

Christ in the Sacrifices 16-01-24b

Let's pick up our study now in Judges chapter 6, and I'm going to read you the translation from Everett Fox out of Judges chapter 6. We've looked at some of his work before in terms of trying to give you a sense of what's in the Hebrew by a very creative English translation and transliterating, to the extent that it is possible, the names and titles and things that are here. So you're familiar now with the first portion of this chapter. So let me read you Fox's translation, which is a very literal rendition.

But the children, this is starting at 6.1. But the children of Israel did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh. So Yahweh gave them into the hand of Midian for seven years. And the hand of Midian was powerful against Israel.

In fear of Midian, the children of Israel made use for themselves of the dens that were in the highlands, as well as the caves, as well as the strongholds. It would be, whenever Israel would sow seed, that Midian would go up along with Amalek and the children of the east. They would go up against it, they would encamp against it, and they would lay ruin, the yield of the ground, as far as where you come to Gaza.

And they would not leave anything sustaining life in Israel, for sheep or for ox or for donkey. For they and their acquired livestock would go up along with their tents, and they would come like locusts in abundance. What was theirs and their camels was innumerable, and they came into the land to bring it to ruin.

So the children of Israel became exceedingly impoverished before Midian, and the children of Israel cried out to Yahweh. And it was when the children of Israel cried out to Yahweh on account of their poverty before Midian, that Yahweh sent a man, a prophet, to the children of Israel. He said to them, Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel, I myself brought you up from Egypt, and took you out of a house of serfs, and rescued you from the hand of Egypt, and from the hand of all your oppressors I drove them out from before you, and gave you their land.

And I said to you, I am Yahweh your God, you are not to hold in awe the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are settling, but you did not hearken to My voice. End of transmission. Now a messenger of Yahweh came and sat under the oak that is in Ophrah that belonged to Yoash the Avri-Ezraite, while Gideon Huer, his son, was beating down wheat in the wine press to whisk it away from before Midian.

Yahweh's messenger was seen by him. He said to him, Yahweh is with you, O mighty man of valor. Gideon said to him, Please, my lord, if Yahweh is with us, why has all this found us? Where are all the wonders which our fathers recounted to us, saying, Was it not from Egypt that Yahweh brought us up? Yet now Yahweh has forsaken us, and has given us into the grasp of Midian.

Yahweh faced him and said, Go forth in this strength of yours, and deliver Israel from the grasp

of Midian. Have I not sent you? He said, Please, O Lord, whereby shall I deliver Israel? Here my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house. Yahweh said to him, Indeed, I will be with you.

You will strike down Midian as if they were one man. He said to him, Now if I have found favor in your eyes, make me a sign that it is you speaking to me. Now do not depart from this place until I come back to you and have brought out my gift and placed it before you.

He said, I will stay until your return. So Gideon came out and made ready a goat's kid with an ephah of unleavened meal, the meat he put in a basket, while the broth he put in a boiling pot. He took them out to him beneath the oak and brought them close.

That's where we left off at the end of our first session. Now I'm going to continue forward from that point with Fox's translation, so you can follow along in your New King James, but listen closely. Verse 20, God's messenger said to him, Take the meat and the unleavened bread and place them on this boulder, and the broth pour out.

He did so. Yahweh's messenger stretched out the tip of the crook that was in his hand. This word, by the way, translated crook, is the same word translated in Psalm 23, verse four as staff, thy rod and thy staff, thy rod and thy shepherd's crook, same word.

So it's, it's not the rod, like the rod of correction. This is the staff, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. He took the crook that stretched out the tip of the crook that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread and fire went up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread while Yahweh's messenger went away from his eyes.

Gideon saw that he was Yahweh's messenger. So Gideon said, Alas, my Lord Yahweh, for now I have seen Yahweh's messenger face to face. Yahweh said to him, peace be to you.

Do not be afraid. You will not die. Gideon built there a sacrificial altar to Yahweh and he called it Yahweh of peace.

Until this day, it is still in Ofra of the Aviezrites. It was on that night that Yahweh said to him, take an ox bull that belongs to your father, a second born bull, seven years old. You are to tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father and the Asherah pole that is next to it, you are to cut down.

You are to build an altar to Yahweh your God on top of this stronghold in an arrangement of stones. Then you are to take the second born bull and you are to offer it up as an offering up with the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down. Gideon took ten men from his servants and did as Yahweh had spoken to him.

The story goes on from there. That's enough for our purposes because we are looking at Christ in the sacrifices. This is a sacrifice post-Leviticus but of a very unusual and unique character.

As you review the details of this, how many sacrifices are there in the story that I've read up to this point? You have the one, the goat, that Gideon brings to the messenger. Then you have the second that God specifies of the bull on the altar with the Asherah pole for wood and so on, right? So two sacrifices. How many altars are there? And be careful now.

How many altars are there in this story as we have read up to this point? Gideon builds one and calls it Yahweh, our peace, right? He builds an altar and then he's going to build one on top of the mound there where he cuts down the Asherah pole and offers the bull. That's two. But what about the minkah, the goat meat and the unleavened bread? Fire comes out and consumes it and sends it to God, is that not an altar? It's an altar made out of a single rock, right? So now how many sacrifices were there again? Two.

How many altars were there? So there's a rock altar where the minkah goes up. There's a constructed altar with Asherah wood, Asherah pole wood where the bull goes up. And then there's an altar in the middle.

What happened on that altar? It's kind of a missing sacrifice deal there, right? I'm just saying. Now you're going to have to help me with this, so keep up. So, stay here, I'll be right back.

I will stay until you return. Verses 18 and 19. Gideon went and prepared a young goat, unleavened bread, ephah, flour.

Keep your finger here in Judges. Go back to Leviticus chapter 2. Just by way of review. Not that we haven't reviewed it enough.

Not that I don't have confidence in your memory. But just to be sure we're on solid ground here. When anyone brings a grain offering to the Lord, this is the minkah.

The offering is a fine flour, oil on it, frankincense. Bring it to the priest, right? All of the details of it. The rest of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his son's.

It is most holy offering of the Lord. There's a priestly portion that is largely taken from this. The portion with the frankincense on it goes up on the altar.

Notice in verse 13. Every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt. You shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering.

Your minkah. With all your offerings you shall offer salt. If you offer grain of the firstfruits.

Firstfruits, roasted grain, heads, frankincense, etc. Alright, now back to Judges chapter 6. We know that there are other minkahs beside the specific type that is mentioned in Leviticus. You remember that Abel brings the firstlings of the flock.

And that's covered. Firstlings of the flock, that is minkah. Minkah in its general sense means gift.

So there's a sense in which Gideon bringing this meal. He expects this to perhaps be eaten by the messenger. It's a three course affair.

You've got the meat. You've got the broth. And you've got the bread.

Right? But it's unleavened bread. So a couple of different things could be happening here. Andrew and I were talking about, well perhaps it's sort of a test.

If you're really from God, you'll know what is and isn't a part of a valid offering here. And you'll make note that the bread is unleavened. If it was just goat meat broth and a loaf of bread without the unleavened part, you might think he doesn't know any better and he's just feeding the guy a meal.

But the unleavened bread, this is not Passover. So what's up with the unleavened bread? Unleavened bread in Israel is only eaten at Passover. Or when it is brought as a Minchah offering.

So we know that Gideon knows his law of Moses information. He says, I've rehearsed all of these mighty miracles that God did when he brought us out of Egypt. Well, signal and central in the bringing out of Egypt is Passover and the giving of the law at Sinai.

So Gideon knows this. He is not the mighty man of valor that has chosen to be the deliverer on this occasion because he's a dummy and doesn't know anything and doesn't have any faith. It's because in the people of Israel, even though by birth he is the least of the least of the least, by faith he's got a lot going on.

So we don't want to underestimate Gideon and figure he doesn't know what to do. He's probably thinking fast. He says, wait here, I'll be right back.

And the whole time he's preparing this goat and baking this bread and preparing this broth, he's thinking almost literally, oh my God, I've got a messenger of the Lord in my presence here. What am I going to do? So he's thinking. He's a thinking man.

He figured out how to thresh in the presence of the Midianites. He's no dummy. So he's figuring, so maybe this is something by way of a test.

I'll find out if you're really from Yahweh by what you do with this meal. If you just eat it and say, hey, is there seconds, I'll know you're not from the Lord. But if you recognize how a minchah works, because Gideon's a tester.

You know about the fleece and all of that, right? He's a tester. He wants verification. So he brings this stuff, and interestingly, what happens? Now, this is a kid of the goats.

Legitimate or illegitimate as a sacrifice to God? Can't hear you. Legitimate. This is perfectly good sacrifice, right? Kid of the goats, you can't get any better than that when it comes to almost any sacrifice in Leviticus.

Kid of the goats works. There's no place where it says, whatever you do, don't bring a kid of the goats. That's a good sacrifice.

Unleavened bread. Acceptable, unacceptable. Holy place, you got a whole table stacked full of the stuff, right? Minkah, unleavened flour, unleavened cakes, right? Perfectly good.

Broth made from the goat carcass. Got any broth in Leviticus 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6? Anybody in the history of mankind ever offer broth to the Lord as a sacrifice? It's a great accompaniment to a meal. Dip the bread, soften it up, gravy, slop some on the somewhat dry goat meat maybe.

Broth, legitimate or not legitimate? Who among the Midianites or the Amalekites or the children of the East would know that God doesn't want broth with His meal? You've got to be familiar with the details. Now, on the other hand, Gideon says, well, we're not in the presence of the priests. We don't have a proper altar.

We're not before the door of the tabernacle. So, I don't know what's going to happen with that. But if this is the angel of the Lord and he's appearing to me, I figure any place where the angel of the Lord is, holy ground, right? We know plenty of patriarchs that built altars wherever.

Jacob did it, Abraham did it, Noah did it, Cain and Abel did it. So, let's just see what happens. So, he brings this stuff and the angel of the Lord says, take the meat and the unleavened bread, lay them on this rock.

Just picks a rock. Because remember, this is a cave area. He's in the wine press and he's come out.

And this is probably outside the wine press. This is outdoors, not inside the wine press, right? Lay them on this rock. Might have been the rock that the angel was sitting on, waiting for him to finish.

This could have been a couple of hours. You know, chase down a goat, slaughter it, and so on. This rock, pour out the broth.

Doesn't say on the rock, on the offering, near the rock. It says, take the broth and get rid of it. Don't need it, don't want it, pour it out.

Not a part of this deal. So, right about the time he says, lay these two things on this rock and pour the broth out, Gideon's going, I believe this is somebody that is a legitimate messenger of the Lord God. Then the angel of the Lord put out the end of the shepherd's crook that was in his hand, touched the meat and the unleavened bread, and fire rose out of the rock.

What is missing from this fiery offering that is present all through Leviticus, present later on when he's going to put the bull on the altar made at his father's Baal worshipping center? What's missing here? What is the essential part? A, there's no blood being poured out, right? What happened to the goat blood? I'm sure he drained the meat and so on, but there was no

blood brought. Gideon didn't bring any blood. What's the second thing that's missing? Central, necessary for burnt offerings in virtually all cases.

The wood. No wood. This is a woodless sacrifice.

Now, the blood and the wood. What are we talking about here? What is being anticipated? And we know this because we're looking back. Gideon would not have seen this coming.

But what do the blood and the wood speak to us of? He bore our sins in his own body on the wood. That's the literal Greek translation. He bore our sins in his body on the wood.

This is where you get your weird cultish Christian offshoots that say Jesus was crucified on a stake instead of on a cross. Who am I thinking of? Dan Corbett. What are those guys? Yeah, the JW's.

I get the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses are on the same shelf in my mind, and sometimes I can't remember which one's which. But, yeah, the Jehovah's Witnesses, New World Translation, all that, you know, God was the Word and Jesus was a God and all the rest of that, and they don't believe in the cross because the word means wood. No wood here.

No blood here. This is the menka. The menka was a bloodless sacrifice.

It accompanied offerings that were brought with meat and blood, right? But the menka itself, Leviticus 2, is not a blood sacrifice. So the missing blood doesn't seem to be nearly as big an issue as the offerings on the altar made by fire to the Lord. There is wood on there.

Now, there are a couple of times where fire appears and wood is not being consumed. We already referred to one in our first session this morning. Moses in Midian encounters a fire that is not being fueled by wood.

There's a bush there, but the bush is not being consumed. Therefore, the fire is not a wood fire. That's a glory fire, right? There's fire at the bush, but the bush is not being consumed.

So the fire is burning of its own power. Its power comes from somewhere else. It is not of this earth.

Fire on this earth has to have fuel. Divine fire has its own fuel. This is one of those fires.

Fire comes out of the rock. The whole thing about earth, wind, and fire, it's a separate thing. Fire is not rock.

Rock is not fire. The rock didn't turn to lava. This fire appears as soon as the angelic messenger takes the crook, the shepherd's staff, and touches it.

Not before, not after. It's not by a spoken word. It is at the touch of the staff.

Thy rod and thy staff. What are these things used for? Shepherds guide the sheep. Shepherds

bring the sheep back where they belong.

It is an oversight, an authority, a provision and protection tool. That's what it means. That's what it symbolizes.

That's why the elders in Israel carried them. That's why Aaron had one that went into the Ark of the Covenant. That rod budded.

Rods and staffs, they are used in that way. So if this is the Lord God who is the shepherd of Israel, who is the keeper of Israel, who is the provider and protector for Israel, there is no more fitting way to communicate that than instead of speaking to the rock, instead of striking the rock, could have done any of those things. Would have been an interesting symbolism if he had reached out and struck the rock and fire had come out and consumed the meat.

But what does he do? He put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched not the rock, but the meat. He touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Maybe this was kind of like a sandwich.

Because he seems to touch it once and both things are touched. So it was one on top of the other. He placed them on the altar.

It was a common place. If you were going to eat the meat, you might put a piece of bread under there like a paper plate. These flat... We see pita bread and things that are kind of like this.

Tortillas are not dissimilar. I remember the first time I ever saw a matzah was in my kindergarten class. And long before it was politically correct, my kindergarten teacher was teaching us about different cultures.

And they had the Jewish culture. And she brought a dreidel and we spun the dreidel and saw the Hebrew letters on each side. And she brought matzah bread.

I don't even know. I can't remember her name. I don't know if she was Jewish or what.

But she brought these things in. And it was real interesting to me to see this very unusual flat bread. But this is what's on the rock.

The meat is on the rock. And the angel of the Lord stretches out this staff, this symbol of authority, provision, and protection, and touches the meat. And at the point that it is touched, it doesn't spontaneously combust.

Fire comes out of the rock. The rock becomes involved. It's not just a platform.

It is integral. Fire coming out of the rock makes the rock the altar. You see my point here? They all ate the same spiritual food.

And they all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from that rock which followed them. And that rock was Christ.

You have that over in Hebrews talking about the Exodus, which Gideon has just referred to with this very angel, the God that brought us out of Egypt, and his miracles, his miraculous provision and protection. Where is it now? The symbol of provision and protection now produces a miraculous result before Gideon's very eyes. It converts a rock into an altar.

It converts this non-standard, not in the right place, not before the right people, menka, into an acceptable offering before God. The Lord takes that which comes from us that is not acceptable and makes it acceptable. Takes that which falls outside the guidance and outside the rules, and because of faith and because of seeking and because of willingness to come after, to follow, to obey, it becomes acceptable.

Deborah is an acceptable prophet and leader in Israel because of her faith, because of her willingness, because of her seeing of the need. Samuel becomes an acceptable priest in Israel, although he is not a Levite, because of faith and obedience, the faith and obedience of his mother, the faith and obedience that he evidenced throughout his life. The rules are not as important as faith and obedience.

Faith and obedience transcend the law. It doesn't obviate or cancel the law. It transcends it.

And there are times when exceptions to it are okay. Jesus tried to teach his disciples about this and told the Pharisees about this, when they were trying to nitpick about eating grain on the Sabbath or having a guy take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath. Their view was, God gave us these rules, they transcend everything.

Jesus says, no, faith and obedience transcend the law. And it is the thoughts and intents of the heart that are determinative. This is why I believe today, occasionally around the world, there are actual physical miracles.

I don't doubt it for a moment. Legitimate, level-headed people have seen these things and I don't doubt it. We say, well, but the miraculous... The Bible doesn't say that God can't do a miracle if he feels like it today.

In the presence of faith and obedience, God will do anything he wants to. And he will do to and for people of faith and obedience miraculous things. That's you, by the way.

You, as a faithful and obedient believer, have access to the unfettered, unlimited presence and power of God. Does he need to do miraculous things? I would say 99.99% of the time, our grace in the presence of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Word of God, is sufficient to guide us and to provide for us and to preserve us and to protect us and to bless us. And God has set it up in such a way that it is a rare thing to have supernatural, physical miracles take place.

But don't count it out. Don't dismiss it out of hand, because God will make exceptions, such as

here, such as with Deborah, such as two guys trying to hide from robbers and dropping a corpse on top of the bones of the prophet, the bones of Elisha. Dead guy springs back to life.

God can make a point anytime he wants, in any way that he wants, in the presence of people who are, and in the interest of people who are faithful and obedient. So, back to the Minkah, though. Here is this offering made by fire.

There's no blood involved, and there's no wood involved. So when we anticipate the Lord Jesus Christ and we see the elements of sacrifice, picturing various aspects of his work and his person, what do we draw from this divinely created sacrifice? Where did the goat and the bread come from? They are Gideon's. Gideon raised the goat.

Gideon grew the wheat. We know he's a wheat grower because he's out there threshing, right? So this is his grain. And he took that grain, and he quickly ground it.

He made dough out of it, didn't have time to leaven it, didn't want to leaven it, apparently. Brought the bread that he had made from this grain that he has freshly threshed. He could have grabbed a handful of it off the threshing floor, right? Quickly ground it, made the bread, brought that.

He brings of his work to the Lord. And he is looking for a sign. He is looking for confirmation that this is the Lord.

And in the acceptance of this offering by fire, that is the confirming sign. It's a miracle in and of itself. Rocks don't typically emit fire and burn up food that's laid on top of them.

But it has a greater significance because this is like the sacrificial system. First section of Leviticus chapter one, it will be accepted as atonement for him. You get the idea that Gideon has acknowledged that there is sin, that the Amorite worship is wrong.

It pains him to see his father as one of the promoters of Baal worship in their community. And he's not in support of his father in that. So he comes and acknowledges that he is ready for deliverance.

He is ready for the presence of the Lord to bring them back where they ought to be. And God responds. God hears.

He's not even praying. It doesn't say he was praying in the winepress. He's just fretting in the winepress.

And it comes right out of his mouth as soon as the angel appears. Hey there, mighty man of valor, the Lord is with you. And he says, how is the Lord with us? I wish the Lord was with us.

I would love for the Lord to be with us. He says, guess what? He is. And he stretches out that crook and incinerates the goat meat and the unleavened bread.

The broth is gone. And the Lord, the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. The end of verse 21.

Verse 22, now Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord. This is the point where he's sure. He suspects it.

And as a result of this demonstration, he perceives it. He understands it. He gets it.

So Gideon said, alas, O Lord God, for I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face. What else does Gideon know? No man can see my face and live. And to him, the messenger is as good as the presence of the Lord himself.

This was a common Old Testament understanding. And this is why so many people have tried to work backward and say that the, notice even in your New King James, capital A, Angel. They think this is the pre-incarnate Christ.

Jesus came down, did the work of an angel in the Old Testament. No. To which of the angels said he at any time, sit thou at my right hand, till I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Jesus is not an angel. And he wasn't an angel in the Old Testament. This is Gabriel work.

This is Michael work. This is angelic operation in the Old Testament. But when you represent God as these angelic messengers do, you speak in the first person for God.

He is a loud speaker. This is what any good messenger does, is become transparent so that the listeners and the hearers are listening to the voice of God himself, not some garbled version. So he says, I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face.

And Gideon knows his Bible as it existed in that day and knows that this, you can die in the presence of the Lord. Then the Lord said to him, now this is interesting because what happened, where's the messenger now? At the point that the flash fire happens on the rock and everything is gone, it says the angel of the Lord disappeared from his sight departed out of his sight. Gideon says, alas, I've seen the Lord.

And then the Lord says to him, from where? It's not the messenger speaking, messenger is gone. So how does he get this information? Apparently, all we have in the account is a disembodied voice. Now that he has had the physical confirmation of the presence of the messenger and the incineration of the Menka, now God can speak and Gideon, when the voice says, peace be with you, do not fear, you shall not die.

Gideon doesn't say, oh voice, how do I know you are the Lord? He doesn't need this confirmation anymore, right? Now God can speak to him in a more internal and invisible fashion and he knows he's dealing with the same God. He doesn't need confirmation of this message. And this message comes without sight and without demonstration and without sign.

He knows with whom he is dealing and with whom he is speaking. So there's an early

confirmation, but now when God speaks, he doesn't have to have more confirmation, at least not in this instance. And this is the nature of miracles at the beginning of a dispensation to confirm and to authenticate a message and a messenger from God, followed by communication that doesn't require all of that verification.

That's why we had miracles at the beginning of the church age, we had miracles at the beginning of the age of Israel, but they do not persist all the way through. Once God has authenticated himself, he doesn't have to keep showing his ID card every time he says something, right? So Gideon, verse 24, built an altar there to the Lord and called it, The Lord is Peace. This is Yahweh Shalom.

What's the name of the Minkah? What's the next offering after that? You have the Olah, the Minkah, and then what? The Shalem Shalomim, the Shalom, the peace offering. You got the burnt offering, you have the grain offering, the Minkah, and then you've got the peace offering. So Gideon says, I'm willing to dedicate myself to the Lord and be his deliverer, as he said.

He has come to me and we've had the Minkah. Now here is an altar for the sacrifice of peace. The Lord is peace.

He says, Peace to you, you will not die. And this goes beyond just the moment. The Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the East are not going to destroy the nation of Israel.

You will not die. The Lord is with you. You will not die.

So the Lord is peace. And to this day, some generations later, when this was all set down and formalized in writing, that altar was still standing. They don't know which rock it was, where the flames came out and incinerated the goat meat and the unleavened bread.

They don't know where the Baal worship site was, where Gideon built an altar and burnt the Asherah wood and offered the Bullock. But what was still in existence to that day was this middle altar that has no offering associated with it. The function of this altar is a memorial.

It is a pile of rocks that still stands. Remember Absalom had to make a pile of rocks because he had no son. And the pile of rocks was his legacy.

Well, this pile of rocks is a legacy to God's mercy and God's faithfulness and God's personal appearance to Gideon. It's a memorial altar and we have no record of a sacrifice being made on it. You have to think that he would have made one, but it's not recorded.

So very quickly now, because we're just about out of time. In verse 25, Now it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him. Now here's my question.

You've got an angel that was there for the better part of the afternoon, sitting around. Gideon's making a meal and all the rest of this stuff. He brings out and does this thing and then he reaches out with the staff.

The flame goes up and the messenger is gone. Why didn't this information that we're about to read come during that time? You've got a guy that could sit there and draw it out on the ground with a stick and say, here are these guys, this is what you need to do. Come in this way.

Do this much. But it is at night. It came to pass the same night.

So the sun sets. Gideon puts away the stock, locks up the wine press, whatever it is he does. He goes to bed and apparently this is a vision of the night.

It is a dream or a nighttime apparition, a nighttime appearance. The Lord said to him, take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, tear down the altar of Baal that your father has and cut down the wooden image that is beside it. Now, help me out here.

What's up with a seven-year-old bull? In all of the offerings and sacrifices of Leviticus, we had things that were of the first year or of the third year or whatever. Have you ever seen something that was supposed to be a seven-year-old bull? So that's unique. Do we have anything in context that might connect to this? Chapter 6, verse 1. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years.

Any other instances come to mind of seven years? Joseph? Egypt? Fat cows? Skinny cows? Fat ears? Skinny ears? Seven years of famine? Seven years of excessive duress? And what happens at the end of that time? The seven years of famine? There were seven years of plenty, stock up. Then there were seven years of famine. It was a seven-year famine.

What happens? There's a lot of things that happen, but what's probably the most important memorable thing that happens at the end of the seven-year famine? It is at the end of that time that the father is reunited with the son. The son that was dead is alive again. And they're all brought down to Egypt to live and to be delivered.

And the oppression ends. Well, here you've got this seven years. So it is a bull of the seven years.

So this bull was born in the year that the Midianites began to seriously oppress Israel. Now, here's what really puzzles me. And we've got to go quickly here.

Take your father's young bull. Which one of your young bulls that belonged to your father? The first-born bull? Second-born bull? What on earth does it matter what the birth order of the bull is? But I've just given you the biggest clue, birth order. Birth order of the bull, which one? The second-born.

This means that there is a first-born bull that is not selected, and there's a second-born bull that is selected for this offering. There is a sort of crossing of the hands here, and the first-born bull is not the one that is selected. It's the second-born.

Now, what tribe is Gideon from again? Manasseh. The first-born that got turned into the second-born, right? For all legal purposes, Manasseh is now the second-born, but he's really the first-born, right? How many times does Jesus come to this earth? Twice. Twice.

The first time, He should have and would have assumed all of the leadership and all of the blessings of the first-born in terms of ownership and rulership and double portion, but those got distributed down so that rulership was to Judah, double portion ratcheted all the way down to who? Who got Jacob's double portion? It goes down to Joseph, right? Jacob's double portion blessing goes to Joseph. That's why Joseph's two sons are both counted. It's the double portion.

All of those things were to belong to the Lord Jesus when He comes as the Mashiach, the anointed one, God's own son in the first advent, but He came into His own and His own received Him not. So, the first coming ends up being a sacrificial occasion and a delay. And what was to be first becomes second.

What was to take place in the first coming now takes place in the second coming. That's when He will rule. That's when He will reign.

That's when He will have the full portion of inheritance and we who are faithful and obedient will join in with Him. It's no accident here that God specifies the second-born bull. It's all about Ephraim and Manasseh.

It is all about what you expected is not for now. It's for the future. The second-born bull.

Take the second bull. And this is repeated twice. Take the second bull of seven years old, tear down the altar of Baal, cut down the wooden image that is beside it, build an altar to the Lord your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement.

Does he have to say what the proper arrangement is? Gideon knows the proper arrangement. But this tells you that this whole Mincah thing, Gideon knows full well that there's no altar in the location where he's talking to that messenger. Build an altar on top of the rock in the proper arrangement.

Take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down. So Gideon took ten men from among his servants, did as the Lord had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night.

When the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal torn down, and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar built. Now, where was the altar built? Where did God tell him to build it? Read verse 26. Build an altar to the Lord your God on top of what? This rock.

What's the only rock that is figured in this story thus far? There's only one rock in the story. He doesn't say that rock. Gideon's not laying down, napping underneath his father's Baal altar.

Build an altar on this rock. So now, back to our altar count. How many altars are there? There's the rock, there's the altar of peace, Yahweh's peace, and then there is the altar properly constructed on this rock.

Right? On this rock. These distances are not too great. Gideon and his father, Gideon's winepress and all the rest of it, this is all on his land, on his father's land.

This town is on the outskirts and within the environs. His father is a community leader here. This isn't a great distance.

And when people see the destruction of the Baal altar, and they look around and say, what happened? What are they going to see emanating from the altar that is built on this rock? A great pillar of smoke. And it tells us specifically what they see. They saw the Baal image torn down and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down and the second bull was being offered on the altar built.

The second bull was being offered. How do they know it's the second bull? Well, they don't know, but we know. And the story tells us, it doesn't say the seven-year-old bull.

It doesn't just say the bull. It says the second bull, the second-born bull. It emphasizes it to us in the story.

This thing is fraught with meaning. In the immediate context, for the people of Israel who aren't primarily seeing the Lord Jesus in view, this is a new start. Gideon says, We had a great start when the God of Israel came and miraculously delivered us and brought us out of bondage.

We were serfs and now we are free, but we are oppressed by Midian. Where is the Lord God now? God says, I'm here. You are going to be the new Moses.

You are going to deliver, in a sense. And here is the sign. Gideon gets a personal sign by fire in the same way that Moses did.

And Gideon then goes and makes a public declaration by actions that God is going to deliver by obeying God and doing this physical work of tearing down the altar of Baal, cutting down the Asherah, hauling this stuff over to, apparently, the nearby rock on which he has built a new altar. By the way, this also avoids confusion with people saying, Well, how does that altar look any different than the one to Baal? Maybe the Baal altar was a giant thing and this is a small 12 stone altar, we don't know. But it's the authorized construction of an altar.

It's the way an altar is supposed to be when it's made of stones. And it is built on this rock. And the result is a sign where everyone can see that there has been a direct finger in the eye of the existing authority and a proclamation of deliverance by Gideon.

And that's what he does. The men of the city say, Bring out your son that he may die. And his

father says, Do you need to protect Baal? Somebody tears down his altar and you've got to go get the guy and do something to him.

Where's Baal? If Baal is so great, let Baal defend his own altar. The whole purpose of worshipping a god is that he will be your protector and defender and provider. You don't want to have to be the protector, defender, and provider for Baal.

That's work. Where's Baal? Let Baal do it. And all the people say, Hmm, you never thought of that.

What's the point of worshipping a god that you've got to defend and prop up like a sock puppet? So on that day, they called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him. Let Baal punish him for tearing down his own altar. So his name becomes Jerubbaal.

Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, people of the east, gathered together and crossed over and encamped. This is the beginning of the end for that group because of the deliverance. Oddly enough, who is it that first threatens Israel as they march out of Egypt with Moses? What's the first group of foreigners they encounter as they leave? The Amalekites.

So shades of the past. But this is, in a sense, a second birth, a second deliverance in the pattern of and after the manner of the first. And the second born bull pictures that.

The first one is under blood, the blood of the Passover lamb. This one is the menka that can be brought by a person who is seeking the fellowship with God that is pictured in that sacrifice. So there's a reason why it's not the bull on the wood with the blood in the ola or in the sin and trespass offering.

This is sort of the difference between striking the rock and speaking to the rock. And there is a rock in both of these cases. And Gideon was smart enough to figure this out.

And faithful, obedient believers in Israel were smart enough to look at this episode and see the first rock serving a purpose. And fire comes out and consumes a sacrifice. The second time, the rock becomes the basis of an altar where there is a second year bullock offered.

And there is an echoing back to the beginning. Neither one of these is a Passover lamb, but it's Leviticus 1 and Leviticus 2. Get back to dedication. Get back to bringing before the Lord not only yourself, as in chapter 1, but your work, as in chapter 2. And if your works are falling apart and you're beginning to serve the gods of the Amorites and you belong to God, there is a need for renewal, for getting back to first things.

Lay again the foundation. Change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God. So there's a lot going on in this sacrifice.

None of it takes place at the tabernacle. We have no idea whether there are any operating priests or where the various components of the tabernacle and the altar are located. God

doesn't quibble about that.

He works with Gideon, who is a man of faith. And through this, there is a great deliverance accomplished. God will do that with us and for us.

The key is trust. The key is recognizing when God has spoken, realizing that God has spoken and acting on that truth. That's what Gideon does.

And bless his heart, with all of his doubts and his need for confirmation, he does get it done, doesn't he? He does what God tells him to do. Once he's sure it's God speaking, there's no stopping the guy. He's got some fear, but he gets it done.

Well, it's a good picture and pattern for us. It's another instance of foreshadowing the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in both his first and second advent. That rock that was Christ, that was struck the first time and spoken to the second time, the deliverance in the presence of God for those who trust in him is prominent in this story.

Well, we'll have plenty to think about in that regard, and we'll close here in prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the challenging ways that you present to us the truths that affect us today as we live before you, as we anticipate the return of the Lord Jesus for us, as we try to live our lives in a way that pleases you, that redeems the time, that bears fruit, that speaks of spiritual life, that reflects your glory.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enable us to have an understanding and be motivated and encouraged by what we've studied together this morning. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.