your deliverance, Moses. This is going to be my deliverance now. If you look in Judges 6, and we're talking about preparation for deliverance, what so far has God done to prepare Israel for deliverance? Look in verses 1 and 2. "And the children of Israel did

evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years, and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel." What did God do to prepare them for deliverance? He sold them into the hands of their enemies.

You will find that exact expression in Judges 2:14, Judges 3:8, Judges 4:2, Judges 10:7, and 1 Samuel 12 and verse 9. There is a very important point here. If you read Judges chapter six, when God sold them, or delivered the people over to the hands of the Midianites, there was no war. There was no battle. There was no skirmish. The Israelites just gave up and ran. That's what the Bible says. Look at verse 2: "And the hand of the Midian prevailed against Israel, and because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains and caves and the strongholds." They ran. They got out of it. They just let them have it.

There does not have to be an actual war for the enemy to take over. Israel was sold into the hand of the enemy and didn't even recognize it for a while, until God turned the screws up and tightened them down. If we have been sold into the hands of our enemies—and we have, I can assure you of that—what is left? What's the next step? What is the first thing that we must do? The first thing that we must do is recognize that we have been sold into the hands of our enemies, and that we have been sold into their hands because of our sins and our rebellion against God.

Application to America

What literally happened in Judges chapter 6 to Israel has literally happened in America. How can such a thing be said? Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 28, and let's begin reading there, verse 43. Notice whether you can find any parallels between America and these verses. Look in Deuteronomy chapter 28, beginning there with verse 43.

God says, "The stranger that is within thee shall get up very high and thou shalt come down very low." How many real Christians do we have in places of government and power? How many real Americans? "He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him. He shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail." How many

Americans are out of debt? We live in a debt economy. The average American could not pay a month ahead on his expenses.

Verse 45 says, "Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed, because thou hearkenest not in the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee, and they shall be upon thee for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever. Why? Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things. Therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies." You will not serve God? God said, That is okay; you will serve your enemies.

Has not the stranger been placed above us? Have not our enemies, aliens, illegal immigrants, criminals, and strangers, more rights in our country than we citizens have? Of course. We have been reaped, raped, ravished, and ruined, and we do not even know it. There is seemingly no place for Christ, Christianity, Christians, holiness, godliness and righteousness, or justice in this country. Anything contrary to Christ and Christianity is allowed. Anything contrary to common sense and constitutionalism is allowed. One of our problems is that we have been sold, and we do not realize it.

What will it take to wake us up? What will it take to get our eyes open? People have asked me repeatedly, Will America wake up? My question is, Will Christians wake up? Will you wake up? Let me show you a principle. In Luke 19 and verse 10, Jesus Christ says, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." How many of you have ever been lost? I am not talking spiritually, but physically. I got lost when I was seven years old, for hours. I was never scared until I realized I was lost. When I realized I was lost, I got desperate.

The Bible says He came to seek and to save that which was lost. When I was lost, I met a man on the road who had a house, a car, and a telephone. I never asked him to call my parents or to take me anywhere. Why? Because I did not think I was lost. I thought I knew where I was and how to get out of the situation I was in. But after I left him, I found out I was really lost. That is when I got scared.

Let me prove something to you. In Matthew chapter nine, the Pharisees asked the disciples, “Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?” When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” Then He said, “But go ye and learn what that meaneth.”

Dr. Bowen, in all your years of practice, did anyone ever drop by your office and say, “Doc, there’s nothing wrong with me. I just want to come by and hand you this $50 bill as an office call”? No. No doctor has ever had people simply walk in to hand him money. Why do people go to a doctor? You say, “Because they’re sick.” No. Come on. When you get sick, you do not go to the doctor.

You go to your medicine cabinet and try to doctor yourself. When your remedies do not work, you call a neighbor and ask about a home remedy. Then you try that. You try everything, and finally say, “Well, I guess it won’t get well. I’m going to have to go to a doctor who knows more than I do about it.” The doctor is the last resort. What did our Lord say? “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Go ye and learn what that meaneth.”

As long as you and I do not think we are sick, diseased, or troubled, we will never seek deliverance. What must our Lord do to prepare us? He must open our eyes and understanding, show us the mess and trouble we are in, and turn the thumb screws to awaken us from apathy and complacency.

In preparing a people for deliverance, they must be made aware of their true condition. We must not only recognize the symptoms; we must know the cause. Consider an antique piece of furniture with five or six coats of paint that you want to restore. You start stripping it, put stripper on it, use whatever you can, and do it again. You take layer after layer off, then use steel wool and a little brush until you strip it down to the absolute bare wood.

It is tedious, laborious, and sometimes painful. That is exactly what God has to do with us spiritually—not only in individual salvation, but in national salvation. God literally has to strip us of our pride, arrogance, haughtiness, and abilities. “When they come for me,” or, “I’ll do this”—no, no, no. As a people and nation, if we

really want to be delivered, we have to realize that we are going to be stripped. How did God strip these Israelites?

In Judges chapter six, think about our country. God stripped Israel of its pride, self-ability, and false idols. Judges 6 says, "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them in the hand of the Midian seven years. And the hand of the Midianites prevailed against Israel. And because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which were in the mountains and caves and strongholds." First of all, He stripped them of their false faith.

Remember, it was because of their idolatry that they were put into captivity to begin with. God showed them that their false gods could not and would not save them. The only One left available was the one true and living God. I have wanted to preach, though I never have, that each of the ten plagues in Egypt was actually an attack on each of the gods of Egypt. Look at the false faith in this country.

I saw it last week on the news, and again this morning. They showed Hillary Clinton. The Democrats are reaching out to the religious conservatives, but Hillary Clinton said, "we as a people of faith." What? I do not doubt she has faith, but it is not the faith that I have, nor the person that I have it in.

Look at the people in this country who trust in the false gods of the dollar, the government, themselves, and politics. The first thing God did was show them that their gods could not deliver. They were not only faithless, because God stripped them of their false faith; secondly, they were fearful. They did not stand and fight, but ran. How can you fight a battle and win a battle when you are running away from the enemy? What did David do when he saw Goliath? He ran toward him, not away from him. Thirdly, they were not only faithless and fearful, but took flight, leaving the cities and towns for the mountains, dens, and caves of the earth. God next stripped them through financial disaster. Look in verse 3.

"And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east. And they came up against them, and they encamped against them, and they destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou comest to Gaza, and left

no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor oxen, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude. For both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land." Why? To destroy it. What did the wealthy merchants have when they went back into the cities? Nothing.

All the reports I am hearing concern the imminent collapse of the dollar. The Federal Reserve note is really not a dollar; it is a Federal Reserve note. Folks, it is just a matter of time.

If God, in His grace and mercy, is going to deliver us, we must be stripped. I will deal with this next week, but look in verse 6: "And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." Only a stripped people cry to the Lord. Only a helpless people cry to the Lord.

"They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick, go ye and learn what that means." The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. It is only when you get lost, helpless, sick, and desperate that you cry to the Lord. Is God stripping us in America? I believe He is, to be honest, but the work is not yet complete. You may say, "Brother Weaver, I do not hear too many people crying to the Lord."

Just wait till He gets through. God knows exactly what it will take to bring us to our knees. He knows exactly how to strip us and how to turn the thumbscrews. When He finishes, we will be willing to cry to the Lord.

I like the children's song about how God drove some inhabitants of Canaan out of the land with hornets. The song says, "God did not make them go. Oh, no. He just made them willing to go." God can make us willing to cry out, "God have mercy upon us."

Conclusion and Prayer

The first one is this: God never delivers a people—spiritually, financially, nationally, politically, or any way you want to talk about it—until He brings them to the end of themselves. As long as we think we can, we will never trust Him. As long as we think we have ability, we will never trust His ability. God is not going to share His

glory with us. When we get there by the grace of God, we will not say, "Well, I finally made it." No. We will say, "It was the grace and mercy of God."

The second application is that one of the evidences that God is stripping us is found in pockets of people, here and there, who are crying out to God for justice and mercy. They discern the circumstances. They know that we are in a mess. They may not know how deeply we are in that mess, but they know that we are there. They understand that governmental programs, political parties, the UN, and all the other humanistic organizations combined can never deliver us from captivity. The only thing they can do is deliver us unto captivity. Only God can deliver us. There are pockets of people everywhere in this country that understand that.

You are going to say, "But Brother Weaver, there is just not enough of us." Hogwash. Was three hundred enough for Gideon?

The truth of the matter is, when God starts stripping, we start crying. Here is the third application: God always delivers us from something unto something. If God delivers us from tyranny and oppression, from humanistic government, He will deliver us unto liberty and freedom in a godly government. It is not that we just want to be delivered from; we want to be delivered unto. If our Lord only delivers those who need deliverance, we had better recognize that we need it and start crying to Him for mercy.

"For he came to seek and to save that which was lost." Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us. Teach us, Lord, and make us willing to be stripped, willing to be brought to the end of ourselves—not only as individuals, families, and churches, but, Lord, as a nation. Make us willing to cry unto Thee for deliverance. We pray that You would work in our hearts, work in our lives, and get glory for Thine own name. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Principles of Deliverance - 2

Review of Part 1: The Right to Control Borders

This is the second part of biblical law and immigration. Deuteronomy 27:17 says, “Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.” Note that God places a curse upon those who would remove his neighbor's landmark.

As you look through the Bible, there are a multitude of other Scriptures concerning landmarks. Proverbs 22:28 says, “Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set.” Proverbs 23:10 says, “Remove not the old landmark, enter into the fields of the fatherless.” Deuteronomy 19:14 says, “Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark.” Landmarks dealt with borders. Scripture shows that God not only sovereignly placed us where we are today, but has also sovereignly placed nations where they are today.

The Bible teaches that God has separated the nations and given them their particular borders. When God brought Israel into the land, He described their borders with four points. Before He brought them into the land, He taught them to respect the borders of others. He told them that they were not to covet Mount Seir because He had

given it to Esau and it was going to be his; they were not going to get one foot of it. The same thing was true of the land of Moab. Thus God taught them also to respect the borders of others.

The whole crux of the message last week was simply this: the right to control one's borders is basically the right of self-defense. We looked at numerous verses where God forbade the children of Israel to allow certain people within their land. In fact, God said concerning some of them, “Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity forever.” We saw how Solomon violated that commandment. He brought the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Hittites, and all these other “ites” into the land, married them, and provided altars for all these foreign people. Thus it brought not only chaos and confusion, but destruction as well.

Interestingly enough, most of the time it is the civil rulers who violate this principle. Our civil rulers issue the passports, visas, immigration papers, and all like that. Based upon the Word of God, God has given government the responsibility and duty not only to punish the wicked but also to protect the righteous. Therefore, part of its responsibility is to protect and guard the borders. To argue that our government has no right to refuse certain people or control immigration would be tantamount to saying that countries have no right of self-defense.

If we cannot resist an invading horde of aliens, by what sense could we properly resist an invading army? It does not matter whether they are invading aliens or an invading army; the result of both will be destruction and subjugation. Nations therefore do indeed have the absolute right to protect and control their borders.

Last week the emphasis was on the negative. I showed you how certain people were not to be allowed into the land: God forbade them to come. Likewise, we have the absolute right to forbid people to come to America. Immigration is not a right. Just because you are born in one country does not mean that you have the right to immigrate to another country, and you cannot simply come over here en masse. When you consider many of the people we are allowing into this country, remember what Castro did with the boat people: he sent in mostly criminals, mob bosses, and the refuse and

dregs of society, whom no one wanted anyhow. We have them now in this country as well.

Introduction: Some to Be Received

The Bible teaches that there are indeed some to be rejected, but it also teaches that there are some to be received. Today I am going to point out the Scriptures that deal with those who are to be received.

America as a Covenant Nation

In the Old Testament and in the New Testament, Israel was a covenant nation. I also want to point out that here in America we too are a covenant nation. The truth of the fact remains that even our Constitution is a covenant. It is a compact between we the people, the states, and the federal government. Many of you remember the Mayflower Compact, or the Mayflower Covenant.

The truth is, our Founding Fathers were predominantly Christian men who appealed to the Sovereign God of Heaven and Earth over and over and over. I know not every individual was a Christian. That is why I said predominantly. But if you will do a study of the Founding Fathers, you will find that the book most frequently quoted by our Founding Fathers is the Bible. And the book most frequently quoted by our Founding Fathers in the Bible is the book of Deuteronomy, which is the book of the covenant, or the book of the law.

Let me begin by showing you a number of passages, and then I want to put them together for you. Look first to the book of Exodus, chapter 22, and consider some of the references to biblical law in relationship to strangers. I will explain who these strangers are shortly. Notice Exodus chapter 22, beginning with verse 21, and read through verse 24. Exodus 22, verse 21: “Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for you are strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child, If thou afflict them, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry.”

Old Testament Laws Protecting the Stranger

"And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." Here God connects the stranger with the fatherless and with the widow. God says you are not to oppress them, and you are not to vex them. If you treat them oppressively, wickedly, or unjustly in any way whatsoever, His wrath will be hot against you, and He will kill you. Thus the warning concerns not merely an outward action, but the wicked and unjust treatment of those whom God places alongside the fatherless and the widow.

Exodus 23:9 says, "Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, seeing you were strangers in the land of Egypt." God says, once again, that you must remember your own background. You are not to oppress a stranger. They were to remember what it was to be strangers themselves, and that knowledge of the stranger's heart was part of the reason given for this command.

Deuteronomy 24:14 says, "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shalt the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it, lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee."

Note the verse carefully: "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy." He could be an Israelite, "whether he be of thy brethren or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gate," indicating that there were other people living in the land who were not necessarily Israelites. Some might say that these strangers could be Israelites from foreign countries. That is possibly true as well, but the point is that the stranger here is not a home-born, home-bred individual. These laws, then, presuppose that there were people living in the land who were not home-born and home-bred.

Deuteronomy 27:19 says, "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow, and all the people shall say, Amen." Here God places a curse upon anyone who perverts the judgment or the justice that would be given to a stranger, the

fatherless, and the widow. He is concerned that judgment be given rightly to each of them, and He declares a curse upon the person who turns that judgment aside.

Turn to Leviticus chapter 19, verses 33 and 34. Look at it very closely: “And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, you shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, And thou shalt love him as thyself. For you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

Notice very closely: “if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land.” Here is someone living in the land. Then verse 34 says, “but the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you.” He was not born among them, yet they were to love him as themselves, remembering that they had been strangers in the land of Egypt. The Bible says, “I am the Lord your God.” God is saying once again that we are not to vex these strangers, whoever they are, who live among us.

Solomon's Prayer for the God-Fearing Stranger

Now turn to 1 Kings chapter 8, and let me begin to put two and two together for us. Solomon, King Solomon, is dedicating the temple to the Lord. This is in his prayer. After he prayed, the power and the Spirit and the glory of God came down upon the temple in such a way that the Levites and the priests had to leave; they could not even stay. So, in 1 Kings chapter 8, he is praying. Notice what he prays in verses 41 through 43. He says in verse 41, “Moreover concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel.”

Now that could not get any clearer as far as I am concerned. Here is someone who was not born in the land—not home born, not home bred—“but cometh out of a far country for thy name’s sake.” Why does the stranger come into the land? Verse 42 says, “For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong arm, and of thy outstretched arm, when he shall come and pray toward this house. Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for, that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.”

Now notice what he prays. He prays for those who are going to come from a far country, who have heard of the name of God and have come into the country because of God—His person, His power, His position, His grace, and His mercy. He prays that even when this stranger comes and addresses God properly, through the right way, God would hear his prayer and answer it. Here he is praying for these strangers.

Isaiah's Promise to the Faithful Stranger

Isaiah 56 gives another passage where the stranger is included with the eunuchs. A eunuch is someone who cannot produce children, and some have been made eunuchs by men, the Bible says. Notice the promise God makes to the stranger and to the eunuch who faithfully obeys Him: “Neither let the son of a stranger that had joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, The Lord has utterly separated me from his people. Neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I'm a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me and take hold of my covenant. Even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

“Also, the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord to serve Him and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants, everyone that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar, for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.”

Now, I want you to note what God is doing. God is saying, here are some strangers that have come into the land. That is, they were not home-born. They were not home-bred. But these strangers are individuals who have taken hold of God's name. They've taken hold of God's covenant. And they are obedient and submissive to Him.

The Condition for Welcome: Assimilation to God's Covenant

Now, let me just make a statement. Listen carefully before we look at any of the Scriptures. Foreigners of other nations were able to immigrate to Israel and become citizens, as you and I would call it, as long as they were willing to forsake their paganism, their culture, and their loyalties. They had to come and embrace the one true and the living God. So, plainly stated then, those who were willing to embrace the culture, the covenant, and the community of God were welcome in the land. Those who would assimilate themselves were welcome. Those who would not assimilate were unwelcome. Are you listening? God's people were not to be a pluralistic, multicultural, multi-religious, tolerant community.

They were to be unique and separate. Period.

Now, here's what God is saying. If you're willing to repent of your sins, and renounce your past and embrace the truth of God and live in covenant with me, you're welcome in the land. If not, you're not welcome. Let me show you. Look in your Bibles to the book of Numbers chapter 15. And let's begin there with verse 14, Numbers chapter 15. And look, if you would please, at verse 14. Numbers 15, verse 14. Look what God says. Numbers 15, verse 14. Giving you time because I want you to see the passage, verse 14, "And if a stranger sojourn with you."

One Law for Native and Stranger

"Or whosoever be among you in your generations and will offer an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord as you do. So shall he do. One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance forever in your generations. As you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you."

The stranger that comes into your land—one law shall be for you, one law shall be for him. That is the law of God. In other words, if you were willing to abide by His ordinances and obey His commandments, you were welcome into the land. If you were not

willing to obey His ordinances and obey His commandments, you needed to look for another place to live.

That principle was equally true in America. In the founding of America, every colony and every state required you to profess faith in Jesus Christ and belief in the inspiration of the Old Testament and the New Testament before you could even be a ruler or have any position of authority. America, in its beginning, required Christian rulers. Why? Because America was a Christian nation. When those people originally came into this country, they understood that it was a Christian nation.

America's Christian Foundation and Rejection of Pluralism

Daniel Webster spoke concerning the Constitution of Massachusetts. There was a debate as to whether Christianity should be mentioned in the Constitution. Webster said, “I am clearly of the opinion that we should not strike out of the Constitution all recognition of the Christian religion. I am desirous, in so solemn a transaction as the establishment of a Constitution, that we should keep in it an expression of our respect and attachment to Christianity. Not indeed to any of its peculiar forms, but to its general principles.”

He was not saying that the Constitution had to be a Baptistic doctrine, a Presbyterian instrument, or a Methodist instrument. He was saying that it must express not only respect, but attachment to Christianity. That was in Massachusetts. Did you realize that in the 1892 Supreme Court case of the Church of the Holy Trinity versus the United States, the Supreme Court quoted 87 precedents?

That means there had been already 87 rulings prior to this ruling, and they included those in this ruling. And here's what the Supreme Court ruled in 1892, and I'm quoting it. The Supreme Court says, "Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise, and in this sense, and to this extent, our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian." Now, that was the Supreme Court in 1892. What did they say? They said, that our institutions and our laws are based upon the Redeemer of mankind. That is, they're based upon Jesus Christ. And because of

that, the Supreme Court said in 1892, our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian.

Now, our founding fathers understood that you did not have to have a national church like the Church of England. They didn't have to establish the Baptist Church or Presbyterian Church. They weren't trying to do that. But what they were trying to do, and what they did do, is establish Christianity as the religion of America. You see, the problem is we have left our monoculture and biblical Christianity, and we now have embraced pluralism, multiculturalism, and political correctness.

We have now become a secularistic society. It is absolutely impossible to preserve history, culture, or faith in a multicultural, multi-religious, pluralistic, politically correct society. Why? Because when you have a multicultural, pluralistic, multi-religious society, what it does is this. It places all religions on a plane one equal to the other. Therefore, all religions may be equally valued, or equally despised, or equally destroyed. So what pluralism says is this.

Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are not all the same. Some say there are many roads to heaven, that people are taking different roads but will all end up there. That's hogwash. Christianity is not on a plane with any other religion. Christianity is not even a religion. Christianity is Christ. You see what has happened, and we don't even realize it.

But we have left our Christian foundations and we have turned into a secularistic society. Secularism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has made these two centuries the most violent in history. Everybody can think back to the Crusades and those killed needlessly. The people killed in the Crusades cannot be a drop in the bucket compared with the people killed in the last two centuries in the wars we have had in this country because of secularism—and abortion. That's part of it. That's a fact.

Let me just show you. Let's try to flesh this out so you can understand what I'm trying to say. Let me give you an illustration first. You know the Pope is in big trouble. And he's in big trouble because he gave a quote about Islam in a speech over in Europe. And here all the Muslims are in an uproar and they are demanding an

apology because the Pope quoted a fourteenth-century document that said that Islam was a terrible, bloody religion, and it was always one that had conquered by the sword.

All of this has upset people. I was listening to the news this morning, and here is what the reporter said: “Intellectually, what the Pope said was right when he quoted the piece of literature. But politically today, you can’t say those things.” Why can you not say those things? Because we are now claiming to be a pluralistic society where all religions are equal.

The Test of Tolerance and the Imposition of Values

You do not defend one religion. You know what our Lord said? Our Lord said there must needs be offense. The Bible teaches that there is indeed an offense to the gospel.

Let us consider a little story, a little scenario, and see how tolerant and politically correct you are, and how far you have gone down the road of pluralism, multiculturalism, and multireligiousism. You get up one morning, put on your house tote, and go outside to grab your newspaper before sitting down to read it with a cup of coffee. It is a day like any other day. But when you go outside, you look over and see that your next-door pagan neighbor has built an altar on his front lawn. He has his little girl in his arms, with a knife in his hands, about to rip her heart open and offer her as a sacrifice to his god.

My question is this: Will you rescue your neighbor's child? Would you go over and forcefully impose your religious values upon him, knocking him in the head if necessary to save his daughter's life? Or will you pick up your paper, turn around, go back inside, and say, “Well, everybody has the right to worship the way they want to worship”?

Think about that. There are mothers in India who throw their babies to the crocodiles in honor of the God of the river. Do you understand? In reality, there cannot be any such thing as pluralism: somebody is right and somebody is wrong. It's just that simple.

Here is what has happened in America. We are told over and over by the politically correct crowd that it is not right for you to try to impose your Christian values upon someone else. And they mean

it—so much so that if you go to an abortionist's home or clinic and gather together as Christians and do nothing but pray, the next thing you know, you're going to have a SWAT team down on you, and you're going to be arrested and

Manhandled and thrown into prison. Why? In this pluralistic, politically correct society, abortionists have the right to kill babies, and mothers have the right to kill their babies. In a politically correct, pluralistic society, the Christian who holds Christian values is the enemy.

Look in your Bibles to Leviticus, chapter 20. A Christian understands this and takes God's law and God's word seriously. Leviticus 20:1 says, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Again thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, watch, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech, he shall surely be put to death.” “The people of the land shall stone him with stones.”

How can the stranger and the child of Israel equally be put to death if they offer their child to Moloch? Because there was one law in the land, and that one law was God's law, and everyone was to be in subjection to it. A child of God takes this very seriously. In our day and time, in a politically correct, pluralistic, multicultural, multireligious society, Christians are the enemy.

The Stranger Who Obeys God's Law

In fact, even Rosie O'Donnell said so. She said fundamental Christians were as bad as fanatical Muslims. I do not know how anybody heard her, or who had the guts and grit to listen to her foul mouth and wickedness, but somebody heard it and reported it. It was on the news, on World Net Daily and the Drudge Report.

Understand this: when God speaks of the stranger sojourning in Israel, He is not speaking of a godless alien who has brought his culture and paganism into the land and set up practicing his religion before false gods. That is not what God is talking about.

In Leviticus 19:33–34, God says, “And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, you shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and

thou shalt love him as thyself. For you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God." God is speaking of a stranger dwelling among them and commands, "love him as yourself." He is not speaking of a godless pagan sacrificing his children to false gods. What kind of stranger is he talking about? Look at Leviticus 16:29, which helps identify the strangers God is addressing. The command is directed to this stranger dwelling among them, not to pagan worship.

In fact, we've already had a hint of it when Solomon prayed for those strangers who came from a far country, who had heard of the name of God and who came over to embrace His covenant. In Leviticus 16:29, God says, "And this shall be a statute forever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether he be of one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you." So the stranger that sojourns among them must be circumcised and must fast on the day of atonement, just like the children of Israel. In Leviticus 17:8–9, this stranger is the one who also obeys the laws of sacrifice: "And thou shalt say to them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among you that offer the burnt sacrifice, burn offering your sacrifice, and bringeth it not to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer it to the"

Even the stranger had to come and bring his offering before the door of the tabernacle, just like the children of Israel. Leviticus 22:18 says, "Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say unto them, whatsoever ye be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the Lord for a burnt offering." Note that the stranger is offering his sacrifices.

He is also someone who has practiced the laws of chastity. Leviticus 18:26 says, "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not commit any of these abominations," referring to sodomy and everything else, incest, adultery, and fornication. "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not commit any of these abominations, neither any of your own nation nor any stranger that sojourneth among you."

So the strangers were to be morally pure as well. In Leviticus 24, beginning in verse 16, these strangers were the ones who had obeyed God's moral laws as well. The Bible says, “And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.”

It does not matter if you are a stranger or one born in the land. Why? There is to be one law for the Israelite and one law for the stranger.

What, then, is God saying when He tells them they are not to vex and not to hate the stranger who dwells among them? Well, let us be honest. There are differences between us. And when I say that, I am not just talking about having different likes and dislikes. I have my likes and dislikes, and you have your likes and your dislikes. There are even differences among people in the same country. There are differences between the North and the South. Those of you from the North know that, and those of you from the South know that. There is a difference between East and West.

I remember the first time I ever landed in Boston, Massachusetts. I had to change planes. I flew up on Delta, and I had to go to Eastern because I was going up into Maine. There was a man standing there who was a police officer. He had on what looked like pants, like a Royal Canadian Mountie. He had the strap coming down across there, the hat with the chin strap, and he stood there like a statue. I walked up and said, "Excuse me, sir, but could you direct me to Eastern Airlines?"

When he spoke to me, my mouth dropped open, and I said, "Pardon?" He said it again. I looked at him and said, "Thank you, sir," and walked off. From that day to this, I have yet to understand one word the man said, and he was speaking English. He had such a horrible accent that I could not understand him.

Let's be honest, folks: there are some accents I don't like. I can't understand them, I can't hear them, and there are a lot of people who don't like the Southern drawl. But what God is saying is this: you can't hate people, despise people, or mistreat people just

because there are differences—because we were not born in the same place and do not have the same attitudes, habits, likes, and dislikes. He is not saying these strangers are pagans and godless aliens. These people have come in, embraced the covenant, and are obedient; they are simply different in some ways.

What God is saying is that someone who is different must not be oppressed and wronged simply because he is different. God told Israel, “You were strangers in the land of Egypt. You were oppressed. You were wrong because you were different.” In other words, those who have embraced the faith, wherever we are, are to be treated honestly and justly.

If you look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 10, note how the judgment of God is against an individual, a family, a church, a state, or a nation that refuses to give justice. Any society that refuses to give justice is under the curse and judgment of God. Deuteronomy 10, verse 17: “For the Lord your God is a God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, and mighty, and a terrible, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless, and the widow, and loveth the stranger, and giving him food and raiment. Love you therefore the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Notice what he said: God is a great, mighty, and terrible God, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward, but executes judgment. If you mistreat the stranger, the widow, or the orphan, God says, “I will judge you.”

Application to Modern America: One Flag, One Language, One Faith

That is true, whether you're an individual, a family, a church, a state, or a nation. God is saying if someone wants to come and embrace the faith and live holily and walk in his law and his statute, fine. They're to be welcomed. Let me give you a quote, and I will tell you in advance that a president of the United States said this. I'm not going to tell you which president, see if you can guess.

He almost had it 100% correct. Not quite, but almost. But listen to what the President of the United States said. And he's talking about immigration. "In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and

assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else. For it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the man's becoming, in very fact, an American, and nothing but an American."

"There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all."

Now let me stop there. Here is what he is saying: any man who says he is American but something else also is not an American at all. A German-American? A Russian-American? An Afro-American? No. He says that any man who says he is an American plus something else is not an American at all.

And here is his last paragraph:

“We have room but for one flag, the American flag. And this excludes the red flag, which symbolizes all war against liberty and civilization, just as much as it excludes any foreign flag of a nation to which we are hostile. We have room but for one language here, and that is the English language. And we have room but for one sole loyalty, and that is loyalty to the American people.”

Would you like to guess who said that? Teddy Roosevelt, in 1907. I would add one thing: there is not only room for one flag and one nation; there is only room for one faith, and that is the Christian faith. You look at the Muslim countries and the Jewish Zionist nation; all of them forbid Christianity. Our American troops could not even wear the American flag in Muslim countries, and the chaplains could not wear a cross. Why?

We were afraid we might offend the Muslims. If the Muslims have the right to forbid Christianity, and if the Jews have the right to forbid Christianity in Israel, do you not think we have the right to forbid Judaism and Islam in this country, since we are a Christian nation? Of course we do.

If you want to follow Islam, my advice is to stay in a Muslim country. If you want to embrace Judaism, stay in a Jewish country. If you are going to come to America, understand that we were founded as a Christian nation, and the Christians in this nation want it back. We want a Christian law and a Christian nation. Do not expect us to

convert to Islam or follow Sharia, the law of Islam. Do not expect us to subsidize your culture, religion, and efforts with our tax dollars. You want your religion to stay in your country. It is that simple. If you come into this country, you are in our country.

That means you must assimilate to our culture and faith. We are not going to change ours for yours. President Theodore Roosevelt said that in 1907, but it would be politically incorrect today. In fact, I am politically incorrect. Probably, if you are listening to this tape, you are politically incorrect.

Now, I'd rather be biblical than politically correct. Let me show you the mess that we're in in this country. I want you to see how easy it is for anyone to get into this country—not just somebody who is going to slip across the border, but someone who wants to come into this country legally. I ran across a website, and the website basically said something like this:

"Are you qualified to be an American? Take the test and see."

I looked at it. The paragraph said, "When immigrants want to become Americans, they must take a civics test as part of their naturalization interview before a citizenship and immigration services officer. The questions are usually selected from a list of 100 sample questions," and then it gave a website. I went to the website. It is an official government website. It said that prospective citizens can look at [them] ahead of the interview. That's like we're giving you the answers before we give you the interview. "Some are easy. Some are not."

"We have picked some of the more difficult ones. Should you be welcomed immediately into the land of the free or sent home for some more homework? Find out." Then it gives you 20 questions, all of them multiple choice. When I finished the 20, by the way, I made 100. When I finished the 20, I went to the website and looked at all 100 questions.

I will give you my assessment: We're in deep trouble. I want you to listen.

If you do not know the answer, just hold on. Number one: How many stripes are there on the United States flag—10, 13, 50, or 51? Do not answer out loud.

Number two: Who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court today—George W. Bush, Alberto Gonzalez, Thomas Jefferson, or John G. Roberts, Jr.? Everyone probably knows it is John G. Roberts, Jr.

Number three: In what year was the Constitution written—1776, 1787, 1876, or 1812? 1776 was the Declaration, and the war did not end until 1783, so it had to be 1787. The War of 1812, you know.

Number four: Which of these is guaranteed by the First Amendment—freedom of the press, the right to bear arms, the right to happiness, or the right to a trial by jury? Of course, freedom of the press.

Number five: How many Supreme Court justices are there—nine, ten, or thirteen? The answer is nine.

Number six: What are the first ten amendments to the Constitution called—the preamble, the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments, or Lewis "Scooter" Libby? Of course, they are called the Bill of Rights.

Number seven: When was the Declaration of Independence adopted—July 4, 1776, July 4, 1787, July 4, 1812, or July 4, 1876? You know: 1776. Number eight.

I want you to think about this one. You might miss this one. Which of the following amendments to the Constitution does not address or guarantee voting rights? The 19th Amendment, the 24th Amendment, the 15th Amendment, or the 7th Amendment? Remember, the first ten were called the Bill of Rights. Voting is not addressed in the first ten, so it has to be the Seventh Amendment. The other three deal with voting.

Now, number nine might get some of you. I'm not going to read all of these, but what were the original thirteen states, or the thirteen colonies? In case you don't know, I'm going to just read them. They were Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Rhode Island, and Maryland. That was the correct answer. To show you how stupid it is, they even threw in some of these that were wrong, New Zealand. Come on. Anybody one

eye and a half cents knows better than that. Now, number ten: what was the first one? Do you remember?

How many stripes were there on the American flag? Now, if you did not know, here is number 10. What do the stripes of the United States flag mean? The cabinet, one for each state in the Union. They represent the thirteen original states, or one for each article of the Constitution. Well, if you know there are thirteen colonies, there are bound to be thirteen stripes. You can figure that one out, I would think.

List number 11. Now this one is really difficult. What is the introduction to the Constitution called: the Preamble, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, or the Articles of Confederation? Preamble.

Now this one, you would think these are tricky, but listen to this. How many changes or amendments are there to the Constitution? How many of you know how many amendments there are? You may not. Here are your choices: 9, 10, 13, or 27. If you do not know, all you have to do is go back to question number eight and find out which one did not deal with voting: 19, 24, 15. So, if you know there is a Twenty-fourth Amendment, you know there have to be more than that, because 24 is not among the choices. Twenty-seven is.

Which of the following is not one of the constitutional requirements to be eligible to become president? Must be at least 35 years of age; must have lived in the United States 14 years; must be a natural-born citizen; must have served as governor. Very obviously, must have served as governor.

Who selects the Supreme Court justices? The Electoral College? The people? They are appointed by the President. How many representatives are there in Congress: 50, 100, 102, or 435? Four hundred and thirty-five.

Who said, “Give me liberty, or give me death”? George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, or Patrick Henry? Everybody knows that. Why did the Pilgrims come to America: in search of gold, to meet the Indians, for religious freedom, or to escape the Revolutionary War? For religious freedom. Who has the power to declare war? Congress, the President, the

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff? Congress, but of course, in our day and time, the President.

And you have the bankers. Now listen to number 19. This one will set you on fire. This one requires a great intellect and some deep thinking. What INS form is used to apply to become a naturalized citizen? Form N-200, Petition for Naturalization; N-400, Application for Naturalization; Social Security Card; or FD-258.

What INS form is used to apply? It has to be N-400, Application for Naturalization. How brilliant do you have to be to figure that one out? Number 20 asks, Which of these contain three rights or freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights? I am not going to read them all, but it is the second one: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion. They have them so intermixed that it is obvious.

I went to the website that listed all 100 questions, and it was pitiful. Remember, these 20 were some of the more difficult ones? Let me tell you what the first question was on this website of 100 questions. The first question was, "What are the colors of our flag?" Now let me ask you a question: How important is it for an immigrant to know the colors of our flag? They did not ask, "What do the colors represent?" or "What did President George Washington say concerning the colors of the flag?" No, just, "What are the colors of the flag?"

Something is wrong in this country. My question is, have you figured it out? Let me point out that even an illegal alien, not counting the legal immigrants, but even an illegal alien, once he gets here to this country, will qualify for food stamps, WIC, housing subsidies, utility grants, welfare, Medicaid, educational grants, free hospital, medical, and dental care, free education for the children, and a host of other benefits, all at taxpayers' expense.

What did God mean when He said, "There shall be one law for you and the stranger"? Look in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 8. I could quote this verse, but I do want you to see it. Remember, there is one law for him that is born in the land and for the stranger that sojourns among you. God says, "But if any provide

not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he denied the faith, he is worse than an infidel." What does that mean?

An immigrant who comes over here, who will not work or provide for his own, and wants to live on welfare, needs to be kicked out of the country. The Bible says in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, "This we commanded you, that any would not work, neither should he eat." God's law says that if you come over here to live off somebody else, you are violating His law. If you will not live according to His law, then you are not welcome in this land. You cannot embrace the law of God without embracing all of it.

When immigrants really started coming into this country, especially during the Irish potato famine in the 1800s, Irishmen came over by the thousands. Irish people are usually predominantly Roman Catholic, but the Irish people who came during that period, and still are, along with their descendants, are predominantly Presbyterian and Baptist. Do you know why? Presbyterian and Baptist missionaries met them at the dock, taught them our faith, taught them our culture, and taught them how to work and assimilate into society.

The point is this: Something is wrong when anyone can slip into this country and demand that we support them and their family. Something is wrong when anyone can come into this country legally and still demand that we support them and their family. God says there is to be one law for you and the stranger. That excludes multiculturalism, multireligiousism, pluralism, and political correctness. It means that God's law is to govern. Until we come back to His law, we are going to have more trouble than you can shake a stick at.

Tighten your seatbelts, because judgment is coming if we do not repent as a nation and as a people.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us and speak to our hearts. Help us, Lord, to understand that Your word is truth and Your law is accurate. It resolves all our problems if we would simply obey it. Help us, Lord; deliver us. In Christ's name we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Principles of Deliverance - 3

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Judges chapter 6. We are continuing the series on principles of deliverance from the life of Gideon. Basically, God finds a man. Judges 6, verse 11: "And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? Where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

Review of Previous Points

We have looked at two points previously. First, the preparation for deliverance: God always strips us of our pride, haughtiness, self-confidence, and self-ability. He prepares us to understand that we cannot save or deliver ourselves. Therefore, if we are ever delivered, we must be delivered by the grace and power of God.

Second is the procedure in deliverance. When God prepared the people, He sent them a preacher, as the Bible says in verse 8. What did the preacher do? First, he reminded them of the goodness, greatness, and mercy of God. Secondly, he reminded them of their wickedness and rebellion against God. He did this to encourage confidence in God, because if God delivered them in times past, certainly He will be the one who delivers us now and in the future.

The Person of Deliverance

On the other hand, God also intensifies and magnifies their wickedness and rebellion against such a loving Heavenly Father. Therefore, whenever God prepares people for deliverance, He not only strips them of themselves and their self-confidence; He also shows them His grace and mercy and gives them repentance and faith.

It is necessary, therefore, to send a preacher. The Bible says in Romans 10:17, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" and "faith cometh by hearing," by the preaching of the Word of God. Acts 5 tells us that God gives the gift of repentance. The procedure is this: God always sends a preacher, and the preacher always magnifies God and shows man his sin and rebellion against God.

The Person of Deliverance: God Uses a Man

Now we come to the third point: the person of deliverance. In this passage, God finds His deliverer in the person of Gideon. It is true that God Himself is the deliverer, but He is pleased to use means, and He is always pleased to use a man. Verse 11 says, "There came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites."

When it came time for God to deliver His people from bondage and tyranny, He did not send a politician, congressman, president, committee, or political party. He sent a man. Someone has rightly said, paraphrasing John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He did not send a committee.” A committee certainly would have messed things up.

When God chooses to deliver His people, He always chooses a man. It does not matter whether it is Moses, Samuel, Samson, Gideon, or Christ; He is always pleased to send a man. The names in this passage also foreshadow Jesus Christ and His great work of deliverance. Gideon’s father was named Joash, which literally means “given by the Lord”—given by the Lord.

When you hear that, you cannot help but think, first of all, of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." And how about 1 John 4 and verse 10? "Herein is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins." The very name Joash means "given by the Lord."

Joash is an Abiezrite. The word Abiezrite simply means that he was a descendant of the family of Abiezer, who was Joseph's son or a descendant of Joseph's son Manasseh. The word Abiezrite literally means "my father is help." Joash means "given by the Lord"; Abiezrite means "my father's help."

Over and over as you study the life of Christ, what was He constantly doing? Communing with His Father and praying to His Father. And what did He say? "I can do nothing of myself. Whatsoever I see the Father do, that I do likewise."

When you come to Gideon's name, the word Gideon literally means "hewer." When you look at the word Midianites, the enemy there, the word Midian means "strife." So Gideon is a hewer down of strife. Put it all together. Here you have someone who is given by the Lord, whose father is help, who hews down strife. Can you not see a picture of Jesus Christ there?

One should automatically think of 1 John 3 and verse 8, where the Bible says, "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." As Gideon hewed down the

statues of Baal and Asherah, Jesus Christ, the true Gideon, hewed down sin and Satan.

When the angel of the Lord came to Gideon, what was Gideon doing? He was threshing wheat by the winepress. Gideon was not seeking the position or office of a deliverer. He was simply going about his daily business, trying to stay alive. He was not endeavoring to recruit an army or raise a militia; he was threshing wheat. It was God who sought out Gideon, initiated the contact, and arranged the encounter. Usually the men God calls for specific tasks are not looking for the work He singles them out to accomplish.

Moses was a shepherd on the backside of the desert. David was a keeper of sheep. Saul of Tarsus was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians. Peter, James, and John were fishermen. None of these people were looking for the office to which God called them. They were simply going about their business. It is God who chooses ordinary men to do extraordinary things. It is God who calls them, selects them, empowers them, and makes them great.

One of my favorite verses is found in Mark 3:13, speaking about Jesus: “And He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him.” The next verse says, “And He ordained twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach the gospel.” Note what our Lord did: He went into a mountain and called to Him whom He would.

That is exactly what you find in the life of Gideon. God comes to Gideon, calls him, and finds him. This week and next week, I want to look at some characteristics in the life of Gideon. Any man whom God uses today or in the future will have these same characteristics in his life.

Gideon's Prudence and Practicality

What does that mean? If we know the Scripture, we ought to be able to discern whether someone is really called of God to do a work. I have heard many voices in this world, and I have heard people say, “Follow me.” But we are to follow no one further than they follow Jesus Christ. If someone does not have the characteristics we find in

the Bible, you can mark it down: God never called him to be a deliverer.

What were the characteristics in Gideon's life? First, Gideon was a prudent and practical man. He was doing everything necessary to save his life and the life of his family. He was threshing wheat secretly, hiding it from the Midianites. Normally, one threshes wheat on the mountaintop, out in the open, because the wheat is thrown up and the wind separates the chaff from the wheat. If it is done below the mountain, where the wind is not blowing, it requires additional work.

Why was he doing it behind the winepress? Because he did not want the Midianites to come and steal it and take it from his family. Gideon was not a coward. He was merely exercising common sense as well as being biblical.

The Bible says in Proverbs 27:12, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." Now what does God say a prudent man does? A prudent man foresees the evil and hides himself; he gets out of the way. But the simple pass on, and they are punished. Proverbs 28:12 says, "When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden."

Stop and think about that. Why will a man be hidden when the wicked rise? Because the wicked are notorious thieves and notorious for their injustices, and so a man hides himself. The same passage, Proverbs 28:28, tells us, "When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase." So what was Gideon doing? He was hiding behind the winepress, not because he was a coward, but because of biblical principles.

He was doing everything that he could, acting wisely, practically, and prudently. He was doing everything he could to save his substance from being stolen by the Midianites. That is not cowardice; that is prudence and practicality.

I want you to note something that is very applicable in our day and time. Gideon was not a visionary. What do I mean by that? Gideon was not a visionary in the sense that he was not just simply sitting back looking forward to better times. Nor was he waiting for a

governmental handout or for someone to come along and do the work for him. Gideon undertook the menial, difficult, laborious work himself. He was willing to do that which was low and menial.

Another aspect shows that he was not a coward, but bold and brave. Imagine what would have happened if the Midianites had caught him threshing his wheat and hiding his substance from them. Not only would everything have been stolen, but he probably would have been executed as well. Gideon himself was protecting his family, saying, "Look, I'll take care of this."

“I'm willing to face the consequences, and you will not have to do that.” Whenever God chooses a man to be a deliverer, that man will be practical. He will be able to use whatever God puts before him. He will not shun his duties or obligations, nor consider himself above menial or dangerous work. He will be willing to say, “This is the way; come, let us walk in it.” He will be willing to do it himself.

You look at most of our leaders today. They’re willing for your children to go out and die, but they’re not willing for their children to go out and die. They’re willing for you to die, but they’re not willing to die themselves. The easy way to stop all wars is to make it absolutely mandatory that leaders have to fight first. The first people on the battlefront would be the president, his cabinet, and Congress. Wouldn’t that be wonderful?

You never find that. Gideon was a man who was prudent and practical. He was willing to do that which had to be done. General Robert E. Lee said it like this: “A Christian is one who will do his duty in all things. And he will never do less than his duty.” So what is the characteristic of a deliverer? First of all, he is prudent and practical.

Gideon's Discernment and Perception

Secondly, Gideon was perceptive and discerning. Look in verse 12: “And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.” What a greeting. But look what he says: “And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?” “And where be all these miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord

bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

Gideon has been greatly criticized, especially by some people who have not studied his life or understood the principles of hermeneutics. I would be the first to admit that Gideon was not perfect. But in spite of whatever faults he had, he was a man greatly used of God. When God hides His face, you can understand verses 12 and 13 of Judges chapter 6. Usually, we are able to perceive God even in our chastisements.

Gideon is saluted by the angel: "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." What a great salutation. How does Gideon respond? Look at verse 13: "Gideon said, O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all these miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

When the angel saluted him, Gideon did not whine or complain. He did not endeavor to deal with the symptoms. He went straight to the heart of the matter. He correctly discerned that the reason Israel was in the mess it was in was because the Lord was not among them. He was saying, "If the Lord is among us, where are all of His miracles that we have heard about? Where is His power? Where is His deliverance?"

Hold Judges 6, but look back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 31. I read this passage to you when I dealt with when God hides His face. Look at verse 17, and I can assure you that Gideon aptly understood it. That is why he said what he did to the angel. God says: "Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?"

What was Gideon saying? When the angel said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor," he responded, "If God is with me, if God is with my people, if God is with our country, where then are all the miracles? Where are all the powers? If God is with us, why are we

in the mess that we are in?" No, he said, "The reason we are in the mess that we are in is the Lord has forsaken us," and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

Gideon did not blame Israel's problems on defective foreign policies, failed economic programs, a lack of governmental welfare, unmanageable immigration policies, or a host of other things.

He said, "No, no, no. It's not those things. The reason we're in the mess that we're in is God has sold us into the hands of our enemies." Say what you will, Gideon understood that the problem primarily was a spiritual problem. Gideon had more discernment and perception than all of our politicians put together. At least he knew the root of the problem. And the root of the problem is always a spiritual problem.

His reasoning was very simple. He asked, "What has happened to us? Why are we in the mess that we're in? Where are all of God's miracles and deliverances?" He rightly concluded, "We're not experiencing those miracles and deliverances because of our sins and rebellion. God has sold us into bondage. And the only way we'll ever have the grace and mercy of God is through repentance, restitution, and restoration."

Let me say it very poignantly: just like God will not use an imprudent and unpractical man, God is not going to use an undiscerning and unperceptive man. Why? Because he cannot discern and perceive spiritual realities. If you do not know the root of the problem, the only thing you can do is treat the symptoms. It takes discernment and perception to see through all the symptoms and go to the root of the problem.

When I go to a doctor, I do not want him to say, "Oh, you have a headache? Let me give you a cup of aspirin." I want him to tell me why I have a headache and what is causing it. Let us deal with the root of the problem and not the symptoms. When God calls a man, He always makes sure that he is discerning and perceptive.

Gideon's Divine Call and Sending

There was another characteristic in Gideon's life, found in verse 14. Gideon was called and sent: "And the Lord looked upon him, and

said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" One of the biggest causes of failure in the ministry is that many have never been called or sent by God. Without a divine call, all you have is the arm of the flesh.

King Hezekiah encouraged his people against the king of Assyria. In 2 Chronicles 32:7-8 he said, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us. Jeremiah 17:5 says, "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Verse 7 declares, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, but blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord.

Go back to Judges chapter 6. What did God do for Gideon? God specifically called him, and God specifically sent him. Without those two qualifications, we are absolutely doomed for failure. You and I cannot accomplish anything without being called and sent by God.

Without getting into this further at present, what we have in this passage is, in reality, a Christophany. A Christophany is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ in the Old Testament: He appears in the flesh before He was ever made flesh in the New Testament. The Bible says, specifically in verse 14, "...and the Lord looked upon him." The word "looked" is very important. It means to look, to regard with favor, to regard kindly. In other words, when the Lord looked upon Gideon, the Lord was highly regarding and highly favoring him.

Gideon was being given a commission. The Bible says, "And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" The word "might" refers not only to human strength, but also to divine strength. In the salutation, the angel had said, "The Lord is

with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Then, in verse 14, the Lord says, "Go in this thy might." What might is it? Is it merely Gideon's might? No, it is the might and mighty power of God. The Lord is with thee. Special calling involves special power and special gifts.

Whomever God calls, He qualifies; and whomever He qualifies, He empowers. Gideon was not merely prudent and practical, nor merely discerning and perceptive. He had been specifically called and sent by God. God assured him that he would be victorious: "And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee." I love this assurance. "And thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Whenever God sends someone, that person will not fail. Whatever He commissions that person to do will be accomplished because that person has God's name, power, and might. Gideon, therefore, was specifically called and sent of God.

Consider our situation. We are in a mess in this country; I do not have to argue that. How will we get out of it? We will not, unless God is pleased to deliver us. When God is pleased to deliver us, He will always send a deliverer. He will use a man, and that man will be prudent and practical, discerning and perceptive, called and sent of God, and specifically commissioned by God to accomplish the particular task. When God sends, the mission cannot fail.

Did Israel have to remain in Egypt when God sent Moses? No. Did the children of Israel have to remain on the other side of Jordan when God sent Joshua? No. Whenever God specifically calls and sends someone to accomplish a mission, He empowers and enables that person to accomplish it. Therefore, whenever someone says, "Follow me and I'll deliver you," you had better look for certain characteristics in his life.

One of the most important questions is whether he has been specifically called and sent by God for that task. After the Lord looked upon Gideon, He said, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" Gideon responded, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel?"

Gideon's Meekness and Humility

“Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” Gideon was meek and humble. He was practical and prudent, discerning and perceptive, called and sent by God, and now meek and humble. He was saying, “My family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house. Why in the world would you even consider using me?”

The word “poor” can refer to financial poorness, but it can also mean weak, lean, or small. Gideon may have considered himself poor, but in verse 27 we read, “Then Gideon took ten men of his servants.” I do not know how many servants he had, but I would like to have ten. He took ten of his servants. Then, as verse 28 records—and I will deal with this next week—“when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it.”

“And the second bullock was offered upon it,” and so forth. In verse 27, Gideon feared his father’s household. It was a very large household; we do not know how many men were in it. Look back at verse 25: “It came to pass the same night that the Lord said unto him, Take thy father’s young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it.”

They were financially well off enough to have their own private altar to Baal and to Ashtaroth. Evidently, this was on public land, though it may have been private land. Joash had built it, and therefore the men of the city worshipped there, according to verse 28. So when Gideon says he is poor, we must put that into perspective. Perhaps they were not as well off as they had been because of the Midianites. Or he could mean, “My family is lean and small in Manasseh,” even though they might have had plenty of money.

When he said, “I am the least in my father’s house,” in verse 15, the Hebrew word refers to his being the youngest. That word is translated “younger,” “least,” “youngest,” “little one,” and “small one.” It can also refer to being insignificant. Gideon was saying, “My family is poor, I am the youngest, and I am insignificant.” He viewed

himself as unworthy of this calling because of the smallness and leanness of his family and his personal insignificance as the youngest.

In Old Testament times, opportunities and responsibilities usually fell to the eldest of the family, not the youngest. Joseph, Jacob, David, and Gideon were exceptions to the rule. There was a patriarchal order, and Gideon knew it. For the oldest son to be passed over and this opportunity to come to the youngest, Gideon's attitude was, "Who am I? I do not deserve this opportunity. My family is poor, I am insignificant, and I am the youngest." Yet the Lord told Gideon, "I've sent you. I've empowered you. I'm with you."

"You will smite the Midianites as one man." What was Gideon's attitude? It was not, "Bring it on. I'll show them. I'll give them some shock and awe." Gideon's attitude was, "Who am I? I don't deserve this." There was no braggadociousness, haughtiness, arrogance, pride, or high-minded spirit in him. He was simply meek and humble.

Read through Scripture, and you will find that the men God has always used have been meek and humble men. One of the greatest deliverers in the Bible was Moses. Look at what God did through Moses in Egypt: the plagues, signs, wonders, marvels, and miracles. You stand in awe at the greatness of that deliverance, at how God parted the Red Sea. The children of Israel walked across on dry ground, and Moses raised his rod; the waters came back in and drowned Pharaoh and his host. Here was a great, tremendous deliverance. Surely, somewhere in Moses, there must have been a little pride saying, "We did it, God. We did it."

Biblical Examples of Meek Leaders

Yet when you come to Numbers 12:3, Moses is called the meekest man on earth. There was no pride or arrogance, only humility and meekness: the thought that God would use me.

Consider David, the mighty warrior. When he came into town, the women sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." David was the young boy who slew Goliath, using a rock and a sling, and then taking the giant's own sword and cutting his

head off. He killed thousands of the Lord's enemies. Surely there must have been some pride and arrogance in David's heart. David even wanted to build a house for the Lord, but the Lord sent Nathan to tell him that he would not build the house; instead, the Lord would build him a house and establish his kingdom. "Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"

"Lord, who am I that You would do this for me?" There are no words of exaltation, personal achievement, or self-promotion—no claim that he was finally receiving the recognition he deserved. David was absolutely amazed and stupefied that God would even consider doing anything for him.

Joshua, the conqueror of Canaan and successor of Moses, the military genius, was confronted by the captain of the host of the Lord in Joshua chapter 5. Joshua saw him standing there with his sword drawn and asked bravely, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" The angel of the Lord answered, "Neither; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." He commanded, "Take off thy shoes, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy."

What did Joshua, the mighty military genius, do? He fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, saying, "What saith my Lord unto his servant?" Joshua did not say, "Let me tell You my battle plans. Let me tell You how I have this figured out, or what I believe we ought to do." He simply said, "Lord, what is Your word to Your servant? You tell me and I will obey."

There is a difference between men who have been mightily used of God in times past and men today who claim to be God's deliverers. Consider Elisha, the mighty miracle worker who raised the dead, healed the sick, and subdued armies. He subdued the Syrian army by himself, praying that God would smite them with blindness, and God did so. He performed twice as many miracles as Elijah. Yet throughout his ministry, Elisha was known as the man who poured water upon the hands of Elijah. He never got away from that. He remained Elijah's servant as long as Elijah lived, waiting on him. Elisha had a servant's heart; throughout his entire ministry, he was meek and humble.

Consider Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee who became the mighty Apostle Paul and was used of God to convert thousands. Paul wrote most of the New Testament—about fourteen of its twenty-seven books, if Hebrews is included, though that is debatable. Remember, Paul had been mightily used of God, but he said in 1 Corinthians 15:9–10, “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.”

Where is all the bragging? Where is all the haughtiness and high-mindedness? It was true that God used Paul, but Paul said, "I am the least of all the apostles. I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle. Why? I persecuted the church of God." When Paul listed his pedigree in Philippians chapter 3, when he spoke of being a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, circumcised the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, and on down through the list, he ended with this:

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Paul's attitude was, "I have nothing, I am nothing, I can do nothing. All I have and all I want is Jesus Christ."

Historical Example: Robert E. Lee

That is a meek and humble spirit. Let me give you one more illustration. One of the greatest, meekest, and most humble leaders of the last couple of hundred years was General Robert E. Lee. General Lee was known for his Christianity, kindness, graciousness, and meekness. Many people do not know the genealogy of the Lee family. General Lee had an ancestor, Lancelot Lee, who fought in the Battle of Hastings in 1066 under the banner of William the Conqueror. He had another ancestor, Lionel Lee, who won honors at the Siege of Acre in Jerusalem with Richard the Lionhearted in 1192, in the Third Crusade.

In fact, Lionel's armor is still on display today in the Tower of London. On Lee's maternal side, the blood of Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland and friend of William Wallace, ran in his veins. When

General Lee was presented with a project to publish and exploit his ancestry, he already knew about his ancestry and had vowed not to dishonor his ancestors. He replied, "I think the money had better be appropriated to relieve the poor."

It did not matter that he could go all the way back. Lee said, "I'd rather use that money to relieve the poor than to brag about my ancestors." The point is simple: We need to beware of arrogant, boastful, self-confident leaders who declare what they are going to accomplish. Even the wicked sometimes have enough sense to recognize this principle. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 20.

Warning Against Arrogant Leaders

Ahab was the most wicked, vile king in Israel, though other kings were wicked and vile as well. When Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, threatened Ahab and Israel, he sent this message: “And Ben-Hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.” The king of Syria was saying, “Look, we’ve got enough people.” In other words, “We’re going to wipe you out. We’re going to stomp you in the ground.”

Look what wicked Ahab answered: “And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.” Ahab said, “Listen, buddy, there’s a difference between starting a war and finishing a war.” We would say, “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.” It is easy to put on that armament; it is not so easy to take it off if you have been defeated.

The Bible teaches us, “A man’s pride shall bring him low.” Everyone here probably can quote Psalm 127:1: “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” Do you remember Proverbs 21:31? “The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord.” Psalm 33:17 says, “An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.”

What is Scripture saying? Neither man, his might, nor machinery can deliver. Only God alone can deliver. That is why Psalm 118:8-9

says, “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” Throughout the Bible, the men God used were prudent and practical, discerning and perceptive, called and sent, and meek and humble.

Applications and Conclusion

Let me make three applications. First, deliverance does not depend upon wealth and supplies. Gideon had neither. Deliverance depends upon God alone—His strength, His might, His mercy, and His grace. I have heard men for years complain that there is not enough money to finance a movement to restore America. Let me tell you: you do not need money to restore America. You can have all the money in the world, and America still would not be restored apart from God. It is not money that we need; it is mercy that we need.

Second, pride, ambition, arrogance, haughtiness, self-serving and self-promoting attitudes and schemes will never, ever work in delivering a people. You know why? God is not going to share His glory with another. I have said this before, and I am going to say it again: there is really only one way to be delivered, and that is God's way. You will either be delivered God's way, or you will not be delivered at all. When proud, arrogant, haughty, boastful, braggadocious men bring their schemes, all they can do is condemn a people; they can never deliver a people.

You and I need to acquire these characteristics and virtues in our lives. We need to learn to be prudent and practical, discerning and perceptive. It is true that only God can call and send us, but we also need to learn to be meek and humble. I had rather have these attributes and characteristics in my life and be prepared to be used by God and never be used by God than to not have them and not be used of God.

If those attitudes are in our lives, God will use us. Let me show you why. In 2 Chronicles 16:9, the Bible says, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." What is God doing? God is looking for men and women whose hearts are perfect toward Him, that He may show Himself strong in them. This is an amazing truth.

If you develop these godly characteristics and virtues in your life, I can assure you that sooner or later you will be called and sent by God to do something. God is looking for men and women who keep their heart, that He might do something glorious and gracious and mighty through them.

Let us pray. Father, we do ask that You help us. Thank You, Lord, for all of Your grace to us. Lord, I pray that You would make us meek and humble, discerning and perceptive, prudent and practical, that we may be, in some areas, called and sent by Thee. Give us grace, Lord, to serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Principles of Deliverance - 4

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 6:16-23 (KJV)

The message you are about to hear was produced by Dominion Ministry. If you would like to support this ministry by becoming a sermon partner or obtain additional high-resolution CDs, DVDs, or MP3s featuring the teaching of Pastor John Weaver, please visit the Dominion Ministry website at www.dominion.org, www.dominionministry.com. This ministry is completely supported by donations, and it is through those donations that we are able to provide sermons for sermonaudio.com. Please visit our website at www.dominionministry.com to subscribe or make your donation today. Thank you. We're coming today to part four on principles of deliverance. And I will take just a few moments to review, but today we're going to read from Judges chapter 6 and verses 16 through 23. Judges chapter 6, verses 16 through 23.

Here's the story of Gideon. "And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my

present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again."

"And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face."

Review of Previous Messages

"And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites."

We have been considering the principles of judgment, and the very first message concerned the preparation, or principles, of deliverance. The first message was the preparation for deliverance and how God prepares His people by stripping them of their self-ability, self-confidence, and trust in themselves. Secondly, the message concerned the procedure in deliverance: how God sent a preacher, and that preacher declared to the people the goodness and greatness of God, and at the same time their own sin, rebellion, and wickedness. There is a very obvious reason for that: you are never ever going to turn to God until you see your own wickedness and your own inability to save or deliver yourself.

The third message concerned the person of deliverance, and I began showing some characteristics, or virtues, in the life of the man God chose to use as a deliverer. That is where we ended, and I am continuing that thought today. Whenever you read about Gideon, it is impossible not to think of John 1:6, where God said concerning John the Baptist, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was

John." Pause and consider what God said: "There was a man." In other words, God looked at John the Baptist and said, "There was a man." The same concept applies to Gideon. There was a man. When God found Gideon, He found a man.

Remember, when we looked at these characteristics, I pointed out at least four things. First of all, Gideon was prudent and practical. When God came to him, he was beating out the grain behind the winepress. He was trying to preserve everything that he could and protect everything that he had.

Second, he was perceptive and discerning. He understood that the mess the country was in resulted from their sins and rebellion, and that God had sold them into the hands of their enemies. In other words, he understood that the problem, down at its very root, was spiritual.

Thirdly, we found out that Gideon was called and sent. God specifically called him for a task and sent him to accomplish it. And then, fourthly, as I pointed out in verse 15, he was meek and humble. All through the Bible, it is amazing how meek the men God uses really are. For instance, Moses was called the meekest man on earth. David, although he had slain his thousands and ten thousands, yet when it came to God building him a house, asked, "Who am I, and what is my father's house?" Then the apostle Paul said that he was not even worthy to be called an apostle. He was the least of all the apostles. Why? Because he had persecuted the church of God. God used these men, and every one of them was meek and humble.

Today we are going to continue and consider at least two more virtues under one point concerning Gideon: Gideon was believing and bold.

Gideon: Believing and Bold

Whenever God uses men, listen carefully, you can mark it down that those men will have the same virtues or the same characteristics in their lives. Why? Because God is immutable; God does not change. What He sees in one man and what He gives one man in order to prepare him to be a deliverer, He does for any other man that He chooses and calls for the same task.

We are going to look particularly at verses 16 through 23, at how Gideon was believing and bold. Let me ask you this question: Why should he not be believing and bold? Just stop and think about this. Had not the angel approached him and said to him, "Hail, thou mighty man of valor"? Was Gideon not specifically told by the angel, "The Lord is with thee"? He had already been informed by the angel that he was a man of might, and that he was particularly sent and called by God. Finally, he was told that he would smite the Midianites as one man.

After he had been told all of that, in light of these truths, verse 17 says that he said unto the angel, "If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me."

Gideon's Request for a Sign

Gideon was not yet clear exactly as to who this messenger was. He did not know if he was simply a messenger of God, an angel, or a man. He certainly believed everything the angel had said, especially concerning his call and mission. Yet now he asks for a confirmation—not so much for Gideon's sake, but also that he might be able to satisfy others.

Do you remember when God called Moses? Moses was on the backside of the desert, and God said, "Art thou, Moses, I want you to go back to Egypt and I want you to tell them that I AM has sent you to deliver them." What did Moses ask? "Who shall I say sent me? How will they believe? How can I make them believe?" There had to be some authentication and validation. Gideon had the same concern Moses had.

It was not merely that Gideon wanted proof that God had called him. Gideon knew that. But how was he going to convey that to the other individuals he would need? Gideon was seeking a sign, but not as the Pharisees sought signs—out of curiosity or unbelief. He sought further confirmation concerning his call to the work and that the call was from God.

A good cause, a good calling, and a good conscience will always make a good courage, all of which are absolutely essential in the life of a good soldier. Gideon wanted not only a good cause, calling, and

conscience, but also good courage. He wanted to be able to say, “Here I know that God has sent me.”

A remarkable thing happens in verse 18. Gideon says to the angel, “Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.”

The Offering and the Consuming Fire

As I read this passage, I am absolutely struck, dumbfounded in one sense of the word. Gideon did not yet perceive who this angel really was, and yet he asked him to wait until he came and brought a present and set it before him.

You have to remember that these were trying times. Gideon was hiding what little he had so that it would not be stolen from him. Yet, although Gideon probably had very little, he was not selfish. He was willing to be hospitable and to share with this stranger. The remarkable thing in this verse is that he asked the angel of the Lord, "I pray thee, do not depart hence until I come and set my present before thee." And the angel of the Lord said, "I will wait. I'll tarry until thou come again."

Who was the angel of the Lord? This was a Christophany. A Christophany is the pre-incarnate appearing of Christ in the Old Testament, before He was ever made flesh in the New Testament. This is the same Christ who appeared to Joshua and to Moses.

The amazing thing was not merely that Gideon was willing to share, but that the Lord was willing to wait. Consider what a remarkable condescension that was: the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth waiting upon a man. He already knew what Gideon was going to do, what he was going to bring, what his motives were, and what was in his heart. Yet He waited. He said, "I'll wait for you."

Gideon brought his offering, which had undoubtedly been roasted. The Bible says that he made ready a kid and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour; the flesh he put in a basket, probably roasted, and the broth in a pot. He brought it out unto him under the oak and presented it to him. When you say roasted flesh, you know, we talk about shish kebabs. That is probably what it was. He had

broth for him to drink, and some in a basket—probably intending to give him something to eat and drink immediately and something to take with him. He was being more than hospitable, willing to care for this stranger's needs. But when Gideon brought the offering out, the angel instructed him to put it on the rock.

Look at verse 20: “And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.”

Instead of this offering being eaten, as Gideon would suppose, it is laid out on a rock. When the angel touches it with the end of the staff, it is immediately consumed, and then the angel disappears.

Stop and think about this. The Bible tells us that the flesh and unleavened cakes were to be laid upon a rock. What is significant about the rock? I hope you know that the rock is one of the names of God in the Bible. He is the Rock. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 32, “His ways are perfect, just and right is He.”

Hold Judges chapter 6 and turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 4. You remember how Moses smote the rock, and water came out of it to give drink to the Israelites in the desert? Notice what 1 Corinthians 10:4 says: “And they did all drink that same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

Gideon brings his offering, and the angel says, “Put it on the rock.” He lays it out; the angel touches it, and fire comes out of the rock and consumes the offering. When Moses touched the rock, water came out for his people. Here is a picture of Jesus Christ and His relationship to His people and to His enemies. To His people, He is our sustainer, our nourisher, our water, and our life. He is the water out of the rock. To His enemies, He is the fire out of the rock. Hebrews 12:29 says concerning God, “Our God is a consuming fire.” To His people, He is the deliverer; to His enemies, He is the destroyer.

When Gideon sees the meat and broth consumed instantaneously and the angel then disappears, a consciousness of sin, helplessness, and unworthiness fills his heart. The Bible says in verse 22, “And when Gideon perceived that it was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.” In other words, Gideon says, “I want to die. I’ve talked to an angel of God. I’ve seen him face to face. Alas, O Lord God!”

Gideon’s Humility and God’s Peace

Whenever any fallen man sees the greatness, the majesty, and the power of Almighty God, his heart is filled with awe and a sense of his own sinfulness, helplessness, and unworthiness. In Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah said, “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord high and lifted up,” and “his train filled the temple.” He saw the seraphim with six wings: with twain they covered their eyes, with twain they covered their feet, and with twain they did fly. They ceased not saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” Isaiah was seeing God in His holiness and righteousness. Then he said, “Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” If God ever shows us even a smidgen of His glory, it will knock us to our faces. We cannot stand a sight of the majesty of God in all of our sinfulness and wickedness.

The same thing occurred in the New Testament. After the miracle of the fishes, when our Lord told the disciples in Luke chapter 5 that they had toiled all night and caught nothing, He said, "Cast your net on the right side." They cast the net and encircled such a great multitude of fishes that their nets were breaking, and the other boats had to come in.

What did Peter do? When he saw it, the Bible says in Luke 5 and verse 8, he fell down on his knees and said to Jesus, "Depart from me, Lord; for I am a sinful man." He had caught a glimpse of the majesty of God and realized his own wickedness. This is exactly what happened to Gideon. Gideon saw a glimpse of God's power, majesty, and righteousness, and said, "Alas, O Lord, I've seen an angel of the Lord face to face," meaning that he thought he was going to die.

God does not use proud, arrogant, haughty, heady, high-minded men. It was necessary that Gideon be humbled. James 4 and verse 6 says, "God resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble." The word "resisteth" means to fight against. God fights against the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. If God's grace is going to assist us, we must be humbled. That is exactly what happened in Judges chapter 6: Gideon is humble.

In verse 22, "And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." God then speaks peace to him: "And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." God did not bring Gideon there, show him His might and power, or accept his offering in order to kill him. Accepting the offering was an express assurance that He was accepting Gideon's person. God was restoring comfort and assurance, saying, "Look, you're not going to die. Peace be unto thee." Gideon was assured of his acceptance before God, and of his mission and its accomplishment.

Gideon is now believing and bold. Why should he not be? The angel has told him all these things. He has seen the angel of the Lord face to face, God has accepted his offering, and he is not going to die. So what did he do in verse 24? He erected a memorial altar to the Lord: “And Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom.” “And to this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.”

The altar was not necessarily something upon which to sacrifice. The sacrifice had already been made upon the rock. It was indeed a memorial altar. The important thing is that he named it Jehovah-shalom. What does that mean? The Lord our peace.

Stop and think with me. Gideon has offered his offering, and it has been accepted. The Lord has expressly said, “Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.” There has been reconciliation, and now there is peace. The Bible tells us that God the Father has spoken peace to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. In Ephesians 2:14, Jesus Christ is explicitly called our peace. In 2 Thessalonians 3:16, the Bible says, “Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means.”

Here is the point: Gideon has effectively been reconciled to God, and peace has been instituted. What does that mean? Reformation must start immediately. You cannot have reformation until there is reconciliation, until there is peace.

God is expecting Gideon to be believing and bold. Ask yourself: Why must Gideon be believing and bold? You can understand being prudent and practical, discerning and perceptive, called and sent, meek and humble. But why must he be believing and bold?

Because you are going to see the work God has cut out for him to accomplish. It will take faith and require boldness. Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please him.” Romans 14:23 says, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” God therefore requires Gideon to be believing and bold. He will not use a man who has no faith or who is unwilling to step out in boldness upon His word. God is going to ask Gideon to do two very important things. What are they? Skip down to verse 25.

The Command to Destroy Baal’s Altar

"And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: and build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down."

Here are the two things that God requires Gideon to do. First, he must overthrow idolatry. He must destroy the established religion of the people. Second, he must restore the true worship of Jehovah. God says, "You build an altar upon this rock"—the one on which he had laid the sacrifice earlier in the angelic visitation—"and then you take that bullock that pulled down the altar of Baal, and you offer him on My altar."

The altar of Baal must be destroyed before the altar of the Lord can be built. Why? God is absolutely sovereign. He is not equal to other gods or on par with them. He is unique. There is no other god, and He will not brook any rivals. Isaiah 42:8 says, "I am the Lord:

that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." God says, "Before you build My altar, you tear down Baal's."

One of the errors of multiculturalism is the reduction or leveling of Christ and Christianity, placing them on an equal footing with other religions. Christianity is not equal to other religions; it is above other religions. Christ is not equal to other gods; He is above other gods. You cannot compare the pagan religions with Christ, nor can you compare the pagan gods with Christ.

God says, "You've got to tear down the idol of Baal and the altar of Baal before you build My altar." A principle of Scripture is being followed here. Why must Gideon first tear down the altar of Baal before he can build the altar of the Lord? At the same time, let me quote the Scriptures.

Amos 5:15 says, “Hate the evil, and love the good.” Notice how God said that: “Hate the evil, and love the good.” You will never love the good until you first hate the evil. Evil must be hated before good can be loved. In the book of Isaiah, chapter 1, verses 16 and 17, God says, “Cease to do evil; learn to do well.” You cannot learn to do well until you cease to do evil. How can you learn to be sober until you cease being a drunkard? How can you learn to be righteous until you cease being unrighteous? How can you learn to be holy until you cease being unholy? That is what He means when He says, “Cease to do evil, and learn to do well.” That is why Psalm 97:10 says, “Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.” Once you understand what the true love of God is, you will hate evil.

Until then, you must understand that you must hate the evil, and then love the good. You must cease to do evil; then you learn to do what is right. Therefore, Baal’s altar must be torn down first.

There are some things that cannot wait. You have to have priorities. God dealt with Gideon that day, and then God came to him that night and said, “Take thy father’s young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal.” There are some things that cannot wait, and one of those things is the destruction of false religion and the establishment of the true religion of Jesus Christ. In verse 25, the account says, “And it came

to pass the same night." The Lord continued, "And cut down the grove that is by it." This was the grove that thy father hath, and it also had to be cut down.

God had appeared to Gideon earlier that day. That same night, God said, "Look, let's get on with the business at hand." Gideon's first mission was to get his own house in order. How could he be a Baal fighter if he allowed Baal in his own home and family? He was sent to destroy the altar of Baal and the idol of Asherah—the grove—that belonged to his father. Evidently, the altar and grove were on his father's property. They had undoubtedly become a public place of worship, because verse 28 says, "And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built." Thus, it was on his father's property, and his father probably owned it; evidently, however, a multitude of people came there and worshipped. Here is a simple truth.

God will never use us to get others right until we are willing to get right ourselves. He will never use us to help other families until we straighten out our own families. Our first priority is to ourselves, then to our families, and then onward to others.

In verse 25, the Lord said unto Gideon, "Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it." How can God command Gideon to take his father's property and destroy it? What about the right to private property? There is a great deal in the Bible concerning private property, and there is a right to private property.

The very word "property" comes from the Latin word proprius, which means literally "belonging to one's own self" or "peculiar to one." So how could God tell Gideon, "You take your father's bullock, and you cut down your father's altar"? There are three answers. The first is found in Psalm 50, beginning with verse 10.

In reality, everything that we have belongs to our Heavenly Father. It is only given to us as stewards. God says, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all

the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." How much in this world actually belongs to God? Every bit of it. Psalm 24 tells us, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Everything belongs to God. God is the creator, the sustainer, the provider, and the protector.

Without Him, all would perish. He alone has absolute title to any and everything in this world. In reality, the property belonged to God.

Secondly, since Gideon was the son and would inherit all things anyhow, practically speaking, the bullock would have belonged to him sooner or later.

Thirdly, we'll see a little bit later that God worked on the father's heart anyhow, so the father agreed with the son, and there was no problem. But you have to understand that God is the absolute ruler of all things in this earth.

The Bullock as a Picture of Christ

Now, Gideon, if you'll look back to verse 25, was specifically commanded to take the second bullock of seven years old. Why that bullock? Why the second bullock of seven years old? Look back in your Bibles to Judges chapter 6 and verse 1: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian how long? Seven years." So this bullock that is seven years old is now to be the sacrifice for their sins. And by the way, if you were to take the time to read Leviticus 4, verses 13 through 21, it was a bullock that God demanded, which was to be sacrificed for national sins.

Now, let me ask you this question: Why was the same bullock to be used to pull down the altar of Baal and then to be sacrificed on God's altar? Because the bullock is a picture of Jesus Christ. What does Jesus Christ do? He destroys the enemy, and He brings praise and worship to the one true and the living God. So it is Jesus Christ that redeems and Jesus Christ that destroys enemies. Let me show

you how these two things are specifically stated in the book of Hebrews, chapter 2, beginning there with verse 14.

What does the Bible say? “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;” Then it continues: “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Now look. What did the bullock do? He pulled down the altar of Baal. He destroyed the enemy. And then he delivered by being a sacrifice to God, which, of course, pictures the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christ delivers His own and destroys His enemies.

"Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night." Gideon took ten of his servants and accomplished the task at night. Why? The answer is explicit: God told him to do it at night, and he did it. Ten servants plus Gideon made eleven people—not very many to fight against an entire household or city.

Gideon’s Boldness and the City’s Reaction

Let me say it plainly: a brave man is not a foolish man. Just because Gideon had been called, sent, and empowered by God did not mean he would run out and act like a fool. God instructs us that even when we are duly called, sent, and empowered by Him, we must use wisdom and discernment.

Verse 27 says, "Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household." The word "feared" does not necessarily imply being afraid in the way we commonly understand it, though it can mean that. Certainly, there must have been some trepidation in Gideon's heart; he had never done this before. He knew he was initiating a war.

The Hebrew word is yare. It can mean to be afraid or to fear, but it can also mean to reverence, honor, or respect. Thus, Gideon may have acted out of respect and reverence for his father. He would not

take his father's property in front of him and then destroy it before him. The word could indicate that as well as fear. Whatever "fear" means here, the job was accomplished. What was the result?

Verse 28 records: “And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.”

What happens after Gideon pulls down the altar of Baal, cuts down the grove, builds the altar of God, and establishes the true worship of God once again?

Naivete would lead us to believe that joy would fill the city. The people should be rejoicing and jumping up and down. The enemy has been destroyed, and the true worship of Jehovah is restored. How wonderful! Isn’t Gideon a marvelous deliverer? Let’s praise him and put him on our shoulders. Give us three cheers for Gideon. Is that what happened? No.

The Cost of Doing Right

I still remember, though I have been preaching for over forty years, when I first started preaching I thought everybody would be so happy to hear what I had to say. They would just fall at my feet. I found out differently. I have been cussed at, fussed at, and run off. What happened when they found that their Baal had been destroyed? They were outraged and insulted, and they were ready to put Gideon to death.

Let's learn one truth very well: You will never please everybody by doing what is right. You will never please everyone by doing what is right and holy. Oftentimes, you will incur the wrath and indignation of the populace for doing that which is right and holy.

How far do you think I would get on a talk show by saying, "God says the sodomites will be put to death"? Can you hear the audience? "That-a-way-to-go, preacher. Yes, sir. Tell them, preach." Is that what they would say? Of course not. They do not want to hear the truth. The unconverted, the hypocrites, and the reprobates will never be satisfied with the pure, unadulterated worship of Jesus Christ. They will howl, scream, and defy that which is right.

So what did the city do? They came together and said, "Who has done this? This was our god. This was our place of worship." It was inquired, and the answer came: "Gideon has done it, the son of Joash." The attack of Gideon upon Baal's altar had a good side to it: it united the family and even gave his father courage.

Joash stepped forward and said, "Whoever fights for Baal, let him be put to death. If Baal is a god, let him fight for himself." What kind of god is he that cannot take care of my son? If he is a god, let him fight against Gideon. Joash called Gideon's name Jerubbaal, meaning, "Let Baal contend"—in other words, "Fight with Gideon, Baal, if you are going to fight."

I do not mind fighting against a dumb idol. What can a dumb idol do? Nothing. But it is not merely the fighting against the dumb idol that upsets people. What really upsets them is the establishment of the sovereignty and supremacy of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself taught that His truth would separate, divide, and even mystify. He said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Jesus did not come to purposely create strife and unrest. But when His truth is preached and proclaimed, and someone believes and embraces it, inevitably there is going to be a separation and a

division. The gospel of Jesus Christ will always separate the wheat from the chaff and the wheat from the tares.

The man that God uses to deliver His people has to be believing and bold. Once he takes on the work of being a deliverer, he will have a multitude of people dead set against him and everything that he does. You cannot please some people by doing what is right. The unbelievers, the reprobates, and the hypocrites will always howl, scream, and fight revival, restitution, and renewal. They do not want it; they want the status quo.

Mark her down: if you study the life of Moses, David, Samuel, Jephthah, or anyone else whom God used, you will find that all of them were practical and prudent, discerning and perceptive, called and sent, humble and meek, and believing and bold. Inevitably, the man whom God uses to deliver His people will be shot at from every corner. Can you imagine what these men went through?

Can you imagine the grace and power God gave them to enable them to endure what they endured and do the job to which God called them? May God make us with all of these characteristics and virtues in our lives, so that He can use us to be His deliverers.

Let us pray. Father, we do ask in the name of Jesus Christ today that You would help us.

Lord, teach us. Fill us indeed with Thy Spirit. Grant us faith and holy boldness. Grant, Lord, that these virtues and characteristics may be in our lives, that we may be used of Thee. We ask for Your mercy and grace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Principles of Deliverance - 5

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 6:33-40 (KJV)

The message you are about to hear was produced by Dominion Ministry. If you would like to support this ministry by becoming a sermon partner or obtain additional high-resolution CDs, DVDs, or MP3s featuring the teaching of Pastor John Weaver, please visit the Dominion Ministry website at www.dominion.org. www.dominionministry.com. This ministry is completely supported by donations and it is through those donations that we are able to provide sermons for sermonaudio.com. Please visit our website at www.dominionministry.com to subscribe or make your donation today. Thank you.

Well, let's open our Bibles to the book of Judges today, Judges chapter 6, Judges chapter 6, and we're continuing our study on principles of deliverance. Judges chapter 6, and today we're going to be reading verses 33 through 40. Judges chapter 6, verses 33 through 40. Notice if you would what the Word of God says. Judges 6, beginning with verse 33: "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together and went over and pitched in the valley of

> Jezreel. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and Abiezer was gathered after him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also was gathered after him, and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and to Naphtali, and they came up to meet them."
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> "And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor. And if the dew be upon the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so, for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will but speak this once. Let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece. Let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night, for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground."

Introduction and Review

As we've looked through this passage of Scripture on principles of deliverance, we've already seen how God prepared a people for deliverance, the procedure that He used, He sent a prophet to them, and how that prophet declared not only the greatness and goodness of God, but also the sins and wickedness and rebellion of the people. And then, thirdly, we saw the person whom God found to use as a deliverer. Every time I think of Gideon, I think of that passage in John 1:6 where he said of John the Baptist, "There was a man." And certainly when you look at Gideon, you could truthfully say there was indeed a man. And I pointed out five things concerning Gideon. The very first truth that we saw was that here was a man who was prudent and practical.

And I explained that in detail. Secondly, he was perceptive and discerning. Thirdly, I pointed out that he was called and sent. And fourthly, that he was meek and humble. And then last week I dealt with the last two virtues. That is, he was believing and bold.

Now, let me just emphasize this again. Anyone that God uses as a deliverer will have these virtues and these characteristics in his life. And he would have to have. You just stop and think about Gideon just for a moment. Here was a man who basically, originally, had to take a stand against his own family, his own people, and even his own nation, in one sense of the word, because of their idolatry. Now certainly God worked it out, and God brought His family around, and God brought the people around, but initially and originally, He had to take a stand against them. And then I pointed out how that as He had to be believing and bold, because there had to be a casting down of idolatry before there could be a building up of the things of God.

Wicked worship of Baal had to be overthrown that the altar of God might be raised up and the true worship would be established. Now, I want you to hold Judges chapter 6, but look in your Bibles, if you would, to the book of Jeremiah chapter 1. And let me just show you what God told Jeremiah. And by the way, this same principle, I believe, applies throughout the Bible as well as throughout time. You remember how God told Gideon to overthrow the altar of Baal and to cut down the grove of Asherah that was by it, and then he was to rebuild the altar of God. Well, in Jeremiah chapter 1 and verse 10, look what God tells Jeremiah.

He says, "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, now look, to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down and to build and to plant." Three times as much tearing down had to be done as building and planting. There is a great work that needs to be done prior to the building up of the things of God.

All that is wicked must be torn down. What has happened thus far? God has prepared the people, proceeded in sending them a prophet, and found the person whom He will use to deliver the people out of bondage. Once again, the altar of Baal has been overthrown, the altar of God has been built, and true worship has been established. Now what? Let us begin by looking in verse 33.

The Enemy Attacks After Reformation

The Bible says, "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel." There is a very important and informative word in verse 33.

See the whole picture. Gideon has been called by God. He has thrown down the altar of Baal, cut down the grove of Asherah, established the worship of God, rebuilt the altar, and sacrificed the bullock exactly as God commanded. The very next verse says, "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel." The important word is "then."

Then, when the Reformation was beginning; then, when everything seemed to be going well; then, when Gideon was riding high—then all hell broke loose.

There is a principle in Scripture: whenever God gives us victories and great successes, when we are riding high, on the mountaintops, and shouting praises to God, it is always then that we are attacked. Why? The enemy will always try to steal the victory God has given us and take back that which God has allowed us to have. Let me show you how this principle works in Scripture. Hold Judges chapter 6, but look back in Exodus chapter 17. There you will see this same exact principle.

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 17:1-8 (KJV)

Biblical Pattern of Attack After Blessing

> “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do you tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is it that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the

> Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee the elders of Israel, and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?"
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> God has sovereignly brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. The blood has been applied. They have been delivered. Now they come where Moses smites the rock. Remember, that rock was Christ. Remember, the water is a picture of the Holy Spirit. So what do we have in Exodus chapter 17? The blood has been applied. Now the Holy Spirit has been given. "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim." The same Amalekites that came in Judges chapter 6: "Then came the Midianites and the Amalekites." Do you see? Here is a wonderful picture of just how the enemy attacks us and when he attacks us many times.
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> You can take the same truth in John chapter 19. You remember there is where our Lord was crucified, and the Bible says a soldier took a spear and pierced his side, and forthwith there came out what? Blood and water. Blood, which is our redemption, and water, which of course is a symbol and type of the Holy Spirit. What happened? Fifty days later—and by the way, the scripture says, "Now when the day of Pentecost was fully come," and the word Pentecost means fifty—what happened?

The Holy Spirit descended upon those disciples in the upper room. In Acts chapter 2, the Spirit of God descends after redemption has been given. There is a mighty awakening, revival, and blessing, and 3,000 are added to the people of God. When you get to Acts chapter 3, what comes in? Persecution. Immediately after redemption, the giving of God's blessing, and power, there is always persecution.

When God blesses in an unusual way, you are usually going to be attacked in an unusual way, because the enemy will try to steal and take back the victory that God has given you.

Now, look back in Judges chapter 6, verse 33: "Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel." They all came together. The Midianites and the Amalekites historically had been the enemies of God's people. Judges 6, verses 3 through 5, explains why they came: "And so it was that when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up and the Amalekites and the children of the east, even they came up against them. And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou comest to Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came up as grasshoppers for multitude. For both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land to destroy it."

Why were the Amalekites there? For destruction and for subjugation. Gideon has destroyed the altar of Baal and established the altar of God. Then come the Midianites and the Amalekites.

Why did they assemble? It could be that they had heard what Gideon had done and were simply preparing themselves in case there was an uprising against them. But it also could be that it was the time of year when they gathered to invade the land, so they could steal and take everything from the Israelites. Regardless of what called them there, they were already assembled, had made their alliances, and were ready to embark on their mission of destruction.

You remember when Gideon overthrew Baal's altar. The men of the city wanted Gideon put to death, and Gideon's father renamed him. He called him Jerob Baal, which means "let Baal contend." In other words, if Baal is a god, then let Baal fight against Gideon. Remember what the word Gideon means? It means "hewer" or "feller." Just as Gideon had hewn down the altar of Baal and felled the grove of Asherah, God now brought him the Midianites and the Amalekites, that he might cut them down as well.

Look back in your Bibles to Judges 6, verse 33: "Then all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel." Now watch verse 34: "But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and Abiezer was gathered unto him."

The Spirit of the Lord Empowers Gideon

One of the most important truths in this chapter is found in verse 34. The Bible says, "But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon." Let me explain it like this. Gideon was supernaturally endowed with wisdom and energy commensurate with the magnitude of the danger and the difficulties of his position.

The Hebrew word is very descriptive. Literally, it means that the Spirit descended upon him, laid around him, and clothed him as a coat of mail, thus making Gideon basically invincible and invulnerable in the spirit and in the power of his might. Mark it down and listen carefully: those whom God calls, He qualifies. Those whom God calls, He equips. Those whom God calls, He empowers. No man can stand, and no enemy can stand, against the man whom God has called and sent in the business of deliverance.

Let me spell it out to you. If God has sent a deliverer, there will be a deliverance. Stop and think about this. I do not care which book you go to in the Bible. I do not care if you discuss Moses, Joshua, David, Samuel, or any man whom God sent for deliverance. Here is my question: Did any of them ever fail? No, not one. God sent them for deliverance, and they always succeeded.

Called and Sent Deliverers Never Fail

We can deduce a principle from Scripture: those who claim to be deliverers but fail have never been called and sent by God. Now listen to me. Many claim the office of deliverer. Many offer themselves as leaders. Many announce themselves as God's man for the hour, yet they have no success in deliverance. What is the answer? God never sent them. God never called them.

Remember the Republican contract with America that was going to save America? Guess what? It never saved America. Remember

the Democratic platforms? They never saved America. Here are politicians and political parties saying, "We are the Savior, we are the deliverer," yet inevitably and invariably they fail and drag us deeper into oppression, tyranny, and misery. Mark it down: God never called them, and God never sent them.

There was a very wise man in the Bible who understood this principle. His name was Gamaliel. Hold Judges 6, but turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter 5. I will show you his reasoning. Look in Acts chapter 5, and begin reading at verse 34. You remember how the rulers were against the disciples of Christ, and they had already had them beaten and thrown into jail.

Gamaliel's Principle and Divine Sovereignty

In Acts 5, beginning with verse 34, they were discussing what they should do with the disciples. Then Gamaliel, a Pharisee and doctor of the law, commanded that the apostles be put forth for a little space—in other words, out of their hearing range. He said, “Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.” He gave them historical examples. Theudas had boasted himself to be somebody, and about four hundred men joined themselves to him; but he was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and brought to nought. After him rose Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, who drew away many people. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. Gamaliel then said, “Refrain from these men, and let them alone. For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

What was Gamaliel saying? If it is somebody like Theudas or Judas, it will run its course. If it is just a man, it will ultimately fail. But if God is in it, it will not fail; and if you attack it, you will find yourselves fighting against God. God is unstoppable.

Isaiah 46:10 says, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” One of my favorite verses is Psalm 115:3: “But our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.” He can do whatsoever he pleases because he is the sovereign God of heaven

and earth. None can thwart him, stop him, or hinder him. He is the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

The armor of God is delineated for us in Ephesians 6, and throughout Scripture we are told to proceed in the spirit, might, and power of the Lord. Remember the instructions our Lord gave his disciples after he was crucified, as he was ascending into heaven? In Luke 24:49 he said, “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

“Don’t start the work without me,” says Christ. “Don’t try to do it in the arm of the flesh. You wait until you’re endued with power from on high.” The Bible says in Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” What did He tell those disciples? You had better make sure that you go in His power. Do you realize that if we walk in His strength, if we walk in His Spirit, and if we walk in His might, we too can say, like the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Do you remember what Jesus Christ Himself testified in John 15:5? He said, “Without me you can do nothing.”

Now see the overall picture in Judges 6. The enemy has come up. God has now supernaturally endowed Gideon with the power of the Holy Spirit; He has clothed him. Notice what happens next. Judges 6:34 says, “But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and Abiezer was gathered after him.”

The Trumpet and the Gathering of Followers

After—and I must emphasize only after—the Spirit of God came upon him, he blew a trumpet, and men were gathered together unto him. What is the significance of that? In 1 Corinthians 14:8, there is a question asked in Scripture: “If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

When you study trumpets in the Bible, you find that they were used for the calling of assemblies, and for calling the princes and the people together. They were used not only in the worship of the Lord,

but also in war. In Judges 3:27, when Ehud had slain Eglon, he blew a trumpet, and men were gathered unto him to help him fight.

Only after the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon did he blow the trumpet, and men were gathered together unto him. Do not expect men to follow you without the Spirit of the Lord upon you. We are to follow no man any further than he follows the Lord. There are many politicians, charlatans, deceivers, and fanatics who bid you to follow them and their cause with blind allegiance. We must never give our allegiance to anyone who has not been called, sent, and empowered by God.

Look back at Judges chapter 6. Gideon had thrown down the altar of Baal and cut down the grove of Asherah. “And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it. And the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built.” They asked one another, “Who have done this thing?” When they inquired, they were told, “Gideon, the son of Joash, hath done this thing.” Then the men of the city said unto Joash, “Bring out thy son, that he may die, because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it.”

But what has God done? God has used Gideon. The Spirit of God comes upon him, and Gideon blows the trumpet. Verse 34 says, “But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, and what? Abiezer was gathered after him.” The very men who had demanded his death, and who had considered him a nut and a fanatic, now considered him a mighty man of valor, called of God to deliver them.

That is a wonderful picture of Proverbs 16:7: “When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.” Those who were against Gideon were now following him.

Here is another truth we must establish: it is not simply God who selects the man He will use as a deliverer. It is also God who gives him the necessary followers. God selected Gideon, stirred the hearts of the Abiezrites, and later stirred other men from other tribes to come and help him.

This is equally true as you apply it within the church. God sovereignly places within the body those whom He has ordained to help the pastor He set over them. Think about this: it is not simply that God calls the man He does; God also gives followers to that man.

Here is a practical application. I could never do what I do without you folks. I could never travel and preach to all these different people in all these different states, even though I may be dedicated to truth and to the Word of God, without people who pray for me, support me, and help me in order that I might do that. In other words, you must love the same truth that I do in order to enable me to do that.

I may do all the preaching, but Roy and Allison and James and Alice, along with a few more who help get these tapes, CDs, and DVDs out on a regular basis, make this ministry possible. I could never have the ministry that I have without you. So what did God do? God says Gideon needs some followers. That is fine; I will give him the followers.

I have thought about this for years. We are a small congregation, and we have had several of our folks move. The Thomassons moved to Atlanta, and Tony and Sue moved up in the mountains. But the amazing thing is that when God allowed those people to leave, He always moved someone in to take their place. The Bible says in Acts 2 and verse 47, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

But let me show you something else. Paul is talking about the church in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 18: "But now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." Who put you in the body of Christ? God did. Why are you where you are in the body of Christ? Because Christ put you there. Why did He put you there? Because that is where you are needed. That is where your ministry is. I am going to tell you something.

Roy can testify to this. I do not know beans about electronics; I could never run that camera or those machines. But when God allowed the Dollars, who did run the camera, to move to Arkansas, God sent Roy and Allison. You remember that? I am simply saying,

folks, it was God who stirred the Abiezrites to say, “Hey, you know, we were wrong about Gideon.”

That guy is not such a nut. God's hand is on him. Let us go down and help him. God sent the followers. The Bible said in Judges chapter six, verse thirty-four, “But the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and he blew a trumpet.” When he blew that trumpet, Abiezer was gathered after him. He sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, which also was gathered after him, and unto Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. So Gideon now has a huge host of followers.

Gideon comes to the realization that the ball is in his park. He has all these people, 32,000 men, and he has to do something. The Amalekites and the Midianites have spread themselves in the valley of Jezreel. Now there is going to be a fight, and Gideon knows that. He says, “Lord, I need some help in this thing.”

Gideon's Request for Confirmation

Here is the passage everyone knows about, the matter of Gideon and the fleece. Before we get to it, observe closely verse 36. Gideon said unto God, “If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be upon the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.”

When he asked for this sign, it was a request for confirmation of the mighty work of deliverance Gideon was about to perform. Undoubtedly, the sign would strengthen Gideon and his followers. What strikes me in the next several verses is that Gideon asks, and God so graciously and readily grants the request.

Throughout my ministry I have heard people say, “I’ll put out the fleece like Gideon did.” May I remind you of something? Gideon did not have the completed revelation that you and I have. We do not have to put out a fleece. We have the total Word of God, and God has given us this Word to rule our lives.

There is no question unanswered. There are principles in the Bible that apply to every area of life. You do not have to put out the fleece; you just have to search the Scriptures. But Gideon did not

have the completed Word of God, and so he asked the Lord for a sign.

I have heard people say, “Oh, doubtful and unbelieving Gideon.” It was not that he was doubtful and unbelieving. If you had thirty-two thousand men and knew that you were about to face an army of over several hundred thousand men, would you not want to make your calling and election sure? Would you not want to make sure, “Lord, You are really in this; You really want me to do this”? I would tend to think, “Lord, I would really like some confirmation on this thing.” That is what Gideon did.

In Exodus 33:14, Moses had been delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt and leading them through the wilderness. God said to Moses, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” In verse 15, Moses responded, “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” What was he saying? “God, if You are not going there, I do not want to go.” That was Gideon’s attitude.

“Lord, You call me to face these Midianites, these Amalekites. I just want to make sure You are going to be with me. If You are not going to be with me, Lord, I do not want to go. I do not want to be anywhere without the presence and power of God.” That was Gideon’s attitude, and it was a right attitude.

The Symbolism of Dew and Fleece

You and I cannot understand this sign or miracle without at least a minimum understanding of dew in the Bible. We understand the fleece, probably, but dew in the Bible is a sign of the beneficent power of God which quickens, revives, and invigorates. We live in the South, where usually we get plenty of rain, though not always; we have our droughts. But Palestine is a land very dependent upon the dew. The dew in Palestine falls mainly in summer and also in autumn. During these periods it hardly ever rains in Palestine. Therefore, the whole land is totally dependent upon the dew. Dew is a symbol of fertility and blessings.

In Genesis 27, Isaac blesses Jacob. Look at verse 28, part of the blessing: "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the

fatness of the earth, and the plenty of corn and wine." Note especially, "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven."

In Deuteronomy 33, verse 13, Moses speaks of the blessedness of Joseph: "And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath it."

Understandably, as you read through the Bible, dew becomes a symbol of God's blessings and the influence of God upon the land. Yet it can also be a symbol of God Himself. Hosea 14, verse 4, says, "I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel. He shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."

What is the picture of God in the Bible? The dew. He said, "I'll fall upon him like the dew." The dew, then, is a sign of God's person, God's presence, God's power, and God's blessings.

Deuteronomy 32, verse 2, shows that the dew is also a symbol of the Word of God. We read verse 1: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak, and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." Then God says, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, and the small rain upon the tender herb, and the showers upon the grass."

Very clearly, then, when you think about dew, you are thinking about the person, the power, the presence, and the blessings of God in the Bible. The image begins with the blessing spoken over Jacob: the dew of heaven accompanies the fatness of the earth, the plenty of corn and wine, and the precious things associated with God's favor. It is likewise named in the blessing of Joseph, where the land is blessed of the Lord through the dew and the deep beneath it. Hosea makes the image still more direct: God Himself says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel." Deuteronomy identifies the same picture with divine doctrine and speech, which descend gently and bring life. Thus Scripture presents dew not merely as a feature of the land, but as a biblical sign of God's person, presence, power, blessing, and Word.

Why would Gideon use the fleece? There are two answers. First, the fleece was taken from a shorn sheep, indicative of Psalm 100,

verse 3: “We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.” Thus, this sign in Judges chapter 6 is full of biblical imagery and significance. It was not chance or happenstance that Gideon chose the fleece and the dew.

Gideon first asked that the fleece be wet with dew while the ground around it remained dry. God did so, and Gideon wrung a cupful of water from the fleece. This demonstrated once again that God would water his people with the blessings of heaven, and that it would be God who would save them. Next Gideon said, “I tell you what, Lord: since wool normally absorbs water, this time let the wool be dry, and let the dew fall all around.” Exactly that happened: the wool was dry, and dew was all around. The sign and miracle accurately portrayed the victory God would give.

The Fleece as a Picture of Christ

The amazing thing is that God condescends to give Gideon exactly what he asked for. He condescends to strengthen his faith, assure his calling, and encourage him in his determination. But we must look beyond the fleece and beyond the dew to the victory portrayed here. Listen carefully to how accurately it portrays Jesus Christ. You say, “Jesus Christ?” That is correct. The fleece represents Christ and, of course, his people who are one with him. This was no empty ritual, but a gracious confirmation that God's presence, purpose, and power would accomplish the promised victory for His people in their appointed hour.

Jesus Christ is the God-man, very God of very God, yet He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man. Although He became flesh, He was still very God of very God. Colossians 1:19 says, “For it pleased the Father in him should dwell.” Colossians 2:9 tells it like this: “For in him, that is in Christ, dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

Philippians 2, verses 5 through 8, refers to the incarnation: “Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in likeness of men, and being found in fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto

death, even the death on the cross." Jesus Christ was made flesh. First Timothy 3:16 says, "And without all controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." Although He became man, the mediator and the servant, He is still very God of very God.

Psalm 110 concerns Christ the God-man, Christ the mediator. Verse 1 identifies Him: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Verse 3 says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power and the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning. Thou hast the what? The dew of thy youth." What did God say in Hosea 14:5? "I will fall upon Israel like the dew." Jesus Christ is God incarnate. Although He became man, He was still very God of very God. Well, you say, "But wait a minute, Brother Weaver. How does the fleece represent Jesus Christ?" Do you remember Isaiah 53:7? Remember, I have preached this passage before; perhaps you have forgotten it, but that is all right. Look carefully at verse 3, because it speaks particularly concerning Christ, the God-man and mediator.

"He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb. So he opened not his mouth." He is brought as a sheep before his shearers. Isaiah 53:2 says, "For he shall grow up as a tender plant before him," that is, before God the Father, "and as a root out of dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness, that when we see him we shall desire him. For there is no beauty in him that we should desire him."

Jesus Christ fits this imagery perfectly: "He shall grow up as a root out of dry ground." The earth was dry, barren, fruitless, and under the curse of God until the Lamb of God came, who took away the sins of the world, full of the dew of heaven, because He was very God of very God, and He gave His life for His own.

God's Willingness to Give Victory in Christ

Although he became man, he still retained the dew of his youth. He was still God and thus able to bring redemption and deliverance. The

picture that Gideon gives us is a miniature of the work of Jesus Christ. As Gideon could not fail in delivering his people, the reason was that the Son of God could not fail in delivering His people.

You know what the Bible says in Isaiah 11:9 concerning the knowledge of God? “They shall not hurt nor destroy any more in my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” What is going to happen because of the person and work of Jesus Christ? The knowledge of the Lord is going to be extended. We have our Gideon; we have our champion, and it is none other than Jesus Christ.

John declared in John 1:16, “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” I love Isaiah 53:11 concerning Christ: “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” Will He fail? No. Did He fail? No. He cannot fail. Why? He is the God-man.

Now ask yourself: Why did God so graciously and readily supply Gideon with everything that he asked? When you stop and think that the fleece and the dew are a picture of Christ, you cannot help but think of John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” You cannot help but think of 1 John 4:10: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Was God the Father pressured into giving His Son? Was He reluctant? Did He hold back? Was He made to give Him? No. He willingly, purposefully, graciously gave His only begotten Son. Therefore, He willingly gave this picture to Gideon. Isaiah 53:10 says, “It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.”

That fleece and that dew were a miniature picture of Jesus Christ. God gave Gideon Christ, so to speak, and therefore He gave him victory. Now turn to Romans 8:32. Make sure that you put these things together. The Bible asks this question.

"He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" If God the Father did not hesitate to give us his greatest and most blessed gift, his Son, why would he hesitate to give us lesser gifts and blessings? If God has granted us the greatest deliverance—that is, deliverance

from sin, Satan, and death through Jesus Christ—why would God fail to give us a lesser deliverance from political tyranny and wickedness? But it is all in Christ.

Conclusion: Christ Alone is Our Answer

That is why verse 34 is very important: "And the Spirit of God came upon Gideon. And he blew the trumpet. And Abiezer was gathered unto him." All this happens only in the power and Spirit of God. We could have a revolution tomorrow in this country, but unless there is regeneration, all we would have is another form of tyranny. God may use a revolution. He has in times past, but He always gave His blessing, and there was regeneration and conversion, turning the hearts of people back to God.

Christ and Christ alone is our answer. He is the power of God.

Father, we thank You for Jesus Christ. We thank You for the principles of deliverance that You've given us. Lord, help us to see that everything we need and everything we have is in Jesus Christ. Help us to work together to further Thy kingdom, Thy Word, and Thy truth. May a multitude be added by Thy grace and mercy to extend Thy Word and Thy kingdom. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 6

Principles of Deliverance - 6

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 7:1-15 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early and pitched beside the well of Harod, so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh. And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return, and depart early from Mount Gilead.

And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand. And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many, bring them down to the water, and I will try them for thee there. And it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee. And of whomsoever I shall say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people into the water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, Everyone that

> lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself. Likewise everyone that boweth down upon his knees to drink.
>
> And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men. But all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand, and let all the other people go every man to his place. So the people took victuals in their hand and their trumpets, and he sent all the rest of Israel, every man into his tent, and retained those three hundred men, and the host of Midian was beneath them in the valley. And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host. And thou shalt hear what they say, and afterward shall thine hand be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant into the outside of the armed men that were in the host.

The Midianites, the Amalekites, and all the children of the East lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number as the sand by the seaside for multitude. When Gideon came, a man told his fellow a dream: “Behold, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it that the tent lay along.” His fellow answered, “This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel. For into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.” When Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, he worshipped and returned unto the host of Israel, saying, “Arise, for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.”

Review of Previous Principles

We are in Judges chapter 7, dealing with the principles of deliverance. First, in the message concerning preparation, we saw how God strips us of our pride, self-ability, haughtiness, and

arrogance before He ever delivers us. We must look and see ourselves before we will look unto the Lord.

Secondly, in the procedure, God always sends a prophet, a preacher, to proclaim the truth of God—not only repentance, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as well. That is exactly what the prophet did in Judges chapter 6. He pointed out the wickedness of the nation and the greatness, goodness, and mercy of God.

Then we came to the person God used in deliverance. In the life of Gideon, we found first that he was prudent and practical. The Bible says, “The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.” Gideon was prudent and practical.

Secondly, he was perceptive and discerning. He understood that the nation was in the condition it was in because of its sins against God. Thirdly, he was called in sin of God. God called him and sent him for the express purpose of delivering Israel. Fourth, he was meek and humble. Nowhere did he brag or boast of himself; he always gloried in the Lord.

God's Unchanging Character in Choosing Deliverers

Fifthly, he was believing and bold. He believed the Lord and boldly acted upon what God had commanded him to do.

It is imperative for us to understand that whenever God calls a man for such a task—to deliver a people or a nation—the principles of His choosing will always be the same. He will always choose a man with the same characteristics and virtues. In Malachi 3:6 He said, “I the Lord change not.” God is immutable; God does not change. God is not going to give us some sloppy, inconsiderate, impudent, impractical, uncalled, unbelieving, and arrogant individual as a deliverer. He never has done it, and He never will do it. God simply does not use that kind of man.

We looked particularly at the power of this deliverance and found that the power was none other than the power of God Himself. Whatever is done for God’s honor and glory must be done in God’s power. We dealt with the fleece and looked beyond it, seeing a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ was indeed

brought as a sheep to His shearers. There is the fleece in Isaiah 53. He had the dew of His youth, Psalm 110. The fleece and the dew, then, were a picture of none other than Jesus Christ and His great deliverance.

The Power of Deliverance and the Fleece as a Picture of Christ

Since Jesus Christ is the true Gideon and the true Deliverer, and has delivered us from sin, Satan, and death, we can bank on Romans 8:32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" If God has given us the greatest victory through His Son Jesus Christ, will He not also give us a lesser victory? The answer is yes, of course.

We have a picture of that in Judges chapter 7. Gideon musters thirty-two thousand men to fight against the Midianite horde. Thirty-two thousand men seems like a great number, and it is a pretty good number. Not many people get to preach to thirty-two thousand men at one time or see thirty-two thousand men at one time, unless they go to football games, where perhaps some great stadium might hold that many.

God's Reduction of Gideon's Army

But stop and think. Thirty-two thousand seems like a lot, but when you look at chapter 7 and verse 12, the Bible says that the Midianites, the Amalekites, and all the children of the East lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number as the sand by the seaside for multitude. When you look at this innumerable host of Midianites, Amalekites, and the children of the East, together with all their camels, you have to stop and say, What in the world is thirty-two thousand men?

For a moment, imagine yourself as Commander Gideon. You have thirty-two thousand men, and here you are beside the spring of Harod. You look out and see this innumerable host, thinking, "Man, it is already five to one." Just think about that: five-to-one odds. You would have to kill five of them for every one of you. Those are pretty good odds. Yet you are not comfortable with the fact that there are only thirty-two thousand of you. You realize it is probably about

five-to-one odds, but you do have God on your side, and God has already promised to give you the victory. You can be comfortable with that.

Now look in your Bible at Judges chapter 8 and verse 10. I do not know how many men were there, but Zebah and Zalmunna, two other princes, had 135,000 men with them. There were other princes there, but just Zebah and Zalmunna had that number. The Scripture says, “Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their host with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the host of the children of the East: and there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword.” Thus, 120,000 plus 15,000 equals 135,000 men they had to begin with—just Zebah and Zalmunna. I do not know how many the other princes had.

Here you are, Commander Gideon, thinking, “Five-to-one odds. At least I have God on my side. At least God has promised me the victory.” Just as you adjust your thinking and become comfortable with being outmanned, outnumbered, and outgunned, you receive a word from the Lord that you really have too many men. Gideon and the Israelites viewed themselves as too few, and therefore they feared. God said, “No, you are not too few; you are too many.”

You see, God's thoughts are not man's thoughts. I want to show you something a little bit later in the Bible, but I want you to think about this. God never complains about having too few. Just stop and think about that. God never complains with having too few. There was a great general who was trying to soothe and calm and encourage his troops when they saw they were outnumbered.

And he says to them, how many do you reckon me for? In other words, think how many that I can take care of. Let me ask that you turn just to two passages. I want you to look in your Bibles, first of all, to Isaiah 52, and then secondly, to Deuteronomy chapter 3. And let me just tell you, as you're turning to these passages, I could multiply these passages literally by the hundreds. But notice, if you would please, in Isaiah 52, and look, if you would please, at verse 12. Isaiah 52 and verse 12. Look what God tells His people. He says, For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight. For the Lord will go before you, and the Lord and the God of Israel will be your rearward. In other words, He's going to be your rear guard as well as your front

guard. God is going to surround you. Now if you look in your Bibles, to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 3, and look at verse 22, and you're going to find this, I hope, very comforting.

Deuteronomy chapter 3 and verse 22 it is. Deuteronomy 3 and verse 22. God tells His people, you shall not fear them. Why? For the Lord your God, He shall fight for you.

Now, let me ask you a question. How many do you reckon God for? I mean, just stop and think about that. Gideon, you've got 32,000 men. That's too many. But Lord, look out there. There's probably several hundred thousand out there. Gideon, it doesn't matter. You consider who I am.

Now, here are two very important truths in Judges chapter 7. The first one is this, that God fights for His people. You've heard the old saying that God and one man make a majority. That's really not true. God's a majority in and of Himself. He can handle a whole lot, I can assure you.

Secondly, we see here a wonderful illustration of Isaiah 55, verses 8 and 9. You remember there, God said, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. Gideon was probably thinking, Lord, we don't have enough, and you're trying to cut us down. God says, look, you've got more than you need. You don't even need the 32,000.

Are you listening to this statement? Men think numbers are important. God thinks purity and right motives are important. Have you noticed how number-conscious we are? You go to the average church, and here is the board: we had this many last week, this many for Sunday school, this many for Sunday night, this many for Wednesday night. When I first went to Jessup, the first church I ever pastored, they had one of those boards on the wall. The first thing I did was go up and take the board off the wall. You know why? You look up there and say, “Wow, we had 89 last week; this week, we only have 50.”

You have a tendency to be discouraged. Let me tell you something: it is going to be a church of those who love the Lord and

whom God has ordained to be there. If this room were packed out, overflowing, with people in the next room and standing around the outside of the building, I would be pleased. But if I come here and there are only three of you, I am still pleased. Why? Because God sent you, and you need teaching and preaching. My wife can tell you that I have preached in a meeting all week long when the highest number we ever had was seven people. Do you know that seven people need preaching too, just like seven thousand?

Men think numbers are important. God does not. I heard somebody say, "Well, He must. He named a whole book Numbers." But He was numbering the army and numbering the people. God said, "Gideon, it is not the numbers. It is the purity and the motive." Judges chapter 7 and verse 2 tells us plainly why Gideon had too many people: "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine hand hath saved me." Even at five-to-one odds, Israel would vaunt themselves. The word vaunt means to glory; it means to boast. The children of Israel would, in essence, steal God's honor and glory, boasting as if their hand, might, and power had gained the victory.

Our Lord knows what is in man. John chapter 2, verses 24 and 25, says, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, that is, unto men, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Likewise, our Heavenly Father knew what was in man.

He said, "Gideon, you have too many. If I give it to you in five-to-one odds, they are going to try to steal My glory." Learn this valuable lesson: it is man's nature and tendency to steal and rob God's honor and glory. Whenever God blesses us, provides for us, heals us, does something special for us, or gives us an unusual blessing, our natural tendency is to think, "Well, we earned it. We merited it."

We were wise in our actions and gracious in our conduct, and somehow we worked it out. We never stopped to say, "Lord God, it was You who gave me this blessing. It was You who took care of my need." No, we have a tendency to steal His honor and glory. Preachers are just as guilty. They can preach a message, and God can

empower them, bless the people, save and convert people, and convict people. The next thing you know, they are saying, “Boy, that sermon is my sugar stick. I’m going to preach that everywhere I go.” It was not the sermon, the illustration, or the preacher. It was God.

There was a king by the name of Herod who tried to steal God’s honor and glory. He made a speech and gave an oration, and the people began to shout, “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.” Herod took that acclamation and glory. In Acts 12:23, the Bible says, “And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.” That is quite a price to pay just for stealing God’s honor and glory.

Truthfully, we need to ascribe all honor, praise, and glory to God the Father in everything that happens to us. We ought to praise Him for being able to wake up each morning and get up. Roy said to me jokingly this morning, “Pastor, why didn’t you tell me old age was going to be this difficult?” I could tell you this: you ain’t seen nothing yet. Fifty-nine is nothing. As Greg Doris says, “Well, you get eighty-six, you’ll find out what the pains are then.”

We need to be thankful that God has given us the help, mind, family, friends, and opportunities that we have. How many people get to live a full life, and how many get to live a full life enjoying what they do? The Bible says in Psalm 50:23, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.” So let us offer God all the praise and glory, acknowledging Him in every area of our life.

Victory Does Not Depend on a Multitude

The truth of Judges chapter 7, verses 1 through 15, is very clear: victory and deliverance do not depend upon a multitude. They do not depend upon a majority, a great number, a great percentage, or a higher percentage. We do not need a multitude. We only need the Lord.

There are preachers in this country driving themselves absolutely insane by asking, “How in the world can we awaken the American people?” I concur that the American people need awakening, and that the Christian people in America need awakening. But the truth

is that most will never awaken from their slumber. They will not face the facts. We will never, ever have a multitude on our side. The sobering reality is that we do not need a multitude; we only need the Lord. We do not need the majority.

Think about George Washington and those men. Those colonial soldiers were in the minority. Someone said that Washington never had more than 8,000 soldiers at one time. Now, it had more than that, but never more than that at one time. God is always pleased to use minorities: Noah and his family against the multitudes; Lot against the Sodomites; Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego against all the rulers of Babylon; Daniel against the presidents; and twelve disciples against the world.

When you get to Acts chapter 17 and verse 6, the wicked cry out, "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also." Samuel Adams, one of our founding fathers, said, "It does not require a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority keen to set fires in people's minds." It does not take a majority. It takes a minority that is consistent, dedicated, and consecrated.

Who will continue no matter what? Stop and think: our Lord chose those twelve disciples, and He turned the world upside down. Here is what the Lord is teaching Gideon. Look back in Judges 7 and verse 3. The Lord is teaching Gideon that you do not need a multitude; you do not need a lot of men. In Judges 7, verse 3, He says, "Now therefore, go to proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand."

Now, what God told Gideon to do was actually part of biblical law. In fact, if you turn back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 20, this is a passage I pointed out a multitude of years ago when I preached on the biblical doctrine of warfare. I went down through Deuteronomy chapter 20, and in verse 8 there is a biblical military law concerning who shall not serve in the military. It says, "And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his own heart."

What is God doing? He is getting rid of the cowards and the fearful. You have heard the old adage, one rotten apple spoils the whole barrel. What would someone who is fearful and fainthearted do? He is going to express that fear and that faintheartedness to someone else. It will be catching. God says, Do not even let them in the army; let them go home. You do not need them anyhow.

Now think about this. Here Gideon is with thirty-two thousand men, and God says to tell whoever is fearful and fainthearted that he may go home. Over two-thirds of the army leaves—twenty-two thousand men! The Bible does say in Proverbs 29 and verse 25, “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.” Evidently, this principle of being fearful and fainthearted applies to defensive as well as offensive warfare. After this proclamation, twenty-two thousand leave. Basically, you have to say this: they were not ashamed to admit that they were fearful, fainthearted, and cowardly.

Now stop and think about the implications. Here were men whose families had been oppressed and persecuted for seven years at the hands of the Midianites and the Amalekites. Everything they had had been taken and stolen from them by the Midianites and the Amalekites.

Now God has called a deliverer, a godly man, a faithful man, and has promised Israel victory. Here is an opportunity to strike back, recover their liberties and freedom, and destroy their enemies, but they go home. They simply leave. So much for putting your trust in a fickle multitude. By God's grace, I would have been someone sticking so close to Gideon, make your head swim. I might not have had but one trumpet and one pitcher, but whatever I had, I would have wanted my opportunity against the enemy.

There is in all men a natural tendency to some fear, especially when it comes to battle. But that fear should be enough to excite and drive you, not enough to make you a coward, fainthearted and fearful, and cause you to leave. Here are men who missed an opportunity to be used by God simply because of their fearfulness.

At least Commander Gideon is now left with 10,000 fearless, faithful, brave, courageous, and valued men. These men are willing

and ready to fight. But if the enemy only has 200,000, the odds are now 20 to 1, rather than 5 to 1. They would have to kill twenty Midianites for every one Israelite.

Then God says something else to Gideon in verses four through seven: Gideon, you still have too many men. I am not going to give this victory to 10,000 men. “And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I shall say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I shall say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.”

The Test at the Water

“So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.” Three hundred men lapped, putting their hand to their mouth; all the rest bowed upon their knees to drink. “And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.”

God tells Gideon to bring the ten thousand down to the spring of Harod, to the water. He is going to try them. The word “try” means to purge, as one would purge dross from silver.

Scholars have suggested various interpretations of this test. Some men got down on their hands and knees, put their mouths into the water, and drank. Others might bow down, but they scooped the water up, looked around, and brought it to their mouths. God said that everyone who drank in this manner should be set to the side.

Scholars have said that the difference was a test between those who bowed the knees to Baal and those who had not bowed the knees to Baal. You remember that Gideon overthrew the altar of Baal. I do not know that this interpretation is true, and I do not know that it is not true. It is an interpretation and a suggestion; it could very possibly be true.

Someone else has suggested that this test was a sign of strength of body and temperance of mind, while the other posture was one of weakness. In other words, Gideon and God wanted only men who would be alert and ready—not down on their knees drinking water and failing to remain watchful.

Someone suggested that there's another application: these men indicated that they were only willing to taste the pleasures of this world as they were needed, but were willing to leave them, do God's will, and do what's right. I don't know. You could probably make a hundred applications from this, but the Scripture says it was a test. The test was who went with Gideon and who did not go with Gideon. It was that simple. When God finished with the ten thousand, Gideon was left with three hundred. If Zebah and Zalmunna had only 135,000 troops, and there were no more—which I believe there were—Gideon had three hundred.

Now the odds are 450 to 1. Humanly speaking, those aren't too good of odds. That means I've got to kill 450 of them for every one of us that they kill. Well, stop and think about this. Three hundred men fighting a multitude that covers the earth like grasshoppers and covers the earth like the sand of the sea. Then think: what? Three hundred men. The natural man will automatically ask, what possible hope could three hundred men have of achieving a victory?

And yet, in verse 7, the Lord said unto Gideon, “By the 300 men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand, let all the other people go, every man unto his place.” God says, “Gideon, you've got what you need right now.” This way, everyone will know that it was I who gave you the victory. Now, I want you to watch what God does. Gideon started out with 32,000. Then he knocked him down to 10,000. Now I knock him down to 300.

God Encourages Gideon's Faith

Now you're Gideon. And you know, you've got the promise of victory. But you look around and you've got 300 men. And you say, what in the world have I gotten myself into? Don't you imagine that went through Gideon's mind? I do. Because Gideon was a man. And God knew that. And so here's what God did. God said, Gideon, I want you

to do something. I want you to take your servant and slip down to the Midianite host. And I want you to hear something, something that will encourage you. Now watch it.

The same night that he had cut him down to three hundred, the Lord said unto him, “Arise, get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host, and thou shalt hear what they say. And afterward shall thy hands be strengthened to go down unto the host.” Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host.

The Midianites, the Amalekites, and all the children of the East lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number as the sand by the sea for the multitude. When Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow: “Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came into a tent, and smote it, that it fell, and overturned it, and the tent lay along.” His fellow answered, “This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel, for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host.”

Now, let me tell you what Gideon is learning. Gideon is learning a very important lesson, and it is one that we have to learn: he must fight by faith or not at all. You remember Hebrews 11:6: without faith, it is impossible to please God. You can also say that without faith, it is impossible to serve God.

Faith has to rely solely upon the Word of God. Presumption may rest upon circumstances, feelings, and signs, but not faith. Faith rests squarely upon God’s Word. Thus God encourages Gideon’s faith after cutting him down to three hundred. He gives him a command that will warrant his action: He tells him to go down to the camp of the Midianites.

You have to remember that Gideon is the commanding general. We would tend to think it rash for the head officer to go down into the entire midst of the enemy, because if he were captured, there would really be problems. But God gives him a warrant. God says, “You go down.” Then He says, “If you are afraid to go, take Phurah,

your servant." What does that mean? He had some fear and some doubts. He was a brave and valued man, but he was still a man. So he took Phurah and went down.

Divine consolations are not only given to believers strongly, but seasonably. They are given when we need them. God said to Gideon, if you think I am doing you harm, get down to those Midianites and listen to what they say. God essentially ordered Gideon to be his own spy. He sent him down with Phurah, his servant. Gideon needed at least one witness, for the Bible says that out of the mouth of at least two witnesses every word should be established. Phurah would hear what Gideon heard as well.

Now look at verse 12. I keep emphasizing this because they were going down at night, with the moon undoubtedly shining. What did Gideon see as he went down? The Midianites, the Amalekites, and all the children of the East lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; their camels were without number, as the sand by the seaside for multitude. I do not know what else Gideon saw on that trip, but that sight alone would probably have been enough to make him think, "Oh God, if I step into this, I am in trouble."

Just as he arrived, one man woke up and said, "I had a dream." He said, "A barley cake came rolling down this mountain and rolled into my tent and just tore it to pieces, laid it down, laid it long." The other soldier said, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, and at whose hand God has delivered this army."

If Gideon and Phurah had heard only the dream, what would they have thought? Who knows? But God not only caused the man to dream the dream; He also caused the other soldier to interpret it. What in the world could a barley cake have to do with the sword of Gideon? Other than this: when you find Gideon, what was he doing? Threshing wheat. He provided a cake for his visitor, and his newly gathered army was like a fresh-baked cake.

Just 300 of them. But we know that God put it in that man's mind to dream the dream, and in that man's mouth to interpret it. Gideon understood that by his hand God would deliver Midian into his hand for their destruction. God would deliver Israel and defeat the enemy.

Look what Gideon did in verse 15: “And it was so when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned unto the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.” Gideon once again teaches us how to respond to the signal blessings of God. God had said, “Gideon, you may be fearful. You may be doubtful. I know you only have 300 men. You've never done this before. But go down.” When he heard the dream and its interpretation, what did he immediately do? He bowed, worshipped, and gave God the honor and the glory. He said, “Lord, we shall defeat them.” Then he went back to his men and said, “All right, men, get up. They're ours. God has given us the victory.”

Applications and Conclusion

Let me mention this: when you talk about psychological warfare, God is the expert. Multitudes cannot save us or deliver us. Even if we have a multitude or a majority on our side, if we do not have the Lord, we have already lost the battle. I would rather be one man with the Lord than ten billion without the Lord. We do not need a multitude of people in this country to awaken. We need an irate, tireless minority who will not give in, give up, or give out, but will stand for the truth and the Word of God.

We also have to learn to be thankful, praise and honor God, and worship Him even for the smallest blessing, favor, or indication that He is going to deliver us. We must habitually give Him the honor and the glory. When we see that little cloud about the size of a man's fist, we need to start saying, “Thank You, Father, for the rain You are going to send.”

It is not here yet, but it is coming. That is a signal that you are indeed going to bless us, and we need to thank Him for that.

The third application is this: God does lead us, guide us, encourage us, and prepare us. He will never leave us alone. At the right moment, He will give us the consolation we need. Many of us look ahead and say, “Lord, help me to avoid that.” No. Give us grace to go through it, and give us the consolations and encouragement we need to bear it for Your name, honor, and glory. There are some things we cannot avoid. You cannot avoid trouble, persecution,

oppression, or wickedness. You must stand against it with grace, power, and the blessing of God, trusting Him for deliverance. Deliverance is His act, not man's.

Father, we thank You for Your Word and truth, and above all for Jesus Christ and His so great salvation. Help us learn that salvation and deliverance are not by multitude, majority, or high percentage, but by grace through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, by the power and grace of God alone. Help us stand against wickedness and for truth and righteousness. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen and Amen.

CHAPTER 7

Principles of Deliverance - 7

Principle Seven

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 7:16-25 (KJV)

Introduction and Review

We turn to Judges, chapter 7, and read verses 16 through 25 as we continue with number seven in the principles of deliverance.

“And he divided the 300 men into three companies and he put a trumpet in every man's hand with the empty pitchers and lamps within the pitchers. And he said to them, “Look on me and do likewise. And behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that as I do, so shall you do. When I blow with the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also in every side of all the camp, and say, 'The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.'”

So Gideon and the hundred men that were with him came into the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, and they had but newly set the watch, and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. And

> the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands to blow with them, and they cried, “The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.” And they stood every man in his place round about the camp, and all the hosts ran, and cried, and fled. And three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the hosts.
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> And the hosts fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, and to Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali and out of Asher, and of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Ephraim, saying, “Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters of Beth-barah and Jordan.” And all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters of Beth-barah and Jordan. And they took the two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew in the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.”

I have dealt with the principle of preparation: when God begins to deliver a people, He prepares them. Deliverance is no accident. It does not just happen. It is a purposeful, deliberate act of God. When God prepares us, He strips us of our pride, our self-ability, and our vain glory. In this procedure, God always sends a preacher. He sends the preacher not only to declare the goodness and grace of God, but also to point out our wickedness and rebellion. Then God chooses the person to deliver, and that person was Gideon.

We saw how Gideon was prudent and practical, discerning and perceptive, meek and humble, and how he was called and sent. Lastly, he was bold and believing. The power in all of this was the power of God as well. Last week I dealt with this point: we do not need a majority or a multitude to prevail. We need simply a dedicated minority.

God Delights in Using Small Things

Stop and think about Gideon and his three hundred. As you look through Scripture, you will find that God delights in using small things. Do you remember that God used the hornets to drive the Amorites out of the land? Do you remember how God used the jawbone of an ass and the hand of Samson to slay a thousand Philistines? Do you remember that in John chapter 6 it was a little lad whom the Lord used, with a few fishes and a loaf of bread, to feed the multitude? God delights in using small things. In fact, Scripture tells us in the book of Zechariah, chapter 4, verse 10, that we are not to despise the day of small things.

Unfortunately, there are a multitude of Christians who tend to look down upon themselves and limit themselves because they think they are small and insignificant. Yet do you know what our Lord said in Luke 12 and verse 32? He said to His disciples, “Fear not, little flock.” It is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. It really does not matter how small you are. When the Father’s good pleasure is involved, you can mark it down: it is going to be accomplished. We shall prevail, because we have already been given the victory in and through our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psychological Warfare Defined

One of the most fascinating and provocative scenes of Scripture is in the passage before us today. This scene is simple on the one hand, yet complex on the other. It is plain on one hand and grandiose on the other. It is a demonstration of God's use of psychological warfare against His enemies. Yes, I did say psychological warfare.

You've heard the old adage that everything goes in love and in war. That adage is true to a certain extent. As Christians, we are bound by the Word of God, and we cannot go over, above, or beyond it. We cannot violate the principles God has laid down for us in His Word. For instance, we cannot kill, harm, and torture innocent civilians and individuals who are not in the battle. Moreover, we cannot make war against creation the way Sherman, Sheridan, Ewing, and Abraham Lincoln did.

No, we are forbidden to do that according to Deuteronomy chapter 20. However, we are free to use and engage every tactic that God commands or gives us by way of illustration and example. The illustration and example He has given us today is that of psychological warfare.

Here is the motto from the United States Army's website: "Capture their minds and their hearts and souls will follow." In other words, you get them brainwashed, get them propagandized, and get them thinking the way you want them to think; then they will come along and do whatever you want them to do. That's their motto.

Psychological operations, or PSYOP, are planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of organizations, groups, and individuals. Used in all aspects of war, it is a weapon whose effectiveness is limited only by the ingenuity of the commander using it. A proven winner in combat and peacetime, PSYOP is one of the oldest weapons in the arsenal of man. It is an important force protector, combat multiplier, and a non-lethal weapons system. By the application of sound PSYOP techniques through face-to-face communication and mass media communications, we have demonstrated time and time again that we can appeal to the intelligence, reason, and emotions of our target audience to get them to think and to act as we desire.

If these people are shooting at us, we can persuade them to lay down their arms. If they fear us, we can convince them that they have nothing to fear. If they are belligerent and uncooperative, we can show them the value of utility and cooperation. Lastly, and most important, the utilization of PSYOP can prevent needless bloodshed, destruction, and misery. That is why we say with conviction that psychological operations, or PSYOP, is truly a humane weapon.

Today, psychological operations are a vital part of the broad range of United States political, military, economic, and ideological activities used by the United States government to secure national objectives. The mission of providing psychological operations for the United States military today rests with the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Now, note what they said. First of all, psychological operations are planned operations that convey selected information. In other words, they are going to give you the information they want you to have. The reason is to influence your emotions, your motives, your objective reasons, and ultimately your behavior—to get you to think and act as they desire. We usually think of psychological operations internationally, that is, influencing our enemies and maybe influencing our friends. But when you read this paragraph, it says that psychological operations are a vital part of the broad range of United States political—Democrats and Republicans—military, economic, and ideological activities used by the United States government to secure national objectives. What does that mean? They are using it against us within the states to secure what they want ideologically, through political correctness, and economically. To me, that is a bald-faced assertion that the people of the United States are literally being brainwashed and propagandized.

One of the greatest military leaders of all time was the Chinese warrior Sun Tzu. I certainly do not wholeheartedly endorse him, because he did many things that were unbiblical as well as ungodly. Yet he enunciated a number of excellent principles in his book, The Art of War. Teaching psychological warfare, he said, "To capture the enemy's entire army is better than to destroy it. To take intact a regiment, a company, or a squad is better than to destroy them."

"For to win 100 victories in 100 battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence. Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy."

"Next best is to interrupt his alliances by diplomacy. The next best is to attack his army, and the worst policy is to attack his cities."

What did Sun Tzu just get out of his mouth? He is saying the acme of skill is not winning a battle, but winning a war without fighting. How do you do that? Through psychological warfare.

Biblical Examples of Psychological Warfare

I could spend hours on historical examples of psychological warfare, from Genghis Khan to modern-day battles. You will remember, by

the way, that psychological warfare was waged against the Davidians in Waco, Texas. When they played that horrible music, dying rabbits, and squealing animals, hard rock, and threw heavy spotlights on them all night to keep them from sleeping—that was psychological warfare. I could give you illustration after illustration from psychological warfare throughout history, from Genghis Khan down to modern day. However, that psychological warfare in the Bible is which best illustrates my point.

Let me make something exceedingly clear. Men may plan, scheme, and manipulate, yet they fail. God never fails. Stop and think for a minute: Can you imagine, can you even conceive of what God could do to the minds of men? No one knows the mind of man as God knows it. God is the one who created us and given us our minds. Isn't it amazing how your mind plays tricks on you? Isn't it amazing how you hear things that are not there, or see things sometimes that are not there?

Or you have a dream and wake up, and lo and behold, it is real. I know one dream that I had years and years ago. I had to fight everything with every ounce in me to dispossess myself of that dream because it seemed so real. I knew it was untrue, and yet it was so real. That is simply the mind of man.

You know what the Bible says in Job 21 and verse 27? "Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which you wrongfully imagine against me." God knows the thoughts of man. God knows the imaginations and the devices that men imagine against Him. In Ezekiel chapter 11 and verse 5, God says, "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them." There is not one thing that you can think of that God does not already know that you thought of.

And how about Psalm 139, verses 2 through 6? David said, "Thou knowest my down-sitting and my up-rising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me."

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain unto it." David said, "Lord, You know the words that come

into my tongue before I ever speak them. You know the thoughts that come into my mind before I ever think them." Since God knows the mind of man so well and is able to control our thoughts, He is in absolute and total control.

Now listen to this statement, because I'm going to show it to you from the Bible. Psychological warfare involves fear, deceit, and the control of the mind, and thus the control of one's actions. The mind is a mysterious thing, and no one can place thoughts, fears, and desires in the mind of men the way God can.

I want you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 22. Hold Judges chapter 7. I'm just going to prepare you for what God has done in Judges chapter 7 for just a moment. Here is a passage where God is going to destroy King Ahab. God had already told Ahab through the prophet Elijah that he was going to die, and that where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, they were going to lick Ahab's blood. Now Ahab has gotten King Jehoshaphat to go up to battle with him to take Ramoth Gilead.

All these prophets of Baal keep telling Ahab, "Go up and prosper, go up and prosper." Jehoshaphat says, "Wait a minute now, is there not here a prophet of the Lord?" "Yeah," he said, "there's one, but I hate him. His name is Micaiah. He never speaks anything good of me but evil." He said, "Get Micaiah." Micaiah was kept in prison, so that is how the king knew where he was. As he was sent for, the jailer who led him out said, "Now look, all these other prophets have prophesied good concerning Ahab in this war. Let thy mouth be the same."

Old Micaiah said, "As the Lord liveth, I can only say what God allows me to say." When Micaiah stood before Ahab, Ahab asked him, "Shall we go up to Ramoth Gilead, or shall we forbear?" Micaiah answered sarcastically, "Go up and prosper, O thou king." Realizing the sarcasm in his voice, Ahab said, "How many times must I adjure thee to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?" Micaiah said, "You want the truth? I'll give it to you. God's going to take you to Ramoth Gilead to kill you. You're going to die."

Of course, all the false prophets then wanted to smite Micaiah and said, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to thee?" He

said, "You'll find out in the day that you hide yourself in an upper chamber." Here is what Micaiah is telling you. Look at it.

Here is what Micaiah said: “Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and all the hosts of heaven standing by him on the right hand and on the left. And the Lord said, ‘Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?’”

“And one said after this manner and another said after that manner. And there came forth the Spirit and stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will persuade him.’ And the Lord said unto him, ‘Wherewith?’ And he said, ‘I will go forth, and it will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets.’ And he said, ‘Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also. Go forth, and do so.’ Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee.” But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, “Which way went the spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?”

Note what happened. God asked, “Who's going to persuade Ahab to go up to Ramoth Gilead?” One said this and one said that. Finally, one spirit said, “I'll go. I'll do it.” When asked how, he answered, “I'll be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets.” Micaiah told Ahab exactly what had happened, but Ahab still believed the false prophets, went to Ramoth Gilead, and got shot. The blood from his body went in his chariot, and when he came back, the dogs licked his blood exactly the way Elijah said.

You know about psychological warfare. What did God do? God deceived Ahab by sending a lying spirit to his false prophets. All warfare is deceit. Camouflage is deceit. When I go deer hunting, I put on camouflage because I want that big buck to think I'm a bush—a big bush, but a big bush with a rifle. If I'm overseas fighting an individual, I want him to think I'm a bush too, whether it's a big one or a small one. I want to deceive him. Why?

So I can destroy him. All warfare is deceit. The enemy first used deceit in the Garden of Eden: the serpent deceived Eve. The lex talionis—the Latin term for the law of retribution—teaches that the

punishment must fit the crime. The deceiver shall be deceived. Since Satan is the great deceiver himself, he deserves to be deceived. All who follow in his steps and his pernicious ways deserve to be deceived as well. That is why Job 12:16 says concerning God, “the deceived and the deceiver are His.”

When you read the Bible, you will find that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and a multitude of others used deceit to overcome their enemies, especially wicked rulers. Someone may become pious and say, “God would never use deceit.” But consider 1 Samuel 16. Saul had sinned against God and refused to follow His commandments, so God rejected him. God was going to find another king and sent Samuel to anoint David.

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, and I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I provided me a king among his sons.” Samuel answered, “How can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me.” The Lord replied, “Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.”

Did Samuel offer a sacrifice? Yes. Was that the main purpose of his mission? No. God told him to use deceit to deceive the deceiver. If Saul wanted to know why Samuel was going to Bethlehem, he was to say that he had come to offer a sacrifice. He did offer it, but that was not the reason he went there. He went to anoint David as king in Saul’s place. When Samuel said, “If Saul finds out, he’ll kill me,” God gave him his cover story: “You’re just going to offer sacrifice.” There is nothing wrong with deceiving a deceiver.

That is the lex talionis of Scripture. Saul had become God's enemy and the enemy of righteousness, and deception was used to overcome him and prevent violence from him. Deception is a nonviolent way to prevent violence by wicked men. If I were approached by three or four men whose intent I perceived was to harm me, I would probably put one hand behind my back or in my pocket and start saying, "Don't make me bring my hand out of this pocket." What am I implying? I've got a weapon there. Whether I do or whether I don't is immaterial. I am using deceit to stop them from using violence. There is nothing wrong with it. That is exactly what God did.

Look in your Bibles at 2 Kings chapter 7. This shows how God uses psychological warfare. Psychological warfare is deceit and deception: placing fear in the minds of men and making them think things that are not necessarily true. In this passage, the Syrians have surrounded Samaria. Samaria is so impoverished because nothing is allowed to go out and nothing is allowed to come in. The people inside are eating, the Bible says, dove's dung, and women are killing and eating their own children.

Two lepers are sitting at the gate of the city. Lepers were not allowed inside, so they lived on the junk and trash thrown over the city walls. But nothing was being thrown over the walls, because there was nothing needed inside the city. The two lepers say to one another, "Why sit we here till we die? If we go into the city, behold, we'll die there because starvation is in the city. If we sit here, we're going to starve to death. We're going to die anyhow."

They said, "Come, let us fall to the Syrians. If they kill us, we will but be dead." You cannot be any more dead by the sword than by starving to death. Once you are dead, you are dead; it does not matter how you die. "It could be that they might save us alive. So that's our only hope. Let's go fall to them." They went, and found that all the host of the Syrians were gone.

In 2 Kings 7:3, we read, “And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate, and they said one to the other, ‘Why sit we here until we die? If we say we will enter the city, the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. If we sit here, we shall die also.’”

“Now therefore, come and let us fall in the host of the Syrians. If they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die.” And they rose up in the twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians. When they came to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. Why had the Syrians left?

They had the city right where they wanted it. The people were about to capitulate. How could an army fight when they had no food and no animals? Why did they leave? Verse 6 says, “For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host. And they said one to another, ‘Lo, the kings of Israel have hired against us the kings of the

Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to come up against us.' Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their lives."

What did God do? He caused them to hear a noise that was not there, and He caused them to think thoughts that were not true. They fled and left everything. That is psychological warfare. You talk about controlling the minds and thoughts of men; God is unsurpassed at it. God is able to instill, manufacture, and develop fear, terror, and horror in every man. He is able to make men think what He wants them to think. In 2 Kings 19, God used a similar tactic to destroy the Assyrian army.

The Assyrians were threatening Jerusalem. Verse 6 says, "And Isaiah said unto them, 'Thus shall you say to your master,' that is, to the king, 'Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.'" Look what God says: "Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and shall return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." God said, "Don't worry about the king of Assyria. I'm going to cause him to hear a rumor. I'm going to cause him to hear a noise, and he's going to leave, go right back, and be killed in his own city."

Verse 28 says, "Because thy rage against me and thy tumult has come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest." When the king of Assyria got back to his hometown, he was in the house of Nisroch, his god, worshipping, and his two sons, or two of his sons, murdered him. Then another son, Esarhaddon, took his place. What did God use—a rumor, a blast, a noise? That's psychological warfare.

Someone may say, "Now wait a minute, Brother Weaver. I know these are illustrations of the Bible, but still, somehow, I just don't think that God would use deceit." You can think what you want to think, but the puny, fallible, sentimental mind of man is not the standard for who God is or what God does. His Word is the standard that reveals who He is and declares what He does. If you want a

good, clear illustration of this, turn in your Bibles to 2 Thessalonians 2.

God Sends Delusion on the Wicked

Beginning with verse 9, the Bible says, “Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” Then verse 10 says, “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

What does God do for those who hate Him, hate His Word, hate His truth, and refuse to bow to Him? He sends them a strong delusion. He deceives them; He lets them believe a lie. Why? That they all might be damned—those who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Does God use deceit? Of course He does, because it is a principle of Scripture: the lex talionis, the deceiver shall be deceived. Go back in your Bibles to Judges chapter 7, and you will see one of the clearest illustrations of psychological warfare and deceit ever recorded in the Bible. God uses this against the Midianites. Remember, God had already begun instilling fear in them. He told Gideon, “Take Phurah your servant, and you get down to the host, and you hear what they say.” One man had a dream: the barley cake came rolling down the hill, smote the tent, and the tent was squashed flat. That is a good southern word, squashed—like tipping over a bucket.

The Psychological Impact on the Midianites

The one said, "Man, this is nothing but the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. God has given the host of Midian into his hands." What is God now beginning to do to the Midianites? He is beginning to terrorize them. For seven long years, they had terrorized His people and put fear into them. Now God is going to take that same fear and terror and turn it right back upon the Midianites. They are going to be ruined by their own imagination and by their own fear. God is

quite capable of putting His fear and the fear of His people into His enemies.

In Exodus 15 and verse 16, God said, "Fear and dread shall be upon them. By the greatness of Thine arm they shall be still as a stone, till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which Thou hast purchased." What has God done? God has placed His fear upon men so much so that they were immobilized. They could not move until His people totally, completely, and successfully escaped. In Exodus 23 and verse 27, God tells His people, "I will send My fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee."

Did you hear what He said? "I will send My fear before thee. I'll make them turn their backs. I'll put things in their mind and things in their heart. They cannot stand against you." In Deuteronomy 2 and verse 25, God says, "This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee and shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee." When His people got ready to go into Canaan land, He said, "I'm going to put your fear upon them. They're going to tremble. They're going to be in anguish. They're going to be terrorized because of you." In Judges chapter 7, He is using the name of Gideon and putting the fear of Gideon, as well as the fear of the Lord, upon the Midianites.

Think with me about the psychological impact of what is about to take place. The Bible tells us that Gideon has 300 men. He divides them into three companies, 100 men to a company. Probably, he has one company in front and one on each side. In other words, he gives them a way out; he cannot surround them with 300 men. Gideon says, essentially, “You have a trumpet, a pitcher—it was a clay pot—and inside there is a firebrand.” That way, the enemy could not see the fire as long as it was in the pitcher.

He tells them, “Watch me and do what I do whenever I do it.” The Bible tells us that he came upon them in the third watch.

The Romans divided the night into four watches, but in ancient Israel it was divided into three. The middle watch was from 10 p.m.

to 2 a.m. They had just changed watches, so probably it was 2 o'clock in the morning. When are you deepest and soundest in sleep? About two or three o'clock. Gideon has divided his men into three companies and placed them on three sides. It is two o'clock in the morning. You know what it is like to be awakened out of a sound sleep. Instantly, you sit up, and for a few minutes you do not know who you are, where you are, or what you are doing.

Alice and I once slept so soundly one Sunday afternoon that, when we woke up, we did not even know what day it was. The only thing I could think of was, "I am supposed to be a church preacher, and I am not there." Thankfully, it was about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and we had time to get there. You wake up confused, and you do not know which end is up.

This is what Gideon has done. He has taken this third watch, when men are going to be sleeping the most soundly. Take what it does to you, being awakened quickly out of a deep sleep, and multiply that by the hundreds of thousands. You have a couple of thousand men there. Secondly, you have to think about the mules, camels, and donkeys.

In verses 17 and 18, Gideon says, "You do as I do." Usually there was one trumpet per army. That trumpet was used to direct the army and to call them either to retreat, to go forward, or to take them left or right, whatever the signal was. Now Gideon has 300 trumpets. What is he going to make the enemy believe? That he has 300 armies, or 300 different companies of soldiers, about to come upon them—300 companies or 300 armies. That could be as many as a million people, depending on how many you have in the army.

Granny Doris asked about the breaking of the pitchers. They blew the trumpets, and the next thing they did was break these clay pitchers. Alice broke one of her clay pots last week somehow, and part of it was still under the carport. She was fixing to throw it away, so I picked up the largest part and took a tool and hit it just to listen to the sound of it. You know what it sounded like?

Think about this. You have just been awakened from a deep sleep, and all of a sudden you hear this noise that sounded like thousands of swords being drawn. If you think the enemy is coming upon you

and hear that noise, that is all you can think about. Then, when they broke the pot, the firebrand was exposed, and the 300 men held the firebrand. What does that mean? It means that here are 300 men holding firebrands, which the enemy is going to think are showing the way to the vast armies behind them. Psychological warfare? You better believe it.

When they cried, “The sword of the Lord and Gideon,” God had already put the fear of Gideon in their hearts. Now He has put the fear of God in their hearts, and they know they are in deep trouble if Gideon and the Lord have gotten together against them. Look down in verses 21 and 22: “And they stood every man in his place round about the camp, and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host.”

Two o'clock in the morning, you hear these trumpets at 300 Abba, and you think of 300 armies. The pitchers are broken, sounding like swords being drawn. All of a sudden, you see the fire, which means the men are coming upon you right now. You are in the dark, you just woke up, and horses, mules, and camels are running. People are charging you on every hand. What do you do? You start defending yourself. You kill whoever is near you. Thus God used psychological warfare to turn the enemy's sword upon themselves. Those who were not killed instantly fled to get out of there through the use of psychological warfare.

Applications and Broader Picture

The first application is this: God used a great noise, great fire, and a great shout to destroy the Midianites. The reason the sword of Gideon was successful was that it was coupled with the sword of the Lord. Had it not been with the sword of the Lord, the sword of Gideon would not have been successful.

What does that teach us? It teaches us that men are God's instruments, and we are to be subservient and subordinate to Him. We are not greater than He is, nor are we equal to Him. He must have first place.

The second application is this. The noted Bishop Hall said, "If these pitchers, trumpets, and firebrands did so daunt and dismay the proud troops of Midian and Amalek, who shall be able to stand before the last terror? When the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, the elements shall be on fire, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Lord himself shall sit with a shout." If the enemies could not stand before simple pitchers in Joshua chapter 7, very obviously they are not going to stand before the reality.

The third application is this: Gideon and the 300 men did not immediately rush into the host of the Midianites. They were neither greedy for blood nor spoil. They patiently stood there, waiting for God to finish His work and observing the salvation of the Lord. They knew that God was turning every man's sword against his fellow, so they stayed out of it until the killing was done and the enemy was on the run.

There is a broader picture that I want you to see. The sleep in many nights gives us an example of the sleeping world. You know what the Bible says? In Romans 13, verse 11, “And knowing the time that now is, it is high time to wake out of our sleep. For now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed.” So we have, then, a sleeping world.

The ungodly are asleep in the lap of the wicked one. And some of the godly are asleep as well. Therefore, in 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 6 and 8, the Word of God says, “Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.” So, you have the sleeping Midianites giving us, then, a picture of a sleeping world.

Secondly, you have the trumpet being sounded, which gives us a picture that the trumpet is indeed a herald of judgment. They blew the trumpets at Jericho, and here at the defeat of Midian. In Revelation 8, there are the last trumpets, and then there is the last trumpet. This trumpet shows that judgment will fall upon the ungodly.

Then there were the lights that Gideon and the three hundred had. The Bible says, “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Neither comes any man to the light because the light exposes his wickedness. But concerning Christ, the Bible

says, He is the light. Jesus Christ Himself said that He is the light of the world. We have the true light, which is Christ.

The fourth thing you have is the sword, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword.” In Revelation 19, the Lamb upon the white horse has a two-edged sword proceeding out of His mouth. The sword is the Word of God. Here is the whole picture: Gideon was standing against a sleeping world with the trumpet of judgment, the light of the Gospel, and the sword of the Word in his hand.

That is how we are to stand today. It is the sword of truth that men cannot withstand. Just as God gave victory to Gideon, we are going to have victory through the Word of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not going to be defeated, and His Gospel will not fail. We need to learn to stand fast, declare the Word of God, use the trumpet in declaring the righteous judgment and justice of God, and hold up the light of the world, which is Jesus Christ. Then we will be assured of the victory that is in Him.

God uses deceit to destroy His enemies, but He uses truth to convert His people. I would rather believe the truth than a lie. Father, we are thankful for Jesus Christ, for the Word of God, and for the victory that is ours through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Give us grace that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we ask and pray, Amen and Amen.

CHAPTER 8

Principles of Deliverance - 8

Introduction and Review of the Series

This is Principles of Deliverance number eight, the last message in this brief series. Our text is Judges 7:23 through chapter 8 and verse 23. We will not necessarily read it all at one time, but I want you to pay close attention.

Judges chapter 7, beginning at verse 23: “And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters of Bethbara and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Bethbara and Jordan. And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeb, and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeb they slew at the winepress of Zeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeb to Gideon on the other side of Jordan. And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou callest us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?”

"And they did chide with him sharply." And he said unto them, "What have I now done in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hand the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeb. And what was I able to do in comparison of you?" Then their anger was abated toward him when he said that.

We will stop there momentarily, but we are going to be looking at all of this passage. We have looked at the preparation that God made when He is going to deliver a people: how He strips us of our pride, arrogance, self-ability, and self-confidence; how He always sends a preacher, who warns us of our sins and rebellion and proclaims the goodness and grace of God; and how this demonstrates that it is God and God alone who can deliver us.

We looked also at the person God used in deliverance. In Gideon we saw a man who was prudent and practical. Here was a man who was perceptive and discerning. Here was a man who was called and sent. Here was a man who was humble and meek. Here was a man who was believing and bold. We then looked at the power, and saw that the power in deliverance was God alone.

I emphasize that we do not need a majority, we do not need a multitude; we only need the Lord. God used Gideon and his three hundred to deliver Israel. Therefore, we do not put confidence in men, in a multitude, or in magnitude, I might add. God has consistently throughout the Bible used little things, as I pointed out last week. In fact, He said, "Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Our Lord took twelve men and turned the world upside down.

Last week I showed you how God used psychological warfare. This psychological warfare is evident throughout Scripture, but especially in Judges chapter 7. There God used the trumpets, the clay pitchers, the firebrands, and, of course, later on, the sword. God is the supreme warrior. He can instill fear and terror in the minds of men, put thoughts in their minds, and allow His enemies simply to hear noise; they became terrified, ran, and left. At another time, they heard another noise and thought that the Ethiopians were coming, when the Ethiopians were not coming at all. I showed you verse after verse where God simply allowed His enemies to hear noise. God is

certainly supreme and sovereign, and since He controls the minds, emotions, and actions of men, He is indeed the supreme psychological warrior. What you have in Judges chapter 7 is divine psychological warfare.

God's deliverance is always complete. He always delivers us from something and unto something. He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt unto the promised land. Scripture says that He brought them out that He might bring them in. He did not bring them out to drop them in the wilderness.

God's Deliverance Is Complete: From Tyranny to Liberty

The same truth is made in Colossians 1, verse 12. The Bible says that we are to give thanks unto the Father who has made us suitable to be partakers of the saints and the like, who has translated us out from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. So we have a deliverance from, and we have a deliverance unto.

Likewise, when God delivers a people from tyranny, from oppression, He always delivers them unto liberty and freedom. When God delivers us from tyranny, He delivers us from man's law unto God's law. God's law is indeed the law of liberty. In James chapter 1, verse 25, the law of God is called the perfect law of liberty.

Liberty and freedom do not necessarily mean that you can do whatever you please; that is licentiousness. Liberty, we can say it like this, is the freedom to do what you are required to do and what you should do. Liberty is actually deliverance from sin and oppression in order that we may fulfill our duties and our responsibilities freely and openly as unto God and for God's honor and God's glory.

When God delivers us from man's law system unto His law system in delivering us from tyranny and oppression, consider this: Suppose that today God destroyed America. Suppose our infrastructure were totally, absolutely gone. Our economic system were gone. Our governmental system were gone. Our educational system were gone. Nothing remained except we, the people, and God allowed us to rebuild this country and society.

Which law structure would you use? Whose law structure would you use? You really only have a choice between two. You may either use God's law structure or you may use man's law structure, but that's it. Then you have to remember that it is man's law structure that has gotten us into the mess that we are in right now. Therefore, the only way that you could rebuild safely is to rebuild upon God's law structure.

Do you understand that this has been the dilemma of every generation? How do I build my life? How do I build my home? How do I build my business? How do I build a kingdom, or a country, or a state, or a city, or a government? Do I build it upon the law of God, or do I build it upon the law of man? This is the age-old battle between theonomy, God's law, and autonomy, man's law.

If you were to rebuild tomorrow, what law structure would you use? You have to have a law structure. You cannot exist without law. You may either use man's law or God's law, but you have to have a law structure.

The Destruction of the Civil Rulers

In Judges chapter 7, Gideon has used psychological warfare. When he sounded the trumpets, the Midianites thought that three hundred separate companies or three hundred separate armies surrounded them. When they broke those clay pitchers and the firebrand appeared, they knew that the pitchers being broken were swords being drawn. Here were men lighting the way to come down upon the camp.

It was about two o'clock in the morning. They were waking out of a deep sleep. They could not see, and they did not know who was there. God sovereignly turned every sword against his brother. The Bible tells us that about 120,000 of them were killed. Some escaped and began running, and Gideon then began to pursue them.

God was going to finish delivering Israel out of the hands of the Midianites. There were four things to understand. First, there was the destruction of the civil rulers. The account says, "And they took the two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeb, and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeb they slew at the winepress of Zeb, and

pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeb to Gideon on the other side of Jordan."

The Destruction of Civil Rulers

The rulers were leading their people against the Israelites. They were the ones responsible for the raids, the pillaging, the plunder, the rape, and the murder. One of the principles in warfare is simply this: you destroy the head.

Do you not remember that this is the very first principle given to us in Genesis 3 and verse 15? Genesis 3:15 is the Protevangelium, the first promise of the Messiah in the Bible. Concerning Christ and the serpent, the Bible says that the serpent shall wound the heel of a woman's child, but the woman's child, Christ, shall bruise the head of the serpent. Do you realize that a head wound is, of course, a devastating wound?

What God is saying is this: if you are going to win a victory, if you are going to be delivered, then you must destroy the head. Please think about this. There are a multitude of enemies in our country today. If there was an insurrection tomorrow, and the people rose up and slew all of our common enemies but left the heads, guess what? You are going to have to do it again sooner or later, because the heads are going to get another group, and they will continue to attack and destroy the country. The principle is that you destroy the head.

I do not know if any of you ever played with snakes when you were children, but I did. I used to love snakes. I used to catch rattlesnakes and moccasins, put them in Kroger sacks—sometimes I would have twenty or thirty in there—and take them somewhere and let them go. When I was a boy, I also played with what was called a joint snake. Has anyone ever heard of a joint snake? It is fascinating. You can take a hoe and chomp a joint snake in two, and he does not die.

He will crawl off and grow that last portion of his body from wherever you chomped him off. It will always grow back; that is why it is called a joint snake. The only way you can kill a joint snake is to cut off his head. If you do not cut off his head, the rest of his body is

going to grow back again. Is that not interesting? This is exactly what God is saying in these civil rulers. God said that you must take care of the head. The only way to ensure that the enemy is totally destroyed is to destroy its leaders.

In the initial rout under Gideon, a number of people were killed, but a number of enemies fled, and they fled various ways. If you look in your Bibles, hold Judges 7, but look in Deuteronomy 28 and verse 7. You will see that this is one of the promises in the Bible for obedience to the law of God. God says, "The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face. They shall come out against thee one way and flee before thee seven ways."

So here they are scattering. Gideon had sent home about 10,000 people, 9,700. These men probably had not made it home, so he sent for them now that the enemy was running. He not only sent for them; he sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Bethbara and Jordan." Then all the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Bethbara and Jordan. The interesting thing is that Bethbara simply means "the house of the ford."

It was a shallow, narrow place where you could easily cross the Jordan River. So they took that crossing, beat the Midianites there, and evidently slew a great number of them. Included were two princes, Oreb and Zeb. There is a great deal of irony in Scripture. Scripture always tells us that God is not mocked. Oreb and Zeb, two princes of the Midianites, had been captured. The word Oreb means raven; the word Zeb means wolf.

Their names indicate their character. They were beastly, cunning, vile, and scavengers. That is why they were there: to destroy the Israelites. They were scavenging. They were not willing to work; they were willing to take from someone else. Look, please, at verse 25: "And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeb, and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb."

They took Oreb and slew him upon the rock Oreb. What does that mean? It means they killed him upon a rock. Why did they kill him upon a rock? Probably that was where they found him hiding. Do you remember when this story first started, back in Judges chapter six and verse two? Who was hiding among the rocks? The Israelites. They were hiding. Now the Midianites are hiding among the rocks.

You have a total reversal of roles. Those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake will ultimately be on top, and the enemy will be on bottom. In fact, the fault occurs, so look in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 6. Let me show you how thoroughly on top the righteous will be. Here you have Revelation chapter 6, verses 15 through 17. Revelation 6, verse 15: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on"

Revelation says that the kings of the earth and the great men will cry to the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" What are they doing? They are pleading for the rocks to hide them. Here is Oreb, captured and slain on the rock of Oreb. Just as he and his kind were hiding in the rock, so all those who persecute God's people and hate Jesus Christ will ultimately be in the rocks, crying for the rocks to fall upon them and hide them.

Secondly, if you notice in verse 25, Zeb was captured and slain at the winepress of Zeb. There is a great deal of irony in Scripture. When this story began in chapter 6, who was hiding behind the winepress? Gideon. Now it is no longer Gideon hiding behind the winepress; it is a prince of Midian. The Midianites are now hiding.

The winepress, of course, speaks of the judgment of God. Look in your Bibles to Isaiah 63. Here is a wonderful passage concerning God's judgment. That is the place for the enemies of God to hide, because that is where He will be trampling out the vintage. Isaiah 63, beginning with verse 1: "Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength. I that speak in

righteousness, mighty to save," that is Jesus Christ. "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine vat?" Christ says, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me, for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment, for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

Isn't that amazing? He said, "And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered, and there was none to uphold. Therefore, mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me." Christ says, "I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury. I will bring down their strength in the earth."

Who is going to ultimately be destroyed? All of those that hate Christ and oppose His people. That passage reminds me of another passage in Joshua chapter 10. Joshua had captured these kings. In Joshua 10:24-25 we read: "And it came to pass when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel and said unto the captains of the men of war, which went with him, now look what he says, 'Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings.' And they came near and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, 'Fear not, nor be dismayed. Be strong and of good courage, for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.'"

Why did Joshua say, "Come here, and put your feet on the necks of these kings"? Because if you have your foot on someone's neck, they are not only defeated, but at your mercy. It is simple and easy to break someone's neck with your foot.

Some of you old-time country folks will remember how you used to kill possums. You would catch one, hold it by the tail, put its head on the ground, place your foot on its neck, and tug. You would just break its neck. That is exactly the picture given here. God says, "Put your feet on their necks"; they are going to be destroyed.

What happened to Oreb and Zeb? They got their heads cut off. Judges 7:25 says: "And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb

and Zeb, and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeb they slew at the winepress of Zeb and pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeb to Gideon, to the other side of Jordan." So they lost their heads. Let me tell you something, folks.

If you can see the flow of truth in this passage, it should teach us that we should never be discouraged, but should always take heart. It does not matter what the situation or circumstances may be. The truth is that we are more than victors in Jesus Christ. In fact, the Bible says it very plainly in Romans 8:37. After naming all of these things that man could possibly fear and could possibly ever dream or think of, the Apostle Paul said, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." If we are more than conquerors in all these things, why should we ever be discouraged? Why should we not always be full of heart and full of faith?

We know how the end is going to happen. No one can thwart, defeat, overthrow, hinder, stop, or conquer the sovereign of the universe. He will prevail. He will conquer. Times may look mighty bad, but do not look at the times; look at the conqueror. Look at Christ. He has prevailed.

Not only were the princes Oreb and Zeb taken, but the kings Zeba and Zalmunna were also captured. Here is the destruction of the civil rulers. Look in chapter 8, beginning in verse 18:

"Then said he unto Zeba and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom you slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they. Each one resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother. As the Lord liveth, if you had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword, for he feared, because he was yet a youth. Then Zeba and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, fall upon us. For as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zeba and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks."

Now, in biblical warfare, the city or army that would not make peace with God, or with the people of God, was to have all its men totally wiped out and destroyed. You will find that in Deuteronomy 20:13: "And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it," that is, the

city, “thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword.” Since this army had been delivered into Gideon’s hands, he was supposed to smite the men with the edge of the sword, especially their rulers.

So you have to ask yourself: Why did Gideon even bother to ask about his brethren in verse 19? When he asked about them, he said, “They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother, as the Lord liveth. If you would save them alive, I would not slay you.” You remember that Ahab got in trouble for sparing a heathen king when God had appointed that king to destruction; of course, Ahab was a heathen himself. What, then, was Gideon doing when he asked Zeba and Zalmunna about his brethren?

Let me put what I will call the biblical construction upon this. First, I believe Gideon was trying to elicit from these kings a confession of their cold-blooded murder of his brethren. And he got it. Secondly, I believe Gideon knew the answer before he ever asked the question. Sometimes we ask questions when we already know the answer.

Now that the confession has been made, and Gideon realizes these men did indeed murder his brethren, watch what happens. He assumes the role of the anointed one, or the blood avenger. What does that mean? It takes the matter out of the realm of personal vengeance and places it squarely in the realm of justice.

Not only did Deuteronomy 20:13 demand the death of these individuals, but, since they had confessed to murdering his brethren, Gideon, as next of kin and avenger of blood, had the absolute right to require their lives. In Deuteronomy 19, when an individual who had murdered escaped to a city of refuge, they would hold a trial. If the man was found guilty of premeditated murder, they turned him over to the blood avenger and said, “Go ahead and execute him.” Gideon was therefore executing these men justly, not necessarily out of personal vengeance.

But out of divine justice. What the Midianites had done to Israel, they had done to God. What did God tell Israel in Zechariah 2:8? He said, "Whoever touches you touches the apple of my eye." Do you realize our Lord said it very similarly in Matthew 25? He said,

"Inasmuch as you've done it unto the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me." Gideon then was acting as God's divine avenger, and thus we have a picture of divine retribution.

Initially, Gideon was going to let his son Jether slay these two men. He was going to give his firstborn son the honor of killing these two kings. Of course, that would also add to the humiliation of the kings, to be slain by a mere lad, a mere youth. Jether refused to do it. He was scared. He had not necessarily killed anyone. The Bible says that he pulled out his sword and feared because he was but a youth.

Let me ask you a question. Here is a picture of a father and a son, where the father was going to give his son an honor, but the son was too immature to accept the honor and accomplish the deed. Look at Hebrews chapter 5, beginning in verse 12: "For when for the time you ought to be teachers," that is, you should be teaching, "you have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe."

“But strong meat belongs to them that are full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” What did God say? There is a time when you ought to be teachers, yet you revert to immaturity, needing someone to teach you again the very first principles of the Word of God. You act like a child and need milk instead of meat.

I believe there is indeed a great deal of immaturity in the people of God—so much that our immaturity holds us back from accomplishing great things for God. We are so immature that the average Christian cannot distinguish between personal vengeance and justice. We have heard people whose child, husband, or wife has been murdered say sentimentally, “But I don't want to put him to death; I forgive him.” Whether you forgive him or not is immaterial. God says, “Whosoever shedeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” God said you are to take no amount of restitution for a murderer; he is to be put to death. Wanting a murderer put to death is not personal vengeance. That is biblical justice.

Look in your Bibles to Psalm 149. Here is what I mean when I say that we do not understand the difference between vengeance and justice. “Let the saints be joyful in glory. Let them sing aloud upon their beds.” What are we to be singing? “Let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand. Why? To execute vengeance,” that is, God's vengeance, “upon the heathen and punishments upon the people. To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron. To execute upon them the judgment written.” “This honor have” how many? “All the saints. Praise ye the Lord.”

The saints are to be mature enough to know the difference between personal vengeance and justice. When it comes to justice, we are to execute God's divine justice. We are not to hold back the sword in that instance. What happens is that these two kings, when they see the lad, will not slay them.

They looked at Gideon and said, “Arise thou and slay us. Fall upon us, for as a man is, so is his strength.” Gideon, are you afraid to kill us too? Gideon said, “Not I.” Then he fell upon them and took care of them.

Please understand that there is a vast difference between personal vengeance and biblical justice. When God delivers us from tyranny and oppression, He destroys the head—wicked, reprobate, ungodly civil rulers who lead the people in rebellion against Him.

This is but the first step in restoration. If you merely got rid of wicked civil rulers and did nothing else, you would have a new crop of them in the morning. I never will forget what one of my preacher friends said about the international bankers: “God could kill every one of them tonight, and in the morning there’d be so many Baptists fighting among themselves just to take their place.” That is about the truth, because we are so ignorant of biblical law and biblical justice.

The Destruction of Carnal Reasoning

Secondly, consider the destruction of carnal reasoning. Not only does God destroy civil rulers; when He delivers us, He destroys carnal reasoning. Judges 8:1 says, “And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus? That thou callest us not

when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?" They chided him sharply. Gideon answered, "What have I now done in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered unto your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeb. And what was I able to do in comparison of you?" Their anger was abated. Ephraim attacked Gideon simply because he had not called them at the beginning of the conflict.

Here is a tribe struggling for dominance and leadership, so much so that they are challenging Gideon. They are hurt because they believe they have been left out and had no initial part in the original conflict, and it has to be all Gideon's fault. Does that sound familiar? There are some people who simply cannot rejoice in the grace and glory that God gives to somebody else. Unless they are partakers of it, unless they can be in it or run it, they do not want God to be merciful to anybody. They do not want God to bless anybody.

When Ephraim came up to Gideon, it did not matter to them that God ordered the battle, chose the men, or that the other tribes were not included in the initial battle. Ephraim was left out, and their pride was hurt. Their feelings were hurt. They wanted to be the leader, the dominant one, and the one to get the glory. At times like this, truth and the Word of God simply do not matter. Is that not the way most people look at it? Does it matter what God's Word says? Does it matter what God's will is? Does it matter what God's way is? My feelings are hurt. I was not involved.

Man by nature wants to be first and foremost. He wants to be preeminent. May I tell you lovingly that position is already taken? Colossians 1:18 tells us that in all things Christ must have the preeminence. He is to be the preeminent one. Yet it never ceases to amaze me that man's nature has not changed in thousands of years.

There are multitudes of illustrations of that fact. Some people believe in evolution. I do not understand how, but if evolution were true, it seems we should be improving in some areas. The fact is, evolution is not true, and we are just as depraved today as we were in Gideon's time. Here Gideon is, with all the people gathered together. They are chasing Zeba and Zalmunna, and they have not been caught yet. Plenty of the enemies are on the run, and right in the middle of a fight, a life-and-death struggle, some people will stop

and say, “Wait a minute. What is going on, you idiot? Why did you not call us first? Why did we not have a part in this?”

“And this has got to be your fault. You've just slighted us.” Let me tell you something, folks. I have always said that we Christians are the only ones who would rather fight among ourselves than fight our enemies. We're the only ones who would rather turn on a wounded brother than fight the enemy. If the enemy really knew us, all he'd have to do is leave us alone; we'd kill ourselves. Can you imagine that? I cannot, for the life of me, imagine these people coming to Gideon and saying, “Gideon, why didn't you call us? This is your fault.”

I told you this point is the destruction of carnal reasoning. You know what my flesh would want to do if somebody came to me in the middle of a fight like that and asked why I didn't call them? I'd like to pick him up, hold him against the wall, and say, “What in the world is wrong with you, dummy? I didn't initiate this fight. God did. I didn't order the battle. God did.” I'd give him a piece of my mind. I believe that's probably what Gideon's flesh wanted to do, but he didn't do it. Gideon is far more sanctified than I am. It's just like I told one man one time.

This man had made a blazing, blatant, and untrue statement about a brother's wife. Then he had the audacity to come to me and say, “I don't even think this brother's a Christian.” I said, “I don't know whether he is or not, but I know he's a better Christian than I am.” He asked what I meant. I said, “Because if you had said about my wife what you said about his wife, I'd already have beaten you into the ground. The very fact that he can hold his temper and control his flesh means he's a better Christian than I am. I'd have whipped you.” But you know what Gideon understood? He understood Proverbs 15.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stirreth up anger." Gideon understood that a man who hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down without walls. If you cannot control your own spirit, anybody can get in, get what they want, and get out. Proverbs 16:32 says, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit better than he that taketh the city."

Gideon did not answer the Ephraimites by insisting, "I did not do this; God did this." He simply said, "Yes, it is true. The Abiezrites were there, but look what God has done for you. God has delivered Oreb and Zeb into your hands. You have the princes. Is not the gleaning of Ephraim better than the first harvests of the Abiezrites? Look what you could do. I could not do that. I did not capture those princes. You did." Their pride was flattered, their feelings were no longer hurt, and everything was all right.

If God never gave us a military victory, but only delivered us from our pride, our feelings, and our carnal reasoning, we would be the world better off. God delivered Gideon and the Ephraimites in that sense: He destroyed their carnal reasoning.

This is something we must learn as Christians. I am not an ecumenist, and I am not for yoking up with anyone who hates Christ or disbelieves the Bible. But there are people who believe the Bible and trust in Jesus Christ who may believe somewhat differently from us in certain areas. We cannot discount them as Christians. God does not give every man the same amount of light, nor does He give every man the same truth at the same time. Yet we must either work together and fight together, or we will hang separately.

That is what Gideon taught the Ephraimites: We must work and fight together, or we will hang separately. The goal of our life is that every thought should be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. Our carnal reasoning is to be destroyed.

The Destruction of the Criminal Rebels

SCRIPTURE READING - Judges 8:5-9 (KJV)

> "And he said to the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me, for they be faint. I am pursuing after Zeba and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zeba and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army? And Gideon said, Therefore, when the Lord hath delivered Zeba and Zalmunna into mine hand, then will I tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars.

The Destruction of Criminal Rebels

> And he went up against Penuel and spake likewise unto them. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him. And he spake unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I'll break down this tower."
>
> Gideon was chasing these people. Why did the men of Succoth and the men of Penuel ask Gideon, "Are the hands of Zeba and Zalmunna now in thine hand?" They did it because of fear: fear of man, fear of death, and fear of the Midianites. Zeba and Zalmunna had gone through there with 15,000 soldiers. How many were with Gideon? Three hundred. He and his men were faint and yet pursuing.

These men of Succoth and Penuel had apostatized from the faith. It was not merely fear of man; it was unbelief. Thus they were traitors to God, traitors to Gideon, and traitors to Israel. Proverbs 10:24 says, “The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him.” Those who think to run from the sword of the Lord will run into it. Those who try to escape the sword—evidently, an arrow of steel shall be shot through them. You cannot escape the judgment of God.

In contempt of God, when Gideon asked bread for his men, they refused to answer the just demands of the man whom God had raised up to save them. Gideon was the deliverer. They affronted him and battered him. They despised the success with which he had already been honored and despaired of the success of his present undertaking. They did what they could to discourage him in prosecuting the war, willing to believe that the remaining forces of Gideon, which they had seen march through their country, would be more than able to destroy Gideon and his three hundred.

They were living by sight and not by faith. Moreover, the bowels of their compassion were shut up against their brethren; they were as destitute of love as of faith. They would not even give morsels of bread to those fainting soldiers. These men were supposed to be princes, elders, Israelites, and men of faith. They were none of these. They were cowards and traitors. Probably most of them were worshipers of Baal, or at least employed in the interests of Midian.

Whether you look at Succoth or Penuel, it is the same thing. Gideon said in verse 16, “And he took the elders of the city and thorns of the wilderness and briars, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.”

He said, “When I come back, I’m going to teach you a lesson.” So he took the men of Succoth, these elders and princes. Verse 14 says, “He called a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him, and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men, seventy-seven men.” He came unto the men of Succoth and said, “Behold, Zeba and Zalmunna, with whom you did upbraid me, saying, Are the hands of Zeba and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?” Then he took the elders of the city, with thorns of the wilderness and briars, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.

You must remember that those thorns were not like the little thorns that grow in our blackberry bushes. Some were two and three inches long. Scripture says, “Those who show no mercy shall receive judgment without mercy.” Maybe these men were soft and delicate, perhaps even effeminate. Perhaps they despised the hardiness of Gideon’s men, or, as ruling elders, were simply unaccustomed to toughness. Gideon said, “I’ll show you what it is like.” He rolled them in the briars and thorns, ripping and tearing their flesh. He instructed their minds, for verse 16 says, “with these he taught the men of Succoth.” He made them know their folly, their sin, and their duty. He made them know that they had despised God and God’s Deliverer. He taught them with the briars and thorns.

That is a principle of Scripture. Micah 6:9 says, “Hear ye the rod, and Him who hath appointed it.” If you and I hear the Word of God, we will not receive His rod. It is only when we refuse to hear that we get the rod. These people refused to hear, and God gave them the rod.

Moreover, the men of Penuel came next. Verse 17 says, “He beat down the tower of Penuel and slew all the men of the city.”

That tower was perhaps what the people trusted and gloried in. They probably thought Gideon and his men could not defeat them,

but they found out differently. Gideon tore down the tower, and probably took and killed the elders of the city, like those in Succoth. Those who are traitors to God, God's law, and God's people must always suffer. They will always end up deserving death, and they will be given that death—not out of vengeance or vindictiveness, but out of biblical justice.

Let me show you, on the one hand, a failure of our forefathers to understand this principle. During the American Revolution, there were plenty of people in the South as well as in the North who were Tories. They sympathized with the king, allied themselves with King George III, and supported his strong, centralized bureaucracy and tough, tyrannical, oppressive rule. After the war, boatload after boatload of Tories left Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina, on their way back to England. But some did not go quite far enough. They settled in the northern colonies after leaving the South. I am afraid—and I have not done any research on this—that it was their descendants who wanted to push that same centralized bureaucracy upon us in 1861 to 1865.

What has God done? In His grace, God will deliver us from those who are unsympathetic to His Word, His will, and His way. He will either change them, convert them, or destroy them.

You have seen the destruction of the civil rulers, the destruction of carnal reasoning, and the destruction of the criminal rebels. One last point is deliverance unto the crowned ruler. Look in verses 22 and 23: "Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son's son also, for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you, the Lord shall rule over you." Deliverance is both negative and positive.

Deliverance Unto the Crowned Ruler

Deliverance is from something unto something. God has delivered us out of the kingdom of Satan and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. He delivers us from oppression and tyranny—the oppression and tyranny of man's law—and always delivers us into the freedom of His own law and the freedom of His own rule. If I had time, I would take you back to 1 Samuel chapter 8 and show you

point after point where we had sinned against God, and God said, “Here is your punishment for wanting a man to rule over you instead of Me.”

When Gideon was offered this, he was not merely offered the kingship of Israel; he was offered a dynastic kingship: “You rule over us. And when you die, your son; and when he dies, your son's son,” and so on down the line. Gideon said, “No, I am not going to rule over you. Neither is my son going to rule over you. God is going to rule over you.” Would it not be wonderful if the rule of God were sought, found, and manifest on a national scale in our land today? Would it not be wonderful if righteousness existed in our government, schools, homes, businesses, and every area and sphere of life? Would it not be absolutely wonderful if every man, woman, boy, and girl bowed the knee to Jesus Christ? One day they shall. Philippians 2:10 says that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.

When everyone bows the knee to Jesus Christ and acknowledges and confesses that Jesus Christ is God, Lord, and Savior, what will happen? “Then cometh the end, when He,” Christ, “shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and all power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.” When Christ is the complete, full, and final conqueror, He will say, “Here it is, Father; I give it back to You.”

And righteousness and peace and holiness will envelop the land. Let me make a couple of applications. The first is this: only God's deliverance is thorough and complete. He not only delivers us from our enemies, which is great and wonderful; He delivers us to Himself, which is even more wonderful and even greater: to be the children of God, to live and walk and act as children of God.

Applications: Thorough Deliverance and Encouragement to Persevere

The second application is this: knowing that God is the conqueror, that Jesus Christ is the sovereign and the victor, should be one of the greatest encouragements to every child of God. We should know and

realize that we are more than conquerors in Jesus Christ. What an incentive to persevere in the faith, repentance, study, holiness, and righteousness—to know that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ.

We will not give in. We will not give up. We will not give out, because our Lord truly has already won the war. We are waiting for that day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

We do ask You to help us, teach us, and give us grace and faith. Help us, Lord, to live for Thee. Make us holy and godly. Father, help us to persevere in truth and righteousness. In Christ's name we ask and pray, amen and amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: Principles of Deliverance - 1
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Chapter 2: Principles of Deliverance - 2
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Chapter 3: Principles of Deliverance - 3
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Chapter 4: Principles of Deliverance - 4
JW00921 | SermonAudio

Chapter 5: Principles of Deliverance - 5
JW00920 | SermonAudio

Chapter 6: Principles of Deliverance - 6
JW00919 | SermonAudio

Chapter 7: Principles of Deliverance - 7
JW00918 | SermonAudio

Chapter 8: Principles of Deliverance - 8
JW00917 | SermonAudio

Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.

A

America as a Covenant Nation p. 29

America's Christian Foundation and Rejection of Pluralism p. 34

Application to America p. 21

Application to Modern America: One Flag, One Language, One Faith p. 40

Applications and Broader Picture p. 129

Applications and Conclusion p. 62, p. 113

Applications: Thorough Deliverance and Encouragement to Persevere p. 151

B

Biblical Examples of Meek Leaders p. 58

Biblical Examples of Psychological Warfare p. 119

Biblical Pattern of Attack After Blessing p. 84

Biblical Usage of Deliverance p. 8

C

Called and Sent Deliverers Never Fail p. 87

Conclusion and Prayer p. 25

Conclusion: Christ Alone is Our Answer p. 98

D

Deliverance as Negative and Positive p. 9

Deliverance Unto the Crowned Ruler p. 150

G

Gamaliel's Principle and Divine Sovereignty p. 88

Gideon's Discernment and Perception p. 52

Gideon's Divine Call and Sending p. 54

Gideon's Meekness and Humility p. 57

Gideon's Prudence and Practicality p. 50

Gideon's Request for Confirmation p. 92

Gideon: Believing and Bold p. 67

Gideon’s Boldness and the City’s Reaction p. 77
Gideon’s Humility and God’s Peace p. 71
Gideon’s Request for a Sign p. 68
God as the Definer of Good and Evil p. 12
God Delights in Using Small Things p. 117
God Encourages Gideon's Faith p. 110
God Sends Delusion on the Wicked p. 126
God's Deliverance Is Complete: From Tyranny to Liberty p. 135
God's Reduction of Gideon's Army p. 102
God's Unchanging Character in Choosing Deliverers p. 101
God's Willingness to Give Victory in Christ p. 96

H

Historical Example: Robert E. Lee p. 60

I

Introduction and Review p. 82, p. 115
Introduction and Review of the Series p. 133
Introduction and Scripture Reading p. 47, p. 99
Introduction to Deliverance p. 7
Introduction: Some to Be Received p. 29
Isaiah's Promise to the Faithful Stranger p. 32

O

Old Testament Laws Protecting the Stranger p. 30
One Law for Native and Stranger p. 33

P

Preparation for Deliverance: Stripping p. 15
Principle Seven p. 115
Principles of Deliverance p. 7
Principles of Deliverance - 1 p. 7
Principles of Deliverance - 2 p. 27
Principles of Deliverance - 3 p. 47
Principles of Deliverance - 4 p. 65
Principles of Deliverance - 5 p. 81

Principles of Deliverance - 6 p. 99
Principles of Deliverance - 7 p. 115
Principles of Deliverance - 8 p. 133
Psychological Warfare Defined p. 117

R

Review of Part 1: The Right to Control Borders p. 27
Review of Previous Messages p. 66
Review of Previous Points p. 48
Review of Previous Principles p. 100

S

Solomon's Prayer for the God-Fearing Stranger p. 31

T

The Bullock as a Picture of Christ p. 76
The Command to Destroy Baal’s Altar p. 73
The Condition for Welcome: Assimilation to God's Covenant p. 33
The Cost of Doing Right p. 78
The Destruction of Carnal Reasoning p. 144
The Destruction of Civil Rulers p. 137
The Destruction of Criminal Rebels p. 148
The Destruction of the Civil Rulers p. 136
The Destruction of the Criminal Rebels p. 147
The Enemy Attacks After Reformation p. 84
The Fleece as a Picture of Christ p. 95
The Offering and the Consuming Fire p. 69
The Person of Deliverance p. 48
The Person of Deliverance: God Uses a Man p. 48
The Power of Deliverance and the Fleece as a Picture of Christ p. 102
The Psychological Impact on the Midianites p. 126
The Role of Government and Justice p. 11
The Spirit of the Lord Empowers Gideon p. 87
The Stranger Who Obeys God's Law p. 37
The Symbolism of Dew and Fleece p. 93
The Test at the Water p. 109

The Test of Tolerance and the Imposition of Values p. 36
The Trumpet and the Gathering of Followers p. 89

V

Victory Does Not Depend on a Multitude p. 106

W

Warning Against Arrogant Leaders p. 61
Wicked Government and the Need for Deliverance p. 13

Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.

Genesis

Genesis 3 p. 137

Genesis 3:15 p. 137

Genesis 27 p. 93, p. 94

Exodus

Exodus 15 p. 127

Exodus 17:1-8 p. 84

Exodus 22 p. 29

Exodus 23 p. 127

Exodus 23:9 p. 30

Exodus 33:14 p. 93

Leviticus

Leviticus 4 p. 76

Leviticus 16:29 p. 37, p. 38

Leviticus 17:8-9 p. 38

Leviticus 18:26 p. 38

Leviticus 19:33-34 p. 37, p. 38

Leviticus 20:1 p. 37

Leviticus 22:18 p. 38

Leviticus 24 p. 39

Numbers

Numbers 12:3 p. 58

Numbers 15 p. 33

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 2 p. 127

Deuteronomy 3 p. 104

Deuteronomy 10 p. 40

Deuteronomy 19 p. 142

Deuteronomy 19:14 p. 27
Deuteronomy 20 p. 107
Deuteronomy 20:13 p. 141, p. 142
Deuteronomy 24:14 p. 30
Deuteronomy 27:17 p. 27
Deuteronomy 27:19 p. 30, p. 31
Deuteronomy 28 p. 21, p. 138
Deuteronomy 31 p. 53
Deuteronomy 32 p. 70, p. 94
Deuteronomy 33 p. 94

Joshua

Joshua 10:24-25 p. 140

Judges

Judges 2:14 p. 21
Judges 3:27 p. 89, p. 90
Judges 3:8 p. 21
Judges 4:2 p. 21
Judges 6 p. 20, p. 21, p. 24, p. 47, p. 53, p. 81, p. 82, p. 86, p. 87, p. 88, p. 89
Judges 6:1 p. 7, p. 19
Judges 6:16-23 p. 65
Judges 6:33-40 p. 81
Judges 6:34 p. 89
Judges 7 p. 107, p. 138
Judges 7:1-15 p. 99
Judges 7:16-25 p. 115
Judges 7:2 p. 19
Judges 7:23 p. 133
Judges 7:25 p. 140, p. 141
Judges 8:1 p. 144, p. 145
Judges 8:5-9 p. 147
Judges 10:7 p. 21

1 Samuel

1 Samuel 12 p. 21

1 Samuel 16 p. 123

1 Kings

1 Kings 11 p. 18

2 Kings

2 Kings 7:3 p. 124

2 Kings 19 p. 125

2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles 16:9 p. 62

2 Chronicles 32:7-8 p. 55

Job

Job 12:16 p. 122, p. 123

Job 21 p. 120

Psalm

Psalm 24 p. 75, p. 76

Psalm 32 p. 8

Psalm 33:17 p. 61

Psalm 50 p. 75

Psalm 50:23 p. 106

Psalm 94 p. 13

Psalm 97:10 p. 74

Psalm 100 p. 94, p. 95

Psalm 110 p. 96, p. 101, p. 102

Psalm 115:3 p. 88, p. 89

Psalm 118:8-9 p. 61, p. 62

Psalm 127:1 p. 61

Psalm 139 p. 120

Psalm 149 p. 144

Proverbs

Proverbs 10:24 p. 148

Proverbs 15 p. 146

Proverbs 16:32 p. 146

Proverbs 16:7 p. 18, p. 90

Proverbs 21:31 p. 61
Proverbs 22:28 p. 27
Proverbs 23:10 p. 27
Proverbs 27:12 p. 51
Proverbs 28:12 p. 51
Proverbs 28:28 p. 51
Proverbs 29 p. 108

Isaiah

Isaiah 11:9 p. 97
Isaiah 42:8 p. 73, p. 74
Isaiah 45:6-7 p. 12
Isaiah 46:10 p. 88, p. 89
Isaiah 52 p. 103, p. 104
Isaiah 53 p. 101, p. 102
Isaiah 53:10 p. 97
Isaiah 53:11 p. 97
Isaiah 53:2 p. 96
Isaiah 53:7 p. 96
Isaiah 55 p. 104
Isaiah 56 p. 32
Isaiah 59 p. 15
Isaiah 61 p. 9
Isaiah 63 p. 139, p. 140

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 17:5 p. 55

Hosea

Hosea 14 p. 94
Hosea 14:5 p. 96

Amos

Amos 5:15 p. 74

Micah

Micah 6:9 p. 149

Zechariah

Zechariah 2:8 p. 142, p. 143

Malachi

Malachi 3:6 p. 101

Matthew

Matthew 25 p. 142, p. 143

Mark

Mark 3:13 p. 50

Luke

Luke 5 p. 71

Luke 12 p. 117

Luke 19 p. 22

Luke 24:49 p. 89

John

John 1:16 p. 97

John 1:6 p. 66, p. 67, p. 82

John 3:16 p. 49, p. 97

John 15:5 p. 89

Acts

Acts 1:8 p. 89

Acts 2 p. 91

Acts 5 p. 48, p. 88

Acts 12:23 p. 106

Romans

Romans 8:32 p. 97, p. 102

Romans 8:37 p. 141

Romans 10:17 p. 48

Romans 13 p. 11, p. 15, p. 130

Romans 14:23 p. 73

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 1:26 p. 19

1 Corinthians 10:4 p. 70
1 Corinthians 14:8 p. 89
1 Corinthians 15:9-10 p. 60

Ephesians

Ephesians 2:14 p. 72
Ephesians 6 p. 89

Philippians

Philippians 2 p. 95, p. 96
Philippians 2:10 p. 151
Philippians 4:13 p. 89

Colossians

Colossians 1 p. 135
Colossians 1:18 p. 145
Colossians 1:19 p. 95
Colossians 2:9 p. 95

1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 5 p. 130

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 2 p. 125, p. 126
2 Thessalonians 3:10 p. 46
2 Thessalonians 3:16 p. 72

1 Timothy

1 Timothy 3:16 p. 95, p. 96

Hebrews

Hebrews 4:12 p. 131
Hebrews 11:6 p. 73, p. 111
Hebrews 12:29 p. 70

James

James 1 p. 12
James 1:13-15 p. 12
James 4 p. 72

1 John

1 John 3 p. 49, p. 50
1 John 4 p. 49
1 John 4:10 p. 97

Revelation

Revelation 6 p. 139
Revelation 8 p. 130
Revelation 19 p. 131

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