

Gideon's Fleece

"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." – Judges 6:12

"If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised-- look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor." – Judges 6:36-37

Introduction

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

There are **five separate incidents** in Gideon's life that are significant to us.

1) His Call, 2) His Test 3) His Fleece, 4) His Battle 5) His Ephod

1 Cor. 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: 27 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 the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

The Will of God

Urim and Thummim, Casting Lots, Dreams, Visions, etc.

Major Decisions: There are many situations in life when we are forced to make decisions regarding our plans or the plans of God. It is in those circumstances that we need to "prove" the perfect will of God.

- Your career choice
- Person you are to marry
- Whether to get married or stay single
- Job Opportunity
- Major move to new community
- Have surgery or not
- Retirement
- Missions Trip
- House to Buy
- Ministry to serve in
- Changing churches
- Full time Christian ministry

God does have a perfect plan for your life. God is concerned about you making the right decisions. God wants to lead you. God wants to bless you. God wants to make you a blessing.

Jeremiah 29:11, John 10:10, Psalm 37:23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: Romans 12:1-2 - it all begins here. The surrender of body and mind to determine God's will.

How to Find (discern) the Will of God

The answer is, "Not with fleeces alone."

A sinful and adulterous generation seeks after a sign.

A faithless generation seeks after a sign.

A fearful and timid person always seeks a sign.

Matthew 12:39 & Matthew 16:4 A sinful people seek after for a sign

Who is Gideon?

The story of Gideon is about an insecure and insignificant man that God used mightily.

The book of Judges are 15 Judges, Gideon, Samson, Deborah, Eli, Samuel. Major Judges [Joshua](#) (*the first great judge*) [Samson](#) (*great judge*) [Deborah](#) (*great judge*) [Gideon](#) (*great judge*)

“For seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. 2. Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. 3. Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country.”

Asherah Pole: It was also a symbol of worship of the Hebrew Goddess Asherah, the consort of Yahweh, during the time when the Hebrews followed the typical pattern of Levantine worship, focused on an Earth Mother and her snake consort.

The original bread of life. Hebrew and Canaanite women molded loaves of this figure which were blessed and ritually eaten, the precursor of the communion wafer (sun god image). Her idols were found under every green tree, were carved from living trees, or **erected as poles or pillars** beside roadside altars. Crude clay images of her as **tree of life** later evolved into the more refined Syrian **Artemis**. Ancient sexual rites (dismissed to this day by male scholars as cult prostitution) associated with worship of Asherah insured that matrilineal descent patterns, with their **partnership** rather than **dominator** values, would continue. Hebrew priestly iconoclasts finally uprooted Asherah, supplanting matrifocal culture with patriarchy.

What Do We Know About Gideon?

- His Call – the least of his tribe
- His Test – cut down the grove (Jerub-Baal)
- His Fleece – the will of God
- His Battle – only 300 men
- His Ephod – idolatry

What Can We Learn From Gideon?

- Your Call – God calls you for something
- Your Test – obedience
- Your Fleece – the will of God
- Your Battles – in God’s strength
- Your Ephod – pride (showing off)

How to Find the Will of God

The answer is, “Not with fleeces alone.”

1. Word – the Bible – Ps. 119:105
2. Whisper – still small voice - Is 30:21 Witness – leading of Holy Spirit – Rom. 8:14
3. Ways – open doors, circumstances – Rev. 3:8
4. Wise Counselors - Prov. 11:14
5. Wonderful Peace - Philippians 4:7

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. <u>Wits & Reason</u> - Proverbs 16:9 (paralysis of analysis)7. <u>Waiting on God</u> – fasting - Acts 13:2 |
|--|

Principles For Discerning God's Will and Leading

When considering important decision and the will of God it is necessary to walk through these steps to discern the mind of God. Using any one of them alone can leave us vulnerable to error. These things you should consider carefully:

1. **Word** - Psalms 119:130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. Psalms 119:105 Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 19: 7-14)
2. **Witness – the Spirit's Leading** - meaning a burden from God: Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: John 14:26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (Acts 8:5, 26)
3. **Whisper** - Isaiah 30:21 And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, This is the way, walk in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left. John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 1 Kings 19:12 a still small voice.
4. **Ways & Circumstances** - open and closed doors: Revelation 3:8 I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: 1 Corinthians 16:9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me. 2 Corinthians 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas a door was opened unto me of the Lord.
5. **Wise Counselors** - Proverbs 11:14 Where no counsel *is*, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors *there is* safety. Proverbs 15:22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established
6. **Wits - Reason & Logic** - Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart devises his way: but the LORD directs his steps. Acts 16:10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Acts 19:21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. Acts 20:16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.
7. **Wonderful Peace of God** - Psalms 29:11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace. Isaiah 55:12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands. Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.
8. **Waiting on God - Fasting and Prayer** - Acts 13:2 - Choosing Barnabas and Saul, waited on the Lord, ministered to the Lord, with fasting and prayers, the Lord said, "Set apart Barnabas..."

Prayer & Fasting - Bathe the thing in prayer. Soak in the Lord's Presence. Rest in the Lord. Wait patiently for him.

Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Judges 6-8

The Call

Judges 6

12. When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

13. "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian."

14. The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

15. "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."

16. The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

17. Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me."

18. Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return."

19. Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

20. The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so.

21. With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared.

22. When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!"

23. But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

24. So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. (Jehovah-Shalom) To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

The Test

Judges 6

25. That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. **Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.**

26. Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering."

27. So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

28. In the morning when the men of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar!

29. They asked each other, "Who did this?" When they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it."

30. The men of the town demanded of Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it."

31. But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar."

32. So that day they **called Gideon "Jerub-Baal "** saying, "Let Baal contend with him," because he broke down Baal's altar.

The Fleece

Judges 6

36. Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised--

37. look, **I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry**, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said."

38. And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew--a bowlful of water.

39. Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. **This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.**"

40. That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

The Battle

Judges 7

1. Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh.

2. The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her,

3. announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

4. But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

5. So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink."

6. Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

7. The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place."

The Ephod

Judges 8

23. But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you."

24. And he said, "I do have one request, that each of you give me an earring from your share of the plunder." (It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold earrings.)

25. They answered, "We'll be glad to give them." So they spread out a garment, and each man threw a ring from his plunder onto it.

26. The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels, not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels' necks.

27. Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

28. Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years.

Illustrations

What were the Urim and Thummim?

Objects connected with the breastplate of the high priest, and used as a kind of divine oracle. The Urim "lights" and Thummim "perfections" were gemstones that were carried by the High Priest of Israel on the ephod / priestly garments. They were used by the High Priest to determine God's will in some situations. Some propose that God would cause the Urim and Thummim to light up in varying patterns to reveal His decision. Others propose that the Urim and Thummim were kept in a pouch and were engraved with symbols identifying yes / no and true / false.

It is unclear whether the Urim and Thummim were on, by, or in the High Priest's ephod. No one knows the precise nature of the Urim and Thummim or exactly how they were used. The Bible simply does not give us enough information. References to the Urim and Thummim are rare in the Bible. They are first mentioned in the description of the breastplate of judgment (Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8). When Joshua succeeded Moses as leader over Israel, he was to receive answers from God by means of the Urim through Eleazar the High Priest (Numbers 27:21). The Urim and Thummim are next mentioned in Moses' dying blessing upon Levi (Deuteronomy 33:8). The following Scripture likely also speak of the Urim and Thummim: Joshua 7:14-18; 1 Samuel 14:37-45; and 2 Samuel 21:1.

15 Judges of Israel

Othniel	(3:7-11) 1st Judge after Joshua's death
Ehud	(3:12-30) Fought the Moabites
Shagmar	(3:31) Led Israelites against the Philistines
Deborah	(4-5) Prophetess, guided Barak to victory over the Canaanites, only female judge
Gideon	(6-8) Defeated Midianites with 300 men
Abimelech	(9) Only judge to win leadership through treachery
Tola	(10:1-5) Judged Israel for 23 years
Yair	(10: 1-5) Judged Israel for 22 years
Jephthah	(10:17-12:7) Defeated Ammonites
Ibzan	(12:8-15) Judged people for 7 years
Elon	(12:8-15) Judge for 10 years
Abdon	(12:8-15) Ruled for 8 years
Samson	(13-16) Fought Phillistines singlehandedly
Eli	(1 Samuel 1:9) Priest, ruled people from the sanctuary at Gilo
Samuel	Last judge before the kingdom came under the rule of Saul