

*Judges 6:1-40 v1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. v2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. v3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. v4 They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. v5 They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. v6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help. v7 When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian, v8 he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. v9 I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. v10 I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me." v11 The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. v12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." v13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." v14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" v15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." v16 The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together." v17 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favour in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. v18 Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return." v19 Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. v20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. v21 With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. v22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" v23 But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." v24 So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. v25 That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. v26 Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering." v27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime. v28 In the morning when the men of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar! v29 They asked each other, "Who did this?" When*

they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it." v30 The men of the town demanded of Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it." v31 But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar." v32 So that day they called Gideon "Jerub-Baal," saying, "Let Baal contend with him," because he broke down Baal's altar. v33 Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. v34 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. v35 He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them. v36 Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised- v37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." v38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew--a bowlful of water. v39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew." v40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

### Introduction

Last time we looked at **HOW GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD RESPOND WHEN GOD SAVES THEM**. Today I want to look at:

## THE KIND OF PERSON GOD USES TO SAVE A NATION BLINDED BY SIN.

Notice, **FIRSTLY: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A NATION BLINDED BY SIN.**

### **1. A NATION is blinded by sin WHEN THEY REPEATEDLY MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES.**

*v1 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.*

There is a saying that says: "The first sign of madness is doing the same thing over and over again AND EXPECTING A DIFFERENT RESULT".

And NATIONS and INDIVIDUALS that are failing are prime examples of this issue!!! WHY Oh WHY, did it that Israel seven years before they sought an answer. HABIT

**Proverbs 26:11** As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.

**2 Peter 2:22** Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

**2 Corinthians 4:4** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

## **2. A NATION is blinded by sin WHEN THEY REPEATEDLY LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS IN THE WRONG PLACE.**

*v2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.*

Right throughout the Bible, people, even believers, have sought answers to deep spiritual questions in the WRONG PLACE.

In the OT, Yahweh, often condemned Israel for trusting in someone or something other than the HIM. Israel entered into treaties with Egypt, Assyria. They trusted in “JESUSALEM” theology. They believed that just because they lived in Jerusalem, they were above judgement. (Jeremiah)

In the NT, some believers, Judaizers, believed that while trusting in Jesus was good, they also taught that you needed to be circumcised to be truly saved. (Galatians 3)

**1 Corinthians 12:1-3** *v1 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. v2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. v3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*

**Matthew 9:35-36** *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. v36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

## **3. A NATION is blinded by sin WHEN THEY REPEATEDLY SURRENDER THE BLESSINGS OF GOD.**

*v3 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. v4 They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. v5 They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. v6 Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.*

The famous American businessman, John D Rockefeller, was once asked “HOW MUCH MONEY DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE A MAN HAPPY?”

If I told you that Rockefeller owned the equivalent of 1% of the total US Economy. Elon Musk only recently broke his record for being the richest person who ever lived. \$340 Billion dollars.

“JUST A LITTLE MORE” or “JUST ONE DOLLAR MORE”

*Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, v25 for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? v26 To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.*

#### **4. A NATION is blinded by sin WHEN THEY REPEATEDLY REJECT THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD.**

*v7 When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian, v8 he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. v9 I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. v10 I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."*

In the Western world we are progressively living in what Sociologists are calling a "Post-Christian" era, since the 1930's.

**"Postchristianity is the situation in which Christianity is no longer the dominant civil religion of a society but has gradually assumed values, culture, and worldviews that are not necessarily Christian.** Post-Christian tends to refer to the loss of Christianity's monopoly in historically Christian societies." Wiki

One of the main causes we are facing this a rejection of the BIBLE as the WORD OF GOD. While there are many questions raised by Unbelieving Scholars, the greatest failure has been church members.

1. We cause people to doubt the Bible by so-called Prophecies. By running after one "Prophet" after the next, we are saying to God and to others that "GOD'S WORD" is not sufficient.
2. We cause people to doubt the Bible by not obeying its truth. Each time we hear the TRUTH of the Bible being explained, AND CHOOSE NOT TO OBEY, we cause the value of the BIBLE the fall in the eyes of others.

#### **5. A NATION is blinded by sin WHEN THEY REPEATEDLY DEFEND SINFUL BEHAVIOUR.**

*v25 That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. v26 Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering." v27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime. v28 In the morning when the men of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar! v29 They asked each other, "Who did this?" When they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it." v30 The men of the town demanded of Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it." v31 But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar."*

The nation of Israel wanted to kill Gideon for standing up to Baal.

For Example THE MONKEYPOX ISSUE

## CNN Health website

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/08/05/health/monkeypox-questions-update/index.html>

### Who is at risk of monkeypox?

Anyone who has had contact with someone with a monkeypox-like rash, or who has had contact with someone who has a probable or confirmed case of monkeypox, is at high risk for infection.

However, a large number of cases in this outbreak have been in [men who have sex with men, including gay and bisexual men](#), and public health officials are focusing their prevention efforts in this group. The virus is [not unique to this community](#), but the nature of its close-contact spread has led to a disproportionate impact.

### Now should I worry about monkeypox? Our medical analyst explains

"The vast majority of those who have been diagnosed to date with human monkeypox virus are self-identifying men who have sex with men," Zucker said.

"This is likely due to shared sexual networks. So what we're seeing is, they're seeing it first and experiencing the majority of cases. Just like other diseases, there's no reason it can't spread to other communities via sexual or other close contact," he said.

*Romans 1:18-32 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, v19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. v20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. v21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. v22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools v23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. v24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. v25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen. v26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. v27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. v28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. v29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, v30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; v31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. v32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*

## **CONCLUSION**

## **WHERE DO WE STAND AS A NATION?**