

Week #:	180	Series:	God's Judgment	Title:	Gideon – The Fleece
Scriptures:	Judges 6:1-10				
Songs:	God Will Make a Way – Don Moen (4:20)				
	Trust In You – Lauren Daigle (3:30)				
	PRAYER:	Spirit Break Out (12:03)			
Videos:	Judges Song – What's in the Bible #4 (Time- 31:31-33:25)				

Judge #5 - Gideon: The Fleece

The first four judges in our study have been:

1. Othniel: He was Caleb's nephew. Israel lived in peace after him for 40 years
2. Ehud: He was known for the physical feature of being left-handed. Israel lived in peace after him for 80 years.
3. Shamgar: He was known for killing 600 Philistines with a farm tool, an oxgoad.
4. Deborah: She was a female prophetess, whom God used to free the people from Jabin [Yavin], King of Hazor, and his commander Sisera.
5. Gideon: Called God's valiant hero.

We left off last week with Gideon having done the first job God called him to do – destroy the altar of Ba'al. He then was supported by his father – in essence, his family had to put the idolatry behind them. They had to choose to follow the way of Adonai. And they did. His father stood up to the villagers who wanted to come against Gideon because of what he did.

Judges 6:33

³³ Now all Midyan, 'Amalek and the others from the east joined forces, crossed the Yarden [Jordan], and set up camp in the Yizre'el Valley [Jezreel Valley].

As Gideon is undergoing his ordeal in his hometown, the Transjordan enemies of Israel have launched an attack by invading across the Jordan from the east and setting up their war camp in the Jezreel. The reason they stopped to camp in the Valley of Jezreel was because it is one of the most fertile areas of land west of the Jordan River. They knew they would be able to have food for their armies if they stopped there. Gideon's hometown was right on the edge of the Jezreel Valley.

Judges 6:34-35

³⁴ But the Spirit of *ADONAI* covered Gid'on. He sounded the call on the *shofar*, and Avi'ezer [Abiezrites] rallied behind him. ³⁵ He sent messengers throughout all M'nasheh, and they too rallied behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Z'vulun [Zebulun] and Naftali; and they came up to join them.

It was at the moment of need that the Lord empowered Gideon with Holy Spirit power to be the deliverer of God's people. Prior to the Day of Pentecost, when Holy Spirit is seen there are two ways in which He interacts with people:

1. Holy Spirit comes upon people
2. Holy Spirit covers a person

It was at Pentecost that Holy Spirit began to indwell men.

Holy Spirit coming upon someone and covering someone are two different words in Hebrew.

1. **Hayyah** is a general term that means **became** or **come to pass** or **befall**.
2. **Labesh** is the term used here in Judges though. It means **to wear something like one wears a garment** or **something that is put on like an article of clothing**. It reveals that a human is so enveloped in God's Spirit that the person becomes endowed with the ability to perform miraculous deeds including the ability to prophecy, or to perform works that far surpass the human nature from both a courage and physical strength standpoint.

Next Gideon blew the shofar. This indicated not only the typical call to battle that the shofar symbolizes for Israel, but also it shows that Gideon immediately took up the mantle of leadership and it was he who would lead his people. Essentially this was the first thing that happened when Gideon was *labesh* (covered like a garment) with Holy Spirit.

He was joined by his own tribe, as well as those in the surrounding area. Notice that it says Asher joined. If you will remember, 40 years before, they were called upon to join Barak, but they declined. They were soundly criticized for their decision with Barak in the Song of Deborah. They must have learned something in the years between then and now, as they now join in willingly.

So, now that Gideon has started the ball rolling, and now that he has an army, Gideon has another crisis of faith and asks God for another sign to authenticate his mission. The sign is not to answer the question of when or how he should lead the Israelites into battle, but if he should lead them at all. The sign is that famous (or infamous, really) sheep's fleece that he laid upon the threshing floor.

Judges 6:36-

³⁶ Gid'on said to God, "If you are going to save Isra'el through me, as you said you would, ³⁷ then, here: I will lay a wool fleece on the threshing-floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, while all the ground stays dry, I will be convinced that you will save Isra'el through me, as you said you would." ³⁸ And it happened! He got up early in the morning, pressed the fleece together and wrung dew out of it, a bowlful of water. ³⁹ But Gid'on said to God, "Don't be angry with me because I am asking one more thing, let me make one more test, please: this time let it be dry only on the fleece, with dew all over the ground." ⁴⁰ And that is what God did that night — it was dry only on the fleece, even though there was dew all over the ground.

Notice that Gideon is no longer hiding away in the cave of the wine press. He is now out in the open, on the top of the hills, camping out on the threshing floor.

Here's what Gideon says to God:

"IF you are going to save Israel through me as YOU SAID you would."

We can cut it anyway we like, but Gideon's flesh was in violent conflict with the Spirit of God that clothed him. We can find ourselves in a situation similar to this as well, where God calls us to do something and we question that calling. We ask for a sign. We question God as if He made a mistake. Many people do as Gideon did here – they “lay a fleece” before God and expect God to show them something more.

Gideon asks for a sign: he will lay a sheep's fleece on the threshing floor and if the Lord will supernaturally cause the fleece to become wet with dew while the area around it is dry, then he'll know for sure that God is with him.

The morning arrives, and there it is: the fleece is wet but the ground is dry. Ah, but there's a problem. Gideon ponders this and thinks that it's entirely possible that this could happen naturally and he could mistake it for Adonai's approval. So, he devises ANOTHER test for God.

As you may recall there were also two signs to authenticate the mission of Moses in Exodus 4:1-7. In the second part of the test he even asks God not to be angry; Gideon knows he is on dangerous ground in what he is asking. For the second time, God is infinitely patient with His deliverer. God does not even rebuke Gideon. Gideon's imperfections only serve to magnify for us an appreciation for God's grace.

The problem with laying out fleeces, and the story of Gideon demonstrates it, is this: when men come up with a means to test God, maybe the results aren't all that conclusive or convincing. So, now what? We often come up with stuff that, for the moment, seems like a good test, and then when it happens, we can think of a dozen ways in which the same result could have been achieved WITHOUT God's intervention.

He presents a wool fleece with the request that the night dew only fall on the fleece and not on the ground. When this fleece-test is fulfilled, he begins to think. Gideon reasoned that fleeces attract water rather readily, and then retain it. It wouldn't be so strange for the dew to moisten the fleece, but at the same time evaporate off the rock threshing floor rather rapidly as the sun rose and thus leave him with the result he found. So, he decides it's more logical to do it in the opposite manner: he asks that the same ground be wet but the fleece dry the following morning. He asks for the reverse. God, in His patience, grants the second sign and the fleece remains dry while the ground around it is wet. Gideon has his answer: God is with him. Now he's convinced.

Like all of us, Gideon is still a fallen human being who struggles to maintain his faith and to render obedience to God. Being "clothed" in the Spirit of God in Gideon's case, or being baptized in the Holy Spirit in our case, does not change our personalities, nor are we rendered immune from sin and doubt. The path of salvation is one of continual conversion and continual submission.

The Call of Gideon:	The Call of Moses:
Gideon was hiding from his enemies in a wine press while he was threshing grain when God called him (Judges 6:14).	Moses was hiding from his enemies in Midian herding sheep when God called him (Exodus 2:15-3:1).
God tells Gideon: "I have sent you" (Judges 6:15).	God tells Moses "I have sent you" (Exodus 3:12).
Gideon protests that he is inadequate (Judges 6:15)	Moses protests that he is inadequate (Exodus 4:1, 10, 13).
Gideon received divine reassurance: "I will be with you" (Judges 6:16).	Moses received divine reassurance: "I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12a).
Gideon is given the sign of a fire theophany to reassure him of God's divine Presence (Judges 6:22).	Moses is given a sign of a fire theophany to reassure him of God's divine Presence (Exodus 3:2, 12b).
The fire theophany induced fear in Gideon (Judges 6:22b-23).	The fire theophany induced fear in Moses (Exodus 3:6b).
Two additional signs are given as proof of the success of the mission (Judges 6:36-40).	Two additional signs are given as proof of the success of the mission (Exodus 4:1-7).
After much hesitation, Gideon accepted the call.	After much hesitation, Moses accepted the call.