

# *Know the God of Scripture*

Volume 1

## **Week 11: The Age of Judges - Answer Guide**

*Below is the answer guide for this week's lesson. By no means are the answers complete or the only possible responses to each question. They are a guide to fully understanding the intent of the questions posed.*

1. According to what we see in Judges 6:22 and 13:21-22, the angel of the LORD is God manifested in some type of fleshly being which could be seen and heard with the eyes and ears of humans. The only being that brought the Israelites up out of Egypt was YAHWEH (Leviticus 11:45; Deuteronomy 4:35-38). When LORD is all caps in the NASB version it is interpreted as the personal name of God, YAHWEH. Every occurrence in the Old Testament of "Angel of the LORD" has LORD capitalized signifying God in a manifested human form. Some scholars believe it was a preincarnate form of Christ. Either way, He spoke and had the authority of God.

Side Note: Every occurrence in the New Testament of "angel of the Lord" has Lord in small letters signifying Adonai or master. The reason for this is that in the New Testament Jesus had already come to earth incarnate and therefore there was no need for Him to appear in any other form.

2. Although it's a hard concept for us humans to grasp, God has control over everything, including our enemy's hearts and decision making. Other supporting Scriptures are Exodus 9:12; 10:20, Ezra 6:22, Proverbs 21:1. Because God is in control, all the events of history have been filtered through His hands. Why and how God does this is a mystery, but true none-the-less. This is why prayer is essential to move the hearts of our authorities or enemies. It is not beyond God to change the hearts of men. It should be comforting to know that God is in control and always will be.

3. Baal was an ancient deity worshipped in Canaan prior to the Israelite takeover. He was the god of rain (thus, agricultural sustenance) often depicted with lightning bolts and fire. Often the followers of Baal would offer their first-born children in sacrifice rituals to appease him. Read 1 Kings 16:29-34. Asherah was a wooden figurine, devoid of boughs, in the rude form of a female deity (Astarte, Ishtar) used in ancient Canaanite and Assyrian sexual worship. Open air sex rituals were common among his worshippers.

4. YAHWEH is the proper, or personal, name of the God of the Hebrews. It seems to have been derived from Moses' encounter with God atop Mt. Sinai. When Moses asked God what His name was, God told him His name was "I am what I am" in Exodus 3:14. This name is a derivative of the verb Hayah which has multiple meanings, one of which is "to come about, come into being."

In Judges 6:12 God says to Gideon "I am with you" which is a play on His name and character. God never forsakes His chosen ones. These were words of comfort for a terrified Gideon.

Side Note: YHWH is oftentimes referred to as the tetragrammaton of God and was considered too holy and sacred to say. Adonai in the Old Testament refers to Lord or Master in a divine matter. Later the two words were merged, the consonants from YHWH and the vowels from Adonai, to create the word Jehovah, a word the Hebrews were allowed to speak. Further information can be found at: <https://www.gotquestions.org/meaning-of-Yahweh.html>

5. The Israelites were ruled by ruthless Midianites who, if they had seen Gideon threshing wheat out in the open, would have confiscated it. Threshing wheat occurred at high places where the wind was stronger to separate the chaff. Wine vats were usually near civilization, towns and houses, where grapes were brought in from the field and trampled on. Gideon is secretly obtaining wheat to feed his family. It is a picture of fear and the will to survive

by any means. He was at the lowest point in his life when God, the Angel of the LORD, showed up to call him. It's just like God to show up then!

**6.** Based on his current living conditions, Gideon had lost faith in the God of his ancestors. When encountering the angel of the LORD, Gideon questions him regarding his current situation, "Oh, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us?" (Judges 6:13). We often cannot see the hand of God in our lives, but that doesn't mean He isn't there. God is omnipresent, He is everywhere at all times. God replies to Gideon, in essence saying, "I'm about to show you my presence by calling you to be my instrument of redeeming Israel."

It is perfectly normal to want to question God and His interaction in your life. I promise you He won't be surprised! Throughout the Psalms, King David questioned God about His apparent absence in his life. Questioning God often strengthens your relationship with Him. It shows you have a deep concern and desire to know Him. However, be prepared for God to show you and often reveal Himself to you.

**7.** Both Moses and Gideon encountered God, one from a spiritual burning bush appearance and the other from a physical manifestation. Moses was highly educated in a high place whereas Gideon was from the weakest family in Manasseh. Both men were up against formidable foes. Moses did not think he was equipped or adequate to be called by God, much like Gideon. Both were transformed men after their encounter with God. Both were used by God to lead His people out of bondage. Both stories illustrate Philippians 4:13, that with God all things are possible.

**8.** Prior to God's calling he exhibited fear while threshing wheat in secret. After his calling he exhibited peace knowing God was with him. In verse 24, Yahweh Shalom means LORD of peace. Gideon had to internalize the fact that he had just been approached by the Almighty God and was assured that God was with him. That kind of experience will make a significant impact on any man or woman.

**9.** Gideon did not have access to the general way of acknowledging God's will at that time (by employing the Urim & Thummim in the priest's ephod). He came up with a way of clarifying what God wanted him to do by using the fleece. He had seen the Angel of the Lord and did not have any trepidations in reassuring himself of what God had called him to do.

**10.** It is an underlying theme throughout Scripture that God can do with little what men do with much. God doesn't need the help of mankind to accomplish His will and purpose. Judges 7:2 states the real reason God diminished Gideon's army... pride! God foresaw that if his army defeated the enemy they would boast about their own strength and leave God by the wayside. God warrants the glory in this and every other instance where He is involved.

This intervention by God is really no different than when David slayed Goliath or when God kills 180,000 Assyrians outside the walls of Jerusalem for Hezekiah. The list of God intervening in Israel's battles is numerous, impressive and comforting. It assures us that God sits on His throne as ruler.

### **Additional Questions:**

**1.** Answers will vary depending on personal experience.

**2.** Answers will vary depending on personal experiences.

**3.** We are not told who the prophet is in Judges 6:8. However, we know that the LORD sent him to prophecy to the sons of Israel and he was faithful in his calling. Jewish tradition says the prophet was Phinehas, the son of Eleazar.

