

God Uses Characters and Stories

Throughout the Bible God uses characters and settings to illustrate the need for man to respect His very being and power. The stories usually present a character in a setting because such helps us in remembering the story. However, consider that the story is never about the character God uses. Rather, the story is really meant to prove a point about the being and power of the God of Heaven. The characters are mere actors in a script written, produced, and directed by God Himself (this analogy is meant respectfully and not in any way intended to lower God to a role occupied by man).

Consider the story told in Judges Chapter 6, with the main character being Gideon. The setting is sad as the people of God had forsaken Him and were practicing idolatry: "Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord" (Judges 6:1). Because of their disobedience, God gave the Israelites into the hands of the Midianites: "So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years" (Judges 6:1). The story continues with the people of God crying out (much like they did in Egypt, Exodus 2:23). Thus, God responds to their cries by sending them a prophet to explain to them that which they should have known, that they are in this situation because of their disobedience (Judges 6:6-8). Gideon now enters the story.

An Angel of God appears before Gideon under a Terebinth tree (Judges 6:11). God then declares to Gideon, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man" (Judges 6:16). God provides a comforting, strengthening sign for Gideon by having fire rise out from rocks and consume meat and unleavened bread (Judges 6:21). Gideon sounds the trumpet (Judges 6:34) and all the armies gather to meet him for the great task.

The storyline intensifies and reality sets in with Gideon. He has been pulled from literal obscurity and perhaps a bit of uneasiness seeps into his mind. Gideon asks God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as You have said - look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said" (Judges 6:36-37). God reassures Gideon twice. God then instructs Gideon to scale down the size of the army Gideon had assembled. Why? Because this

story is not about proving anything about the main character in the story, Gideon. The story is about proving the being and power of God.

The people needed to understand that God provided the victory over the Midianites (Judges 7:2). God repeats His point in Judges 7:9, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hands." Gideon will further this by declaring, "God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian..." (Judges 8:2).

God used Gideon to tell a story He had written. God produced a victory for Israel by directing all the events that occurred. This story helped Israel realize that God is the One they must rely on and obey. The story helps you and I understand the same.