

Judges 6:17-27 (NIV)

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. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

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.

07-06-02-Gideon's First Assignment

signs, idolatry, reform, obedience

Judg 6:17-27

We may seek divine signs, but God gives divine assignments.

INTRODUCTION:

–Israel had served *false gods*– **Judg 6:1**, "Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites."

When they cried to the Lord, God called Gideon—a *timid* man with *little courage*—to be the deliverer of Israel. Still *doubtful* and *unsure*,

Gideon said he needed some proof– **v.17-21**, *Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. 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." 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.*

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. 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. 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!" But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

–Before moving to *the crucial part* of this story, let's explore some...

I. Facets of Gideon's Sign-Seeking Behavior

- A. When God calls us to do something, do we ever ask, "*Is it 'really you talking to me'?*" AND if we do, *what does it show... about us?*
 1. We believe God spoke in the past in the Bible, but do we believe Christ's words in **John 10:27**, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." (*Are we **doubtful** He still speaks today?*)
 2. Like Gideon, *do we feel too insignificant for God to speak to us?* (Nobody is insignificant to God!–**Rom 5:8**, But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still **sinners**, Christ died for us.)
 3. *Do we feel **unworthy** of a call to serve God?* (If we're made in the image God, the *Ultimate Servant*, we're all called to serve.)
- B. What "*sign*" did Gideon ask? "*Stick around while I go make you an offering.*" (But he lost it when "*fire flared from the rock, consuming*" his

“offering” just before the angel “disappeared.”) How did he react?

1. He was so **scared**, God had to tell him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.” (We fear the *mysterious*, but God, Who is the Ultimate Mystery, wants to move us from our *fears* into *faith*.)
2. We raise monuments for extraordinary events then return to our ordinary lives. (Gideon “built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace.” Maybe he figured, “I’ve got my “sign,” paid tribute to God’s words of “Peace,” now back to a normal life.”

TRANS: *Not so! We seek signs; God gives assignments.* God really does *speak to us*. He affirms our *significance*, even calling each of us a “mighty warrior,” as He did Gideon. And He, the *Serving God*, calls us to be His servants, giving us *assignments in line with His divine will*. So...

II. He Told Gideon to Start a Reformation— v.25-27, *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. 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.” 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.*

- A. Israel had cried out under their oppression without removing the cause of their oppression. (If we’re to be delivered from Satan’s power, we must reject Satan’s lies and give up Satan’s ways.)
 1. [I wrote a *blog article* (“**Jesus Drew a Line**”) to warn readers that, between God’s Kingdom and Satan’s dominion, there can be no middle ground.]
 2. God’s love is consistently holy. (He loves us as sinners, but He never ignores our sin: He saves us to deliver us from sinning.)
- B. But giving up *false gods* wasn’t all. (They had to return to proper spiritual worship, to re-“build a proper kind of altar to the LORD.”)
 1. God indeed forbids sinful behaviors, but an exclusive focus on **what not to do** misses the point and leads to a trust in legalism.
 2. Real change comes from positive action, motivated by the *divine Positive— 2 Cor 1:19*, For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you... was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.”
- C. God had Gideon lead the way in reestablishing a *true spirituality*.
 1. Even if *those around us* keep their worldly diet, we must feed on our divine assignment as Jesus fed on His— John 4:34, “My food,”

said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”)

2. God assigned this task to a fearful soul— v.27b. But because he was **afraid** of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime. (God knew exactly what He was doing, when He gave Gideon this assignment. AND, He knows what He’s doing when He *comes to us with some mission for us to do that we feel is far beyond our gifts and abilities, way beyond our comfort zone*.)

CONCLUSION:

–In our *timidity*, in our *doubt*, in our *lack of confidence* and *courage*, **we may seek divine signs, but God gives divine assignments.**

–God gives these special tasks not just to accomplish His will in the world, but to embody His will in us. He *doesn’t scold us* for being so “afraid” that we obey Him secretly instead of *in broad daylight*. But He *never gives up on us*: He will lead us into a bold Christian lifestyle. He desires our spiritual growth. He wants us to reach maturity in Christ, achieving the potential He sees in us, so that *each of us becomes the “mighty warrior” He calls us to be*.