

Judges 6:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

Analysis

After the prophet's rebuke, the narrative shifts to Gideon's introduction through an angelic visitation. The Angel of the LORD (mal'ak Yahweh, מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה) is a divine theophany—God Himself appearing in visible form (verse 14 identifies Him as Yahweh directly). He sits under the oak in Ophrah belonging to Joash the Abiezrite, Gideon's father. The detail about the oak (elah, אֶלָּה) suggests a known landmark, possibly associated with previous worship or significant events. Gideon is threshing wheat in the winepress—an unusual location revealing the depths of Midianite intimidation. Winepresses were typically in valleys, partially underground, offering concealment that outdoor threshing floors couldn't provide.

Historical Context

The Angel of the LORD appears throughout the Old Testament (Genesis 16:7, 22:11, Exodus 3:2) in theophanies that Reformed theology generally interprets as pre-incarnate appearances of Christ. Ophrah's location in Manasseh territory placed it in the path of Midianite raids from the east. Abiezzer was a clan within Manasseh (Joshua 17:2, Numbers 26:30). Threshing normally occurred on elevated, open threshing floors where wind could separate chaff from grain, but fear drove Gideon to hidden, inefficient winepress threshing.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the Angel of the LORD's appearance to fearful Gideon demonstrate God's grace in seeking out the weak and fearful?
2. What activities in your life are you 'hiding in a winepress'—doing fearfully and inefficiently because of intimidation?
3. How does God's initiative in calling Gideon (rather than Gideon seeking God) illustrate the doctrine of divine election?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁר בְּאֵלָה תִּחְתַּט וַיָּשַׁב יְהוָה מְלָא־גָּת
under an oak and sat H8478 H3427 H3068 H4397 And there came an angel of the LORD H935

אָשָׁר בְּעֵפֶר הַיּוֹאָשׁ אָבִי בְּעֵזֶר
the Abiezrite H33 H0 H3101 that pertained unto Joash H834 which was in Ophrah H6084

מִפְנֵי לְבָנָי יִסְתַּחַט וְיִגְדַּע וְיִבְנֶה
it from H6440 H5127 H1660 by the winepress H2406 threshed H2251 and his son H1121 Gideon H1439

מִדְיָן:
the Midianites
H4080

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 17:2 (Parallel theme): There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.

Hebrews 11:32 (Parallel theme): And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

Judges 13:3 (References Lord): And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

Judges 8:2 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?

Isaiah 63:9 (Parallel theme): In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.