

Gideon's Call

Key Verse: *"The angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."*
—Judges 6:12

Selected Scripture:
Judges 6:11-24

The Lord had assured Israel that if they kept his commands they would be blessed. Their unfaithfulness would result in curses. (Deut. 28) These curses would include oppression by their enemies. Now, deeply impoverished, Israel cried out to the Lord for deliverance from Midian.—Judg. 6:6

God's angel greeted Gideon, assuring him that the Lord was with him. Gideon's response, however, reflects a somewhat different state of mind: "Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."—vs. 13

Gideon did not receive a rebuke for his wavering faith, but rather encouragement. "The LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel

OUR KEY VERSE INTRO-
duces us to Gideon, a "mighty man of valour." Israel was in dire need of a great leader to deliver them. They had lapsed once again into a condition of unfaithfulness to God. Idolatry was openly and rampantly practiced. Marauding bands of Midianites plundered their livestock and grain, leaving Israel in a desperate condition. Such calamity had been foretold.

from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" (vs. 14) As Christians, we have often found this to be God's loving way of dealing with us. Though we may expect a rebuke in moments of doubt or weakness, the lovingkindness of our Heavenly Father consistently gives encouragement.

The Lord's words, "Go in this thy might," could be thought of as referring to Gideon's strength as a mighty and valiant warrior. However, it more likely signifies the assuring message of hope for Israel's deliverance. Gideon was to take strength from God's pledge of blessing and victory over the Midianites. Nevertheless, another barrier to Gideon's full faith in God's call arose. He expressed this concern: "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."—vs. 15

We may have similar feelings at times, with misgivings about our ability to do the Lord's work. The Scriptures give us strength to counter such doubts. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: . . . That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—I Cor. 1:26-28,31

Gideon prepared a meal for God's messenger, perhaps believing that if the angel ate of it, proof would be given that this was no imagined vision. The meal was not merely eaten, but was wholly consumed by fire. (Judg. 6:19-22) The evidence was irrefutable. Gideon now grasped the reality of the moment, that an angel of God had indeed spoken to him. He truly was called to service by the Lord. In like manner, and by God's grace, let us be strengthened to accept the profound reality of our call to his service. ■