

Judges 6:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

Analysis

The angel of the LORD's greeting to Gideon is laden with irony and prophetic insight. The salutation "The LORD is with thee" (Yahweh immeka, יְהוָה עִמָּךְ) echoes God's promise to Moses (Exodus 3:12), Joshua (Joshua 1:5), and anticipates the Messiah's name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). This assurance of divine presence forms the foundation for the impossible task ahead. The designation "thou mighty man of valour" (gibbor hechayil, גִּבּוֹר הַחַיִּיל) literally means "mighty warrior" or "valiant hero," yet addresses Gideon while he's secretly threshing wheat in a winepress, hiding from Midianite raiders. This apparent contradiction reveals God's method: He sees not what we are but what He will make us through His power. The Hebrew gibbor (גִּבּוֹר) describes warriors of exceptional strength and courage (like David's mighty men, 2 Samuel 23:8), yet Gideon protests he's from the weakest clan in Manasseh and the least in his family (6:15). God's calling transforms fearful, doubting Gideon into a mighty deliverer. This pattern recurs throughout Scripture: God chooses the weak to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27), demonstrates power through human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9), and calls the timid to courageous faith. Gideon's transformation from fearful farmer to victorious general illustrates sanctification—God progressively conforms believers to the calling He has declared over them.

Historical Context

Israel's oppression by Midian lasted seven years (Judges 6:1), punishment for abandoning God to serve Baal and Asherah (6:10). The Midianites, along with

Amalekites and "children of the east" (nomadic desert tribes), invaded during harvest season, destroying crops and livestock, impoverishing Israel (6:3-6). These raiders used camels for rapid military strikes—the first biblical reference to camels in warfare, a technological innovation that gave nomadic peoples significant military advantage. Gideon's family lived near Ophrah in Manasseh's territory (6:11), in the central highlands vulnerable to raiding from the Jezreel Valley. Threshing wheat in a winepress (a pit carved in rock for treading grapes) allowed Gideon to hide grain from Midianite scouts who confiscated harvests. This humiliating necessity illustrated Israel's desperate situation. Archaeological evidence from this period (Iron Age I, 1200-1000 BCE) shows new highland settlements with hidden grain silos, confirming the biblical picture of a population under constant threat. The angel's appearance to Gideon parallels other divine commissions to unlikely leaders: Moses tending sheep (Exodus 3), Saul searching for donkeys (1 Samuel 9), David keeping sheep (1 Samuel 16), Elisha plowing (1 Kings 19:19). God consistently chooses leaders from obscurity, demonstrating that victory depends on divine power rather than human qualifications.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Where in your life is God calling you to step into an identity or role that seems far beyond your current strength, experience, or qualification?
2. How does God's designation of Gideon as a 'mighty warrior' while hiding in fear challenge your understanding of how God sees and transforms His people?
3. What 'Midianite oppression' in your life keeps you hiding and fearful rather than trusting God's promise that He is with you?

Interlinear Text

אֵל יוֹ א	אֵל יוֹ	מַלְאֲכֵי	יְהוָה	וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵל יוֹ
appeared	H413	And the angel	of the LORD	unto him and said	H413
H7200		H4397	H3068	H559	
יְהוָה	עִמָּךְ	גִּבּוֹר	הַקָּדוֹשׁ		
of the LORD	H5973	is with thee thou mighty	man of valour		
H3068		H1368	H2428		

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 1:5 (Parallel theme): There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Luke 1:28 (References Lord): And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Judges 2:18 (References Lord): And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

Joshua 1:9 (References Lord): Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

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.

Luke 1:11 (References Lord): And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Exodus 3:12 (Parallel theme): And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Matthew 28:20 (Parallel theme): Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

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