BEING PREPARED TO LEAD

Judges 6:25&26 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.”

Background

Judges 6:1 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.

Judges 6:6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

I Samuel 7:2b-4 Then all the people of Israel turned back to the LORD. So Samuel said to all the Israelites, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines.” Sor the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

I Kings 18:21 Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”

American False Gods

Alistair Begg: Truth for Life: footbaal, basketbaal, basebaal

Luke 8:14 “The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.”

Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

2 Timothy 3:4b&5 lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness, but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

John 5:44 “How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?”

Strong’s concordance says the Greek word *“doxa”* means “glory, honor, praise.”

By accepting culturally acceptable ideas contrary to the Word of God.

 Evolution and billions of years.

 Abortion.

 The legitimacy of all forms of sexual activity and gay marriage. “They worship the great god Tolerance.” Tolerance used to mean everyone has a right to their own opinion. It increasingly means, “You have no right to say my opinion or conduct is wrong.

What God Told Gideon To Do and What He Did

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Judges 6:27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

The Reaction of the Townspeople

Judges 6:28-30 In the morning when the people 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! They asked each other, “Who did this?” When they carefully investigated, they were told, “Gideon son of Joash did it.” The people 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.”

Judges 6:31&32 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. So because Gideon broke down Baal’s altar, they gave him the name Jerub-Baal that day, saying, “Let Baal contend with him.”

Gathering an Army

Judges 6:33-35 Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

According to Judges 7:3c 32,000 men responded to the call to arms. Those tribes numbered 212,000 fighting men in the census in Numbers 26:4-51

Putting out the Fleeces

Judges 6:36-38 Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised – 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.” And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew – a bowlful of water.

Judges 6:39&40 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, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew.” That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Ephesians 5:15-17 Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Hebrews 2:4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Acts 4:29-31 “Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Things to Think About

The problem in Israel was not that they replaced God with Baal, but that they added the worship of Baal to the worship of God. The problem with American Christianity is not that most people have replaced God with something else, although some have, but that we who continue to profess faith in Christ have brought other “gods,” money, pleasure, social acceptance, etc. into our lives.

The Israelites were crying out to the Lord for help while continuing to worship Baal, and were ready to kill Gideon for tearing down the altar to Baal.

Gideon had to take on the sin among the Israelites and his family before he could take on the Midianites.

When nothing happened to Gideon after he destroyed Baal’s altar, the Israelites were willing to follow him.

Gideon put out the fleece AFTER he raised an army of 32,000 men in Midianite occupied territory, not BEFORE. (The Midianites had 135,000 men. Judges 8:10)

Today, we first obey Scripture, then ask for wisdom, and then ask God to confirm His direction as we move out in obedience to what He tells us.