



Study Guide: Judges – Chapter 6

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Judges Chapter 6 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Judges Chapter 6 marks a pivotal moment in the history of Israel during the period of the Judges. This chapter introduces the story of Gideon, a key figure whom God raises to deliver Israel from Midianite oppression. The chapter reveals themes of fear, doubt, divine calling, and God's provision. It sets the stage for understanding how God works through unlikely individuals to accomplish His purposes.

Context

The book of Judges covers the time between the conquest of Canaan and the establishment of monarchy in Israel. During this era, Israel repeatedly falls into cycles of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. Judges Chapter 6 occurs after a period of peace under the leadership of Othniel and Ehud, but now Israel faces severe oppression by the Midianites. These nomadic raiders devastate the land, causing famine and fear among the Israelites. The chapter introduces the beginning of God's deliverance through the calling of Gideon.

Outline

The chapter begins by describing the oppression of Israel by the Midianites and the resulting distress of the people. It then transitions to God's response, highlighting Israel's cry for help and God's sending of a prophet to remind them of their disobedience. The narrative then focuses on the calling of Gideon, who is initially reluctant and fearful. God encourages Gideon by revealing His presence and power, culminating in the miraculous sign of the fleece. The chapter closes with Gideon preparing to lead Israel against their enemies.

Verse-by-Verse Study



Verses 1-3: Israel is oppressed by the Midianites for seven years due to their disobedience. The Midianites, along with Amalekites and other eastern peoples, invade and devastate the land, destroying crops and livestock, leaving the Israelites impoverished and fearful.

Verses 4-6: In their distress, the Israelites cry out to the Lord for help. God responds by sending a prophet to remind them of their repeated failure to obey His commands and their idolatry, which led to their suffering.

Verses 7-10: God's prophet confronts Israel with their sin and announces that their suffering is a consequence of their turning away from God. Despite their cries, God's patience is limited as their rebellion persists.

Verses 11-12: The angel of the Lord appears to Gideon while he is threshing wheat in a winepress, hiding from the Midianites. The angel addresses him as a "mighty warrior" and commissions him to save Israel from Midian's oppression.

Verses 13-15: Gideon expresses doubt and insecurity, questioning how he can save Israel given his family's low status and his own weakness. The angel reassures him that God will be with him, giving him confidence for the task ahead.

Verses 16-21: Gideon requests a sign to confirm the angel's message. He prepares an offering, and the angel causes fire to consume it, confirming God's presence. Gideon's fear turns to worship as he realizes he has encountered the divine.

Verses 22-24: Gideon recognizes that he has seen the angel of the Lord face to face and fears for his life. God reassures him, and Gideon builds an altar to the Lord, naming it "The Lord is Peace."

Verses 25-32: God commands Gideon to destroy his father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Gideon obeys, but does so at night out of fear. The next morning, the townspeople discover the destruction and demand Gideon's death, but his father defends him, arguing that if Baal is a god, he can defend himself.

Verses 33-35: The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon, and he summons the tribes of Israel to prepare for battle against Midian. He sends messengers throughout the land, calling the people to arms.

Verses 36-40: Gideon seeks further confirmation from God through the sign of the fleece. He asks God to make the fleece wet with dew while keeping the ground dry, and then the



reverse. God grants both signs, strengthening Gideon's faith and resolve.

Key Themes

One major theme is God's faithfulness to deliver His people despite their repeated disobedience. The chapter highlights the cycle of sin and redemption that characterizes the period of the Judges. Another theme is the calling of unlikely individuals; Gideon's initial fear and low status contrast with God's choice to use him as a deliverer. The presence of God's Spirit empowers Gideon for the mission. Additionally, the chapter emphasizes the importance of obedience and trust in God's guidance, as seen in Gideon's actions and requests for signs.

Cross-References

The oppression by Midian and the cycle of sin and deliverance in Judges 6 connect with similar patterns in Judges 2:11–19. Gideon's calling parallels other biblical call narratives such as Moses in Exodus 3 and Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1. The angel of the Lord's appearance recalls divine encounters in Genesis 18 and Exodus 3. The destruction of Baal's altar echoes Elijah's confrontation with Baal worship in 1 Kings 18. The Spirit's empowerment of Gideon relates to the Spirit coming upon Samson in Judges 14 and Saul in 1 Samuel 10.

Application

Judges Chapter 6 encourages believers to trust God's calling even when feeling inadequate or fearful. Gideon's story reminds us that God often chooses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary tasks. It challenges us to confront idolatry in our lives and communities, just as Gideon destroyed Baal's altar. The chapter also teaches the importance of seeking God's confirmation and guidance through prayer. Finally, it reassures us that God's Spirit equips and strengthens us to face challenges and fulfill His purposes.

Summary

Judges Chapter 6 presents a vivid account of Israel's oppression and God's call to Gideon as a deliverer. Despite fear and doubt, Gideon responds to God's commissioning and receives assurance through miraculous signs. The chapter highlights God's faithfulness, the power of His Spirit, and the necessity of obedience. It sets the foundation for the deliverance that follows and offers timeless lessons about trusting God's call and relying on His strength.

