

Judges 08-03-21b

We pick up our study in Judges chapter 6 and we step back and saw kind of a larger pattern here of communication from God to the land in general which includes Gideon and then Gideon specifically. And Gideon is the faithful man in Israel, the prophet speaks to the whole nation. The prophet does not come to Gideon, Gideon is in a group, a larger group but Gideon seems to be responsive and his initial dialogue with the messenger is that there is something wrong in the nation and it is related to the presence or absence of the presence of God.

And that incarnate messenger, that personification visits Gideon specifically. And then that same individual Gideon is further visited at night with this vision and given a task. There is a general commission that does not have the specifics with the messenger.

The messenger says you will deliver Israel, God is with you, have I not sent you? But there is no tactical mission assigned, it is a strategic mission. It is an overall commission. The details of how to begin and where to begin are going to be given that night.

And in the same way when the Lord Jesus comes to the nation of Israel and offers them the kingdom there is a call that is issued and it is a call to attitude. You think of the Sermon on the Mount, for in spirit those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, walk the narrow way, try to go through the straight gate. There are many exhortations of a general nature to live a life that is pleasing to God.

But the ability to fulfill that and the actual living out of that commission, that kingdom life, turn the other cheek if a man asks you to go one mile, walk within twain and so on. Their opportunity to fulfill those things is really going to come in the millennial kingdom when they have the power of the spirit. Because now that Christ is glorified in the same way that we walk in the spirit and with the spirit and by the spirit, that is what they will do in the kingdom.

They will be able to fulfill that commission specifically and in specific ways and the revelation of God will come to them individually even as it does to us through the word and through the spirit. So as we go back now and do our study in a little more detail, you shall defeat the Midianites as one man, whereas by one man sin entered the world and death by sin, so that death passed upon all men because all have sinned. Even so, by one man comes deliverance.

And a lot of people's fate can be wrapped up in what happens with one man. And so the Midianites, it is as though by defeating one man, you've defeated the entire nation. You'll defeat them and the victory over sin and death is really personified in the victory over Satan and his attack on the human race, his whole philosophy of rejection of God's authority and desire to set himself up as an independent arbiter, an independent judge, an independent authority.

This is what everybody wants today. I don't want to be subject to rules. I don't want to be accountable.

I don't want to have to submit myself to something. I chafe under that sort of authority. Who are you to tell me what I should think? Even in the Christian community, there can be this attitude of how can some Christians believe that God would eternally punish people just because they don't believe in Christ? Why can't there be many roads to God? And people try to reinvent God in their own image or after their own likeness or according to their own desires.

And even in the realm of the Christian faith and even within the body of Christ, there is widespread abuse of biblical truth. Jesus Christ is the only way. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

None other name. You can't just have a general belief in God, oh, well, don't the Israelites believe in God and the fact that they missed Christ, well, they'll come around. No.

Don't let yourself be carried down a road. God, the Holy Spirit, convicts the world of the personal and individual existence of the Savior. Jesus said, I am the way, no man comes to the Father but by me.

I am the truth, there is no other truth. I am the way and there is no other way. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby anyone can be saved.

Forget it. And it is not an invention of the human mind, it's not a bunch of crabby old conservative Christians. This is God's statement.

This is God's truth. We are required as believers to adjust our thinking and conform our understanding to God's plan and purpose. God is not modeling clay that we can push and squish and shape into something that we find appealing, nor is there any need to do so.

God is the standard of righteousness and justice and beauty and absolute fairness. It is not the will of God that any should perish. It is the will of God that all should come to change of mind.

God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. God is not vindictive. God is not arbitrary.

God is not capricious. God is not unpredictable. God holds out His hands all day long to disobedient and stiff-necked people.

Peter talks about the patience of God, the long-suffering of God. He says, people who say, well, you keep talking about this coming of God, the great judgment, where is it that all things go on as they have from the beginning? Peter says, do you not know that this is the mercy of God? Instead of mocking and saying, where is the promise of His coming, you ought to be down on your knees thankful that He has delayed that to allow more time for people to change their mind. It is a merciful and gracious God who only as a last resort is going to end up condemning those who are absolutely willfully refusing to come to Him.

And listen, people who talk about the horrible nature of divine punishment and eternal damnation and so on, do not know what they are talking about. I'll tell you something, and I've

mentioned this before, but think about it. Hell is a mercy.

The lake of fire is a mercy. It is a compassionate and loving God that is going to put these people in the lake of fire. It is love that is going to put them there.

It is compassion on them that is going to destroy them in the lake of fire. I do not find any place in the Bible that teaches eternal conscious torment. It looks to me like apolia means a doing away with.

It is a loss. It is a being gone. And you think about someone to whom the idea of God and His authority and His plan and His purpose and His divine rule is odious and abrasive and a choking stench in the air.

To be submissive to God is something that wears, welts, and blisters, and they chafe, and they bind, and they twist, and they squirm, and they pull, and they rail, and they shake their fist against the idea and the authority of God. You want somebody to do that eternally? You want someone to be eternally miserable, eternally railing, eternally shaking their fist at a God that they cannot overcome, and that they cannot get away from, and that they cannot abide, and that they cannot stand? It is a mercy for God to simply give people a chance, if they want to, to come to Him and have a relationship with Him. And those who appreciate Him, and those who love Him, and those who are interested, at least at a bare minimum, content with His sovereign power and His omnipresent rule of the universe.

And if someone cannot abide God, such as Satan, and those who follow in Satan's wake, it is a mercy to put them out of their misery, because they're never going to change. They will fester. They will infect.

This is why God has allowed human history to run as long as He has, to show the degrading, degenerating, disintegrating nature of this attitude. It does not get better. It gets worse.

You look at someone that is going down a bad road, whatever it may be. Pick your addiction. Pick your problem.

People don't start out heavy in a thing, and then get lighter and lighter, and it just sort of trails away. If it's a problem, if it's an addiction, if it's a bad habit, it just gets worse. It degenerates.

It goes from bad to worse. When you think about segments of the human race and their attitude toward God, they're not going to eventually come around, well, you know, I sort of see, after all, He really is a good God. Satan has had how many thousand years to come around? Nobody knows more about God than Satan.

Nobody. There is no one more familiar with the triune God than Lucifer, and he can't stand Him. His hatred is just building and building, and it's going to culminate at Gog Magog, where he tries to wipe out everything and everybody associated with God.

That is when he is going to take his trip into the lake of fire that burns forever and ever. The point being, God is a God of mercy. God is a God of grace.

His judgment is designed to turn people to repentance. Now, that picture of presentation. God sends the prophet to say, look, here's the problem.

He sends the individual messenger to bring about deliverance through one man, and then he gives that man the exact steps to take. Here's what needs to happen. And Gideon, I think, in this picture, represents the faithful remnant in Israel, those who are going to respond.

There are going to be others, as we go through this story, who are going to join with Gideon and be of like mind and are going to go with him into battle. You know, you've got the 300 with the lamps and pitchers and so on. But Gideon is symbolic here, and that's the reason he is in the group that hears the prophet, but he himself sees and responds to the messenger.

And that's where we are here as we pick up in verse 16. The Lord says, through the messenger, and the messenger and the Lord are almost blended together here, I will be with you. You shall defeat the Midianites as one man.

He says to him in verse 17, if now I have found favor in your sight. Standard, stock phrase. Esther says this to Ahasuerus, if I have found favor in your sight.

People say this to God all the time. If I have found favor in your sight, show me a sign that it is you, capital Y, that talks with me. Gideon needs some affirmation.

Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to you and bring out my offering and set it before you. Now, again, stepping back and thinking about this large picture, the prophet didn't necessarily, we have no record that he authenticated his message with anything supernatural. But this individual messenger says, okay, I'll wait here, and I will authenticate that it is really me, I am really from God, with an overt supernatural sign.

Show me a sign, Gideon says. What do people say to Jesus all through the Gospels? Show us a sign. Jesus says, look, if you don't believe me, believe the works.

The works testify of me, that I am from the Father. We've seen this all through John, haven't we? And you find that same pattern right here in this malach Yahweh. So Gideon went, now you say, well, who gets to pick the sign? Does the angel of the Lord say, okay, Gideon, sit here on this rock.

Well, maybe he shouldn't sit on the rock, knowing what's going to happen with the rock. He could end up on the hot seat. But the messenger doesn't say, okay, Gideon, stand over here and watch this.

I'm going to pull a rabbit out of a hat, or I'm going to call down fire from heaven, or I'm going to turn stones into bread, or what. He says, look, you wait here. I want you to show me a sign

that you're really from God.

You wait here, I'll be right back. The angel says, okay, I'll wait. So Gideon decides what will satisfy him.

And it's an odd thing. I try to think, now, is Gideon thinking back on Scripture, or what makes him have this idea? Gideon goes and gets a goat. And it's a specific goat.

The way this is worded in Hebrew, when he says he prepared a young goat, he carefully selected this goat. He selected this goat according to the Levitical standard for an offering. This is a goat without spot, without blemish.

It's a young goat. It's within the age range that they would typically use for the olah, the whole burnt offering. And unleavened bread from an ephah of flour.

You remember the nature of unleavened bread? And there's only certain times and certain occasions where there's unleavened bread. So Gideon is thinking in sacrificial terms here. But, how much meat is there on a goat? I mean, could you eat a goat? Well, I mean, I know people who could make a good start on a goat.

But most of us could not consume an entire goat. I'm not talking about anybody in this room, by the way. Anybody in this room.

You think about how much meat there is in a goat. I mean, you could feed a large family on a single goat, right? You know how much an ephah of flour is? It's a lot. It's like 22 pounds of flour in an ephah.

22 pounds of flour? Now we begin to see that this is going to be a supernatural sign. Does he think that the angel is going to eat this whole thing? I mean, I don't think so. But it's an entire goat.

It's unleavened bread made with 22 pounds of flour. This is, I mean, is Gideon expecting, and there were with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly hosts sitting down and partaking of goat and bread? It's, you know, we're not familiar with the biblical measures. But, and this isn't one of these little tiny goats.

I mean, this was a big, strong, you know, this is one of those ram-type goats that you see up in the mountains. It was a young, strong, big goat. Not a little scrawny.

That would not have qualified for a sacrifice. This is the best one in Gideon's flock. And his family is fairly well off, remember? Ten servants, owns a town, has a temple for Baal.

These people are not paupers. So he's got one of the best goats in Israel. And he brings this giant goat.

And the angel is sitting there the whole time. And I think, now, how long does it take? It says he

prepared a goat. So if I set a goat here, and it makes a goat noise, and it's standing there, how long would it take to turn that into a meal? Starting from scratch.

I mean, people that have done hunting, you know, you kill the thing. You've got to flip it over. You've got to start taking out the parts that are inedible.

You lop off various things. You take off the skin. You're chopping at certain joints.

You're getting, you know, maybe a side of the goat or maybe the entire goat. How do you cook a goat? We didn't have, you know, a lot of the modern appurtenances that we have today. So how do you cook a goat? Well, you've got to put it on a, I mean, one way would be to put it on a large spit.

Build a big fire. You've got to get the fire going. You've got to put the goat on the spit.

You've got to roast the goat. You've got to bake the bread. You're starting out with 22 pounds of flour.

I suspect that Gideon had help. I don't think he needed all of this dough himself. I think he got, you know, at least 10 of the servants and said, all right, you know, here we go.

Here's the menu of the day. Get the goat roasting. Get the bread cooking.

But this takes, I would expect, a couple of hours at least, wouldn't you? Wouldn't you think? I mean, you start with a live goat. You've got to go pick the goat. You've got to bring the goat.

I mean, it's just a long time. And the angel is just sitting there and sitting there and sitting there this whole time. Now, the angel is sitting, probably back under the tree.

That's where I would sit. I've got some shade. For a couple of hours, you start to smell the roasting goat, smell the smell of baking bread, servants scurrying about, just observing, you know, things, but just sitting there.

What is the Lord Jesus doing right now, right this minute? What is the incarnate messenger of God who came to earth and delivered the message of salvation? What is he doing now? He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he is waiting for something. I just point that out in passing. So Gideon went and prepared a young goat, unleavened bread from 22 pounds of flour, the meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth.

So I guess, thinking about it, he wouldn't have necessarily been able to do it over spit because the broth is from, it must have boiled the meat like they did, you know, the big pots that later on Eli's sons are going to be getting the three-pronged hook and getting the stuff out. So this must be boiled goat. Chop it up, a couple, maybe several big pots, and so there's all of this broth.

It's like goat stew, goat soup, goat bouillon. You can get chicken bouillon and beef bouillon. I

don't think I've ever seen goat bouillon at the store.

But he's got the broth. So he's got the meat, and he puts it in a big basket. He's got the broth in a pot, and he brought them out to him, and of course it's got a capital H there, which is understandable, but it's not really appropriate.

This is an angel. He's a heavenly resident. He's one of God's servants.

So he comes down, and he's still sitting under the chair of the tree, and presented it. Now, these are all sacrificial elements, but this is not a sacrifice per se, right? You don't have any of the tabernacle accoutrements. You do not have a Levite around.

Gideon is not a Levite. He cannot offer a sacrifice on his own. So he brings these elements.

Now, a genuine sacrifice, if this was going to be one, if you go back to Leviticus, how does the sacrifice go? It's a live animal. You bring it to the priest, and on the altar, lay the hand on the head, and all of that. And this is not a sin offering either, is it? This is not a sin offering.

It's a menka. It's a free will offering. Gideon thought it up.

Gideon decided what he would bring. It's not a bull, not a sheep, not a dove, and it's already cooked. He brings it cooked already.

The angel of God said to him, in verse 20, do you notice anything there? All the way up to this point, this individual has been referred to as the angel of the Lord. Malak Yahweh. Now it is Malak HaElohim.

Is this just stylistic variation? Most people read, well, it's just variation for style. I don't think God cares about variation for style. If the name changes, I think something is going on here.

Now what has happened between the time that this angel showed up, and he's been called angel of the Lord, angel of the Lord, angel of the Lord, and now he's called angel of God? Well, again, if you step back and think about our pattern of history for the nation of Israel, if the sitting represents the time between the first and second advent, as it were, there is a difference when the Lord Jesus Christ again is in a position to converse with Israel face-to-face, right? He talks to Gideon, Gideon says, hang on a second, I'll be right back, which is... and he sits for all of this time. Now Gideon comes back and says, here's the stuff, here's the roasted goat, here's the great baskets of bread, and here's some broth. And now he's called the angel of God.

And maybe I'm over being too nitpicky or paying too much attention to detail, but it just seems strange to me that now instead of angel of the Lord, which is God's personal name, you have angel of Elohim. And Elohim is the overarching... Yahweh is God's personal name for Israel. He reveals that name through Moses.

When the people ask me who sent me, what shall I say? Tell them I am. Tell them Yahweh has sent you. What's going to happen at the second advent? When Jesus Christ comes back, and

you've got the Armageddon scenario, all of the nations of the earth are represented there.

And Jesus Christ, every eye shall see Him. As lightning east to the west, everybody sees Him. Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess.

He is God Almighty to the nations. He is not just coming and seen and an issue only for Israel. And so again, this seems to me to sort of track with the larger issue of Israel's chronology and God's revelation to them.

So now He is the angel of God, saying to Him, Take the meat and the unleavened bread, lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth. Now, pouring out a liquid always puts us in mind of the drink offering. You remember when the men go and get the water behind enemy lines and bring it back to David? He says, Oh, I wish I had a drink from a particular spring.

These men risk life and limb and go get it and bring it back. And David says, This water is too precious to drink. And he pours it out before the Lord.

Mount Carmel and Elijah, and you have the water poured around and poured around and poured around. This meat and bread are set on the rock, and the broth is poured over it like gravy or like when you marinate a thing or you sauce it with the broth. So it's not going to catch fire because it's a hot day.

It puts you in mind of Mount Carmel, where it just makes it even more unlikely that anything would burst into flame or be consumed. But this is poured out, and Gideon obeys. He does exactly that.

Then the angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in his hand, and he touched the meat and the unleavened bread. And fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and consumed the unleavened bread. And then the angel of the Lord disappears out of his sight.

The touch of the wooden rod, and he puts out the end of the staff, and he touched the meat, and he touched the unleavened bread. He touched it with the staff. At the point that he touches it, fire erupts out of the rock and incinerates everything.

And then the angel disappears. And that's the end. So you think, well, at first blush, for Gideon, this is definitely proof.

If there was any doubt in his mind, this really was a messenger from God. There is no remaining doubt. There are elements there that are suggestive without being exact metaphors or archetypes.

What does a rod symbolize? It can be a symbol of authority. Elders, Aaron's rod that budded, that was his Levitical authority. Each of the elders put out their rods, and in the morning it was Aaron's that had budded.

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. It's the authority of the shepherd over the sheep. And

so this speaks of authority.

What about the goat meat, the unleavened bread, and the broth? The broth has been poured out, and we don't hear anymore about the broth. The broth, part of it has gone into the ground around this rock. These things are laid on the rock, and this serves more or less as an altar.

And that meat and that bread are consumed at the touch of the rod. Well, when you think about the symbolic value of animals, why a goat? And this doesn't appear to have been God's... God didn't say, go get me a goat. Gideon picked the goat.

But what's the most famous goat you can think of in Israel? Ezazel. You've got the goat that was caught by its horns in the thicket. This is the substitutionary atonement aspect, right? You have Ezazel, the scapegoat, that is released in the wilderness.

The blood and the guilt of Israel are taken off into the wilderness. And so the goat really speaks of the substitutionary taking away of sin. And the first thing that has to happen before Gideon can deliver Israel, before deliverance can come to Israel through Gideon, is this goat meat gets judged by fire.

And that's what happens. Unleavened bread is commingled with that meat. Jesus broke bread and gave it to his disciples and said, this is my body which is broken for you.

The unleavened bread, sinless, leaven always representing sin. And unconsciously or for whatever reason, this is an acceptable offering in God's sight. It is the goat meat and the unleavened bread commingled.

The authority of God represented by the rod touches it and it is consumed by fire. And so I think you have a suggestion there of the work of Jesus Christ, which is a necessary precursor to any deliverance, any physical deliverance taking place. And as soon as that is accomplished, when Jesus says it is finished, what happened? He dismissed his spirit.

And within a few days Jesus is gone from Israel. And after this work is accomplished, the angel of the Lord disappears. His work is done.

He has issued the call. He has issued the commission. He has talked to faithful Gideon and has manifested through a sign that he is indeed from God and this is a legitimate message.

And now he is gone. So, in verse 22, Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God, for I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face.

And now he is afraid that because of seeing this individual, he is going to die. And the Lord says to him, and you have a disembodied voice. It's not a vision.

It's not a dream. God speaks in some fashion, saying, Peace be with you. In verse 23, And this is Shalom.

Shalom L'cha. Peace to you. Do not fear.

You will not die. Now, the generation of believers who saw Jesus Christ, what did Jesus say to them in John 11? The one who lives and believes in me will never die. So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it Yahweh Shalom.

The Lord is peace. And until this day, it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrite. What is this day? The day of the setting down of this account, which is evidently many decades after the fact, probably sometime in the reign of David, if not later.

But for a long, long time, Gideon's altar remained as a testimony that Gideon, having seen God in terms of God's messenger, lived. Now it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him, Take your father's young bull. Now we're moving from goats to bulls.

Remember when we were so helpful that we went through that Leviticus study? Because you remember the propitiatory nature of the sheep and the goats. You remember the first sacrifice was the ox. And that is the strength.

That is the physical might. And there is the young bull. Gideon picked a young goat to offer to the messenger.

Now God says, You get a young bull. So just as you have in the Levitical system, goats and bulls, what does it say in Hebrews? Not by the blood of goats and bulls? It's the two facets of the work of Jesus Christ. Propitiatory sacrifice and that whole burnt offering as a dedicatory sacrifice.

I dedicate myself. I love the Lord God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my might. That's what the ox represents.

It is full dedication. Romans 12, 1 and 2. Offer yourself a living sacrifice. That's the ox.

That's the young bull sacrifice. It is an offering of dedication and commitment. Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has.

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. And take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down.

Now, what I find fascinating about this is why the second bull? Why is there any mention at all of the second bull? Well, if you think about the time phases that are represented by the prophet, by the incarnate messenger, and by the night vision or the night speech, where are we now? What kind of a sacrificial system would be operating in Israel in the millennium? It's not Solomon's temple. It's the millennial temple. It's not looking forward to Christ and His first advent.

It is memorializing Christ in His second advent. It's the second bull. This is the resurrected

Christ, the revived nation of Israel, dedicating itself to God in the pattern of Christ.

We've already offered the first sacrificial bull. That was prospective. Now, resuscitated in the kingdom, it is a memorial and a reminder that the first bull has already done its work and made its representation.

Now you have the second bull of seven years. Seven years old. Why not... Remember, they used to have a two or three year old ox that they would sacrifice.

But seven is the number of what? Completion and perfection and maturity. You're perfected. You've got everything.

You're whole. You're in the land. You've got your vine and your fig tree.

You've got the promises of God. You have no need that any man teach you. You have God's Spirit.

This is it. This is the second bull, the bull of seven years that is being offered. So, to me at least, that perspective of the history of the nation of Israel from beginning to end really answers a lot of the questions of why the details in this passage.

Now, having said that, we ask ourselves the time honored question, so what? Interesting as far as it goes, but, so what? I, as a church age believer, am fascinated to look at Israel, but I am not Israel. But, as goes Israel as a nation, so goes the individual believer. We value our salvation.

We look back retrospectively at the work of Jesus Christ. We are saved. We are sanctified.

We are glorified. We are in Him. We are chosen.

We are elected in Him before the foundation of the world. We have all of these blessings. We live now the life that Israel is going to live in the kingdom.

So, what Gideon is about to do on the basis of the instructions in this night vision, everything up to this point, we can apply in terms of meditating on what God has done for us in salvation. What Jesus Christ did in His first advent. What He made possible.

And it's common to all the people of God that being the goat that takes away sin, we are free from sin. We have died to sin. We are no longer under the law.

We have a new and living way that's been opened through the veil. That's great. Well, now what? What are we going to do? Believe it or not, with all of our frailties and trials and tribulations and everything else, this is our millennium.

We are living now the life that Israel will live in the millennial kingdom. We've got the gift of the Spirit. We have the revelation of the Word of God and divine truth.

We have the promise of the presence of Jesus Christ in us where He will be in the nation in and

through David and his sons in the millennial kingdom. Well, spiritually speaking, we're living that now. So everything that Israel is supposed to do, everything that we saw in Ezekiel, is supposed to be happening with us now.

You think, well, you know, I've got a car to drive and maintain. I've got bills to pay. I've got kids to raise.

I've got stuff I have to do. This millennium kingdom stuff is not really pertinent. I don't really see it.

Well, we're going to have to stop for tonight, but when we look next week at the replacing of this altar and what Gideon does in his own father's house, the way that he does it at divine command, this is going to have a big reflection on us. We have been delivered out of Egypt. We have been brought through the wilderness.

We have been brought across the Jordan into the land of promise. That's where we stand. Jesus Christ has come and has taken away our sin.

We are not under the penalty of sin. We are not under the power of sin. The power of sin has been broken.

Satan has been defeated. And we are in a position to exploit that victory, just as the generation after Joshua was charged with taking possession of the land. Possess it and glorify God in your existence in that land.

As you fulfill that divine mandate, God is glorified. God is vindicated. God is justified.

God is manifest to the nations. To the extent that we fulfill that commission, God's light shines. Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles.

How can it be a light to the Gentiles when you are constantly getting raided and defeated and knocked off course and distracted into idolatry? How does that shine a light to the Gentiles? Evangelism is an important function. Witnessing for Christ is an important function. We cannot do it until we fulfill our commission of possessing our inheritance and letting the presence of God shine in and through us out to the world.

That's what Israel was supposed to do. That's what they are going to do in the Millennial Kingdom. All the nations of the earth are going to bring their tribute.

The glory of Christ is going to shine worldwide throughout the Millennial Kingdom as that rule takes place. That's what our life should be now. So the question is, to what extent do we have a Gideon type of response to that commission? Are we brave enough to do what needs to be done? We'll explore that theme when we pick up in verse 25 next week.

But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the meat of it and the depth of it and the fascinating way that you have condensed and

compacted so much divine truth into these narratives.

From ancient times to today, they resonate with the same power and the same impact as they have had for century after century after century. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impart that power to us day by day so that our lives will reflect your glory and the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name.

Amen.