I. Israel's Distress (6:1-10).
   A. Israel had been in subjection to the Canaanites for several years until God raised up Deborah.
   B. Deborah had defeated Sisera the captain of the hosts of Canaan, and Israel had rest.
   C. Unfortunately, the Israelites turned back to idols and left God again
      1. This is the case throughout the book of Judges.
      2. It is the case today that many Christians turn from God until things get tough in their lives. (Go into detail)
   D. This time God allowed the Midianites to dominate God's people.
      1. They so dominated Israel that the people were left to live in caves.
      2. There was little food and almost no cattle, oxen or donkeys.
      3. The Midianites took much of the food that was grown by the Israelites.
   E. All this suffering caused the people to cry out to God.
   F. God heard them and to drive home why this was happening to them he sent them a prophet to remind them what all God had done for them and how they had treated Him.

II. Gideon's Doubting (6:11-40).
   A. Gideon asked why?
      1. This is not a bad question to ask when troubles arise.
      2. Many today ask God why bad things happen.
      3. There are several reasons for suffering:
         a. Natural events bring suffering;
         b. Other people's sin brings suffering (drunk driving, abuse, etc.);
         c. Consequences of our sins (this was the case of Israel's suffering);
         d. And God's chastening (Proverbs 3:11-12)
   B. That night he was told to tear down the altar of Baal.
      1. It is important to note here that until sin and error are uprooted, righteousness cannot flourish.
      2. Each Christian must make sure that the things that cause us to falter are removed or we will go back to them.
   C. Gideon asked for a sign from God.
      1. He asked for dew on the fleece only and God did it.
      2. He asked for dew on the fleece only and God did it.
      3. Many of us ridicule Gideon for a seeming lack of faith.
         a. I don't know if it was so much a lack of faith in God as a lack of faith in himself.
         b. God being in His life was new to him.
         c. His father had not set a godly example and Gideon did not know God well.
d. He did not know how much he believed in God and he knew to lead God’s people into battle his faith had to be sure.

4. This should also encourage us to be patient with those snared in sin, especially the sin of denominationalism.
   a. It’s all they have known in that instance.
   b. Patience is required when teaching them (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

5. We should also use this as an example to investigate things before we believe them.

D. Interestingly enough, we don’t read of Gideon questioning God ever again.
   1. His doubts and fears were removed.
   2. Sadly, many still question God and His word.

III. God’s Directives (7:1-14).
A. At the end of chapter 6 we are told that Gideon had sent for men from the neighboring tribes.
   1. A number of men came totaling 32,000 (7:3).
   2. But they were facing a force of 135,000 (8:12).

B. God wanted Israel to know that it was He who would save Israel and not Gideon and the army so he told Gideon that there were too many.
   1. He told Gideon to tell all the fearful to go home and 22,000 men left.
      a. God does not want cowards serving him.
      b. The first person to be cast into hell in Rev. 21:8 is the person who is fearful.
      c. God wants people who will stand up for Him no matter what the situation.
   2. There were still too many so he was told to march them to water and those that put their faces into the water were told to go home.
   3. God said with 300 men I will save Israel.
      a. This shows God wants right attitudes not necessarily great multitudes.
      b. God can do great things with few people.

C. God then allowed Gideon to be strengthened by hearing the interpretation of a Midianite soldier’s dream.
   1. Gideon got to hear he wins, which gave him courage.
   2. As we read through the New Testament, we ought to get the message that Christians win.
   3. This should give us great courage to face the enemies of God and to do His will in all things.

D. Gideon then worshiped God.
   1. He realized God was with him and he praised God for it.
   2. Knowing that we win and that God is with us ought to cause us to serve and worship God with the best of our abilities.

IV. Midian’s Destruction (7:16-25).
A. Gideon came back to the camp and divided the soldiers into 3 groups.
B. Gideon told them "look on me and do likewise."
1. Gideon led by example.
2. We need elders to stand up and lead this way.

C. Gideon gives them the plan and they go out and defeat the Midianites.
   1. What if they had changed God’s plan?
   2. God has given us a plan and it works as long as we don’t tamper with it.