

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built. They said to one another, "Who did this thing?" And when they searched about and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash did this thing." Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it." But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar." Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he had torn down his altar. (Judges 6:28-32)

When you touch someone's idol...there's a high price to pay. Blood sacrifice is serious business. And often *real business* is the kind that makes the world go round (*actually God does that, but maybe you've heard that expression*). Real business that powers world systems is indeed a *bloody business*. War surely seems to be the driving force for many economies, whether it's global, national, or local. In the passage before us, hometown boy Gideon, son of Joash, touched his father's idol...and the community's security. You see people trust their god, and some of them fear their god...even a false one. Gideon tore down the *altar of Baal*. I don't think we realize the militant nature of what happened in this episode. But it has historical ramifications, even to this very day. You see, Gideon didn't just think it would be a good idea to touch the idol...he went to war. And he had a little help getting there in his mindset. The Angel of the Lord revealed Himself as God to Gideon to make a warrior out of a wimp. The fear of the Lord can be a powerful motivator and a huge deterrent. The first thing this terrified man was required to do was to obey the Living God when it came to dealing with the deadness of idol worship. Idolatry is not to be allowed to coincide or coexist (*there's a code word for you*) in the heart of Jerubbaal...often human beings get a name change when they get a heart change. What a powerful proclamation Joash made when the home folks came to collect the price of Gideon's life for daring to touch their idol. They were out for blood to avenge their idol. But Gideon was now called *Jerubbaal*...Let Baal contend for himself! Let the false god speak!

God had commanded Gideon to take his stand and tear down the altar of Baal. The Lord is most expressive in His language so Gideon can understand that the reality of worship is truly the reality of warfare. Every time we worship...whether the worship is wicked or holy, spiritual warfare is being waged. And it is always a bloody business. Life is in the blood. The Lord God Almighty is a Warrior God...He commanded the destruction of what He called the *stronghold*, or *fortress*, of a false worship altar and replace it with a holy altar. Worship not only builds the altar, it fortifies it and strengthens it every time it is practiced. And a wicked stronghold, a battle hardened altar, has been fortified in our culture for over 45 years. And it will only be destroyed by holy worship. When you touch this idol, there is a high price to pay!

I was a senior in high school when a U.S. Supreme Court decision opened the door to legitimize abortion's bloody and wicked altar. Since 1973 it is estimated that an average of 1.5 million souls per year have been sacrificed on the altar called freedom of choice...over 67 million people lost their lives and became the basis of a lucrative financial institution. And that idol must not be touched. Idolatry is indeed a bloody business. As of this writing, the U.S. Senate will host a public hearing of accusations against someone who has been nominated to sit in a seat of justice. Roughly half of our population already believe that he is guilty of being a sexual predator and unworthy of becoming a Supreme Court Justice before sworn testimony is even heard. The real battle, the real bloody war, is seething underneath the public protests. The war is over the evil practice of abortion, a bloody sacrifice that covers the unholy altar offered to the ruler of this world and the territorial evil spirits over our land. The uproar is not about whether this man exhibits good character. The clamor is an expression that manifests the fear that this man could potentially tip the scales of justice in overturning the national and spiritual rebellion called *Roe vs. Wade* that has corrupted our culture and poisoned our minds against what is good and right and true. May the Lord God Almighty win the day granting mercy to the millions of people who have believed the lie of abortion for generations instead of believing what the Lord has to say about life in the womb:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you;...(Jeremiah 1:5a)

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. (Ps 139:14)

Blessings to you and may the Lord have mercy upon us,
Pastor Sam