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A Prophet Sent by ADONAI Confronts Isra’el 6: 1-10

A prophet sent by ADONAI confronts Isra’el DIG: Who were the Midianites? Who aided them in their raids on the Israelites? What were they interested in? What were the Israelites forced to do in response? What was the unknown prophet’s message? How was the function of his message different from Deborah’s?

REFLECT: What outcomes should be anticipated if we live in disobedience to God? Have the passing years blurred any of the hard lessons you had to learn in the past? Who, or what, have you been turned over to? What has it cost you? Have you cried out to the Lord? Who has ADONAI sent to remind you of His ways?

The Israelites were focused on getting help, when what they needed was repentance.

Rebellion (6:1a): Again the Israelites did evil in the sight of the LORD (6:1a BSB). After the remarkable victory of **Deborah and Barak** over **Javin** and his general **Sisera** (to see link click [Aw](#) - **The Defeat of the Canaanites**), **Isra’el** had **forty years** of relative calm and stability. But the passing years blurred the memory of the great deliverance and the next generation reverted to the easy-going syncretistic religion that again threatened to obliterate **Isra’el’s** distinction from **their** pagan neighbors.¹³⁴

Retribution: The Midianites (6:1b-6): Having strayed once more from **YHVH**, **Isra’el** was abandoned to **her** own devices, and foreign domination was quick to follow. **The** anonymous **prophet’s** words of rebuke, that squarely lay the blame for **the people’s** predicament at **their** own doorstep. **So He handed them over to the Midianites for seven years (6:1 NLT).** **The Midianites** were descendants of **Abraham** and **Keturah (Genesis 25:2)**, and **they** were involved in the sale of **Joseph** to **Egypt (Genesis 37:25-36)**. **They** were defeated by **Isra’el** (see the commentary on [Numbers Ea](#) - **Taking a Stand for God**). But now, two centuries

later, **the Midianites** had renewed **their** strength. One branch of **the Midianites** was **the Kenites**; **Moses** found shelter with **them** and married one of **them**, and **they** journeyed with **Isra’el** into the Promised Land. But the other clans of **Midian** were not pro-**Isra’el**.¹³⁵

The Midianites were so cruel that the Israelites made hiding places. The Midianites were more interested in plundering **the Israelite** possessions and necessary supplies than exterminating **them**. Because **they** were nomadic, or Bedouin by nature, **they** had no desire for permanent settlement in the land. **They** came for the produce of the land, not after the land itself or the inhabitants. As a result of those raids, **the Israelites hid their produce in the mountains, caves, and** hollowed out wadis **(6:2 NLT)**.

The plight of **the Israelites** is described in much more detail than in the previous **cycles**. **Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites** came with **the Amalekites**, who had already been a problem in **3:13**, where **they** were also described as being allied with **Isra’el’s** enemy **Eglon**. Another allied group was **the people of the east**. These were Bedouin raiders whose use of camels enabled them to take waterless journeys of several days, which nomads on donkeys simply could not do. **Their** strategy was to **attack, camp, and destroy the crops as far away as Gaza**, the southern end of the land **(6:3-4a Hebrew)**. What they could not take with them as plunder, they destroyed. **They left the Israelites with nothing to eat, taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. These enemy hordes, coming with their livestock and tents, were as thick as locusts; they arrived in droves of camels too numerous to count. And they stayed until the land was stripped bare. So Isra’el was impoverished**, or literally **Isra’el became small**, which says as much about **her** emotional state as **her** economic condition. **Isra’el** was completely paralyzed before **the Midianite** menace. All these events fulfilled what **God** had warned would happen in **Deuteronomy 28:50-51**. **Isra’el’s** covenant unfaithfulness resulted in the covenant curse. **Then the Israelites cried out to ADONAI for help (6:4b-6)**.¹³⁶



No Repentance (6:7-10): The response of **Ha’Shem** to **the Israelites cry** was quite different from the first **four cycles**. By sending **an** unknown **prophet** to confront **the people** and indicting **them** for **their** covenant unfaithfulness, **God** was implying that there comes a time when **His** patience turns to judgment.¹³⁷

When the Israelites cried out to ADONAI because of Midian (6:7NLT), He immediately **sent them a prophet**, who appeared at exactly the same point in this **fifth cycle** as **Deborah the prophetess** had appeared in the previous one. But the function of this unnamed **prophet** contrasted sharply with that of **Deborah**. **He** doesn’t come to restore anything, but to accuse **the Israelites** of spiritual adultery and to tell **them** (by implication) that **they** had forfeited all right to **restoration**.¹³⁸

The Israelites appear to have turned to **ADONAI** as a last resort. **Their cry** didn’t seem to have been any indication of **repentance** for sin because apparently **they** were not aware of the reason behind **the Canaanite** oppression until **the LORD** sent a prophet to point this out.¹³⁹

While **the prophet’s** name was unimportant, **his** message was very important; it was from **God** to **His** covenant people. **He** brought home **his** point by declaring: **This is what ADONAI, the God of Isra’el says: I brought you up out of slavery in Egypt (6:8 NLT). I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove out your enemies and gave you their land (6:9 NLT). God** reminded **them** that **He** said:

I am ADONAI your God. This statement is reminiscent of when **the LORD** told **Moses** to tell **the Israelites** that **I AM WHO I AM** sent **him** to deliver **them from Egypt (Exodus 3:14)**. In this title, **YHVH** was stating that just as **He** has always been faithful to **His** covenant **people**, **He** would continue to be faithful to **them**.

The point of **the prophet’s** message was this . . . despite all that **God** did for **Isra’el** in the past, it was simply not too much to ask for exclusive allegiance to **Him** now. Instead, **they abandoned the LORD for the gods of the Amirites**. **They** were focused on getting help when what they needed was repentance. The message of **the unnamed prophet** was a reminder of what **ADONAI** did for **Isra’el** in **the Exodus** and the conquest of **the Land** under the leadership of **Joshua**. **Isra’el’s** obligation was faith, loyalty, and obedience, but **the prophet** concluded by pointing out **Isra’el’s** failure: **But you have not listened to Me (6:10 NLT)**. One might think **God’s** message to **Isra’el** was harsh, but nothing could be further from the truth. In **His** mercy, **the LORD** exposed **their** sin and the reasons for **their** distress, and in doing so, **He** gave **them** an opportunity to repent of **their** sin and experience restoration. **The people** needed to recognize that rejecting **their** false gods and being faithfully devoted to **ADONAI** was the only way they would experience true and lasting rest.¹⁴⁰

This brief episode leaves us wondering how **God** will respond to **the people’s** persistent disloyalty. We know that the Midianite oppression represents God’s judgment, but we can’t help but expect further discipline. All this set the stage for the calling of **Gideon** (see [Ba – The Call of Gideon](#)). And if **God** raises a deliverer for **Isra’el**, it is an entirely gracious act because there has been no hint of repentance . . . nor any announcement of divine forgiveness. **God’s** subsequent intervention on **Isra’el’s** behalf must be interpreted in light of **the people’s** persistent apostasy.¹⁴¹

When you read the B’rit Chadashah epistles, you can’t help but notice that the apostles took the same approach when they admonished the believers to whom they wrote. The apostles repeatedly reminded the believers that **ADONAI** had saved them so that they might live obediently and serve **the Lord** faithfully. As **God’s children**, **they** were to walk worthy of **their** high heavenly calling (**Ephesians 4:1**) and live like people who were seated with **Messiah** in glory (**Colossians 3:1ff**). The motive for **Godly** living is not that we might gain something we don’t have, but that we might live up to what we already have in **Messiah**.

The purpose of **Godly discipline** is to make **God's children** willing to listen to **God's Word**. Often after spanking a child, parents will reassure the child of their love and then gently admonish the child to listen to what they say *and obey it*. **ADONAI** speaks to **His children**, either through the soft voice of Scripture, or the heavy hand of discipline; and if we ignore the first, we must endure the second. One way or another, **the Lord** is going to get our attention and deal with us.¹⁴²

Those who lack the resolve to resist the lures of the world will likely face the disasters and destructions that these lures often bring. They may find that **Ha'Shem** is their opponent . . . not their friend. Certainly, fickleness in loyalty to the things of **God** occurs in the Church today. When believers run after the same gods as their worldly friends, they should not be surprised when **God** does not hear their prayers or react in the same way they think **He** should.

It is interesting that **Ha'Shem** formally indicates. Such language places the relationship into the forensic, legal context, where doubt is removed and clarity is added to the description of what is wrong in the relationship. That **God** still indicts **His** people is clear through various passages in the B'rit Chadashah. For example, in **Revelation Chapters 2 and 3**, several churches are indicted for their failures to **God's** covenant. **The Spirit of God** carries on this same process with us individually.

In a practical sense, this passage addresses a common problem in the area of prayer. We turn to **the LORD** in a moment of need, even when we have not been walking in **His** ways. Yet, we expect **ADONAI** to answer our prayers because (and often for no other reason than) we are in need. Over and over again, the Bible (including the book of **Judges**) addresses this issue of manipulation in prayer (**James 4:1-6**). Our relationship with **God** is never a mechanical process.¹⁴³

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** offer of a relationship of steadfast love to all who believe in **You** as their **Lord and Savior**. What a wonderful gift. That relationship is more important than anything else in the world. When sin breaks the relationship with **You**, true repentance should come quickly from a heart full of deep sorrow. People want things to go well in their lives, but what is needed is to recognize false gods, such as prideful use of time and money and pleasure, rather than being faithfully devoted to you **ADONAI** is the only way to experience true and lasting peace, joy and rest. **You** work in my life to guide me back to loving **You**. Often **Your** guidance is thru **discipline**. Even when **You** have to correct and **discipline**, the correction is done in love. **My son, do not take lightly the***

discipline of Adonai or lose heart when you are corrected by Him, because ADONAI disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He accepts (Hebrews 12:5b-6). True Repentance involves turning away from sin and toward **You**. The mind/heart changes from selfishness to surrender to **Your** will, with a joy for pleasing **You**. Thank **You** so very much, for being such a wise and loving **God** to see into the heart, guiding me into true repentance that **You** may graciously forgive. **You** are awesome! I love to praise and to worship **You!** In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen