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## **Dunkirk: We Have a Job to Do!**

### **You Haven't Turned Around.**



## **There is No Hiding From This, Son. We Have a Job to Do.**

### **Movie Background**

In late May, 1940, over 300,000 British and French soldiers were holed up in the French port town of Dunkirk. The German army was days away from totally annihilating the British army, whose only escape was via the sea. Without the ability to maneuver British warships close enough to rescue its soldiers, Churchill made the only decision he could: In desperation, he sent civilian boats across the English Channel to try to evacuate the beleaguered forces. In the English version of the Alamo, hundreds of average citizens sailed their private vessels to Dunkirk to rescue soldiers and get them safely back to England. The movie, **Dunkirk**, tells that story as seen through the eyes of a soldier amongst those trapped forces, two RAF fighter pilots and a group of civilians on their boat who answered the call and joined the evacuation fleet.

To see a video clip from the movie, [CLICK HERE](#)

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## Digging Deeper

### Hale Valiant Warrior

In the 6th chapter of the book of Judges, there is a story about a man named Gideon. Times were desperate. A tribe known as the Midianites ruled the land. Whenever the Israelites went to plant their crops, the Midianites and their allied clans would invade and take all their crops. The Bible likens them to “swarms of locusts.” The point: There was nothing, humanly speaking, that could be done to stop them.

The Israelites cried out to God to save them. The Lord did two things. First, he sent a prophet to remind them of their sin. We read the following in Judges 6:7-10:

**The LORD sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, and he said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘It was I who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out from the house of slavery. I delivered you from the hands of the Egyptians and from the hands of all your oppressors, and dispossessed them before you and gave you their land, and I said to you, “I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But you have not obeyed Me’.”**

Notice that the Prophet – who he is, we do not know – laid the blame for the predicament facing the Israelites squarely at their feet. They had failed to obey God. Think just for a moment about how we would receive a no-name prophet in our day were he to show up and tell us that the reason for all our sorrows is because we have failed to obey God. Would we listen to him? No. Would we even notice that he had come with such a message? No. We’d ignore him.

This helps us to understand the second thing the Lord does. He appears to a man named Gideon, who is threshing out wheat in a wine press. Typically, one would stand on a hill, throw the grain into the air, and let the wind blow the chaff away, separating it from the grain. However, because Gideon is cowering in fear from the Midianites as he does this, he is down in a hole that is used to press wine so they won’t see him. It is this context that the Angel of the Lord says the following in Judges 6:12-13:

**The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior.” Then Gideon said to him, “O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”**

Two things are clear from this. First, Gideon had no idea that the reason Israel was in the state it was in was because it had sinned against God and not obeyed him. (“If the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?”). He is just as clueless about some prophet having shown up as we would be in our day.

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Second, the Angel of the Lord doesn't see a sniveling, fearful coward standing before Him. Rather, He sees a Valiant Warrior. God didn't see Gideon for the man he was at that moment, a man cowering in fear from the Midianites. Rather, God saw Gideon as the man into whom He would shape into a "valiant warrior."

And that's the way God looks at us.

### **Four Keys to Godly Leadership**

Chapters 6 and 7 are the story of how God shapes Gideon into the man he will become. He does the same thing for us when we submit to His leading. Here are four lessons we can draw from the story of Gideon and apply not only to our lives, but to the lives of people like those who set out in their boats to rescue the English soldiers at Dunkirk:

1. **First, we must be willing to rely on God, and not our own strength**. There must have been someone else in Israel who was not only an accomplished warrior, but someone who would have jumped at the chance to lead Israel against the Midianites. But instead, God chose Gideon, a man who didn't want to get involved and would recognize that his only source of victory was God, not himself.

2. **Second, stand for what was right**. At one point, God told Gideon to cut down the idol to the pagan god Baal that was in his father's yard. While Gideon obeyed, we read in Judges 6:27:

**Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had spoken to him; But because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night.**

Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had spoken to him; But because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night.

We are called to stand for what is Right. When we do that, God will be with us.

3. **Expect your faith to grow**. God ordered Gideon to go and fight the Midianites. In Chapter 7 of Judges, we read of how Gideon starts out with an army of 32,000 men, but God had Gideon let all but 300 of the men return to their tents. Why? Because there were too many! God wanted Gideon to realize that the ONLY way to win the battle was utter and complete reliance on God.

4. **At the height of success, give the glory to God**. When they had defeated the Midianites, the Israelites wanted to make Gideon their king. But Gideon declined, stating (Judges 8:22-23):

**Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son's son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian." But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you."**

**Gideon, Dunkirk, and The Prophet**

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Even though Gideon would not be made king, he did ask each warrior for a share of the spoil that was won in defeating the pagans. He made the gold into an ephod – a garment worn only by the Levitical Priest of God (which he was not). We read the following in Judges 8:26-27:

**The weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the neck bands that were on their camels' necks. Gideon made it into an ephod, and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household.”**

Human nature has not changed since the time of Gideon. In the secular and religious worlds, many men and women have achieved a great deal of good, only to fall victims to their own success. Gideon, though he achieved much good in his life, ultimately became ensnared by the fruits of his success. As a result, all that Israel had gained was lost (Judges 8:33):

**Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-berith their god.**

At the battle of Dunkirk, The British fleet was powerless to come and rescue their soldiers. Instead, about 850 private boats sailed from Ramsgate in England to Dunkirk in France between May 26th and June 4th, 1940, as part of Operation Dynamo, helping to rescue more than 336,000 British and French soldiers who were trapped on the beaches. Hardly anyone knows who most of the men who piloted those ships were. Their names have been lost to history, just as the names of those 300 men who stood with Gideon have also been forgotten.

In 1940, The British honored God and remembered His name. In 2018, England is a post – Christian nation. as its cities are filled with Mosques, while its churches stand mostly empty. Even the Mayor of London worships Allah. America has also wandered down that same path, and is in danger of forgetting God.

Will God send us a prophet as he did in the days of Gideon? Would we even recognize his coming- or worse, have we, like Gideon, not even noticed that the prophet has already come? And will we, like Gideon, ask God where He has been while we experience [The Unraveling of We the People](#)

**Picture Source:**

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## Questions for Further Reflection

1. The lesson from the story of Gideon is that God sees us, not as the people who we are today, but as the people we will become. Does this give you hope, or cause you distress?
2. The men and women who answered the call to save the soldiers at Dunkirk were ordinary people. People that no one expected anything of. But they rose to meet the demands of the moment. They “stood in the gap.” What does doing that look like where you live?
3. In the book of Judges, Gideon was a nobody that nobody noticed. But then, he became a somebody. Eventually, he let success go to his head. How can you apply the lessons of the life of Gideon to your own circumstances?

## At The Movies & Discovering How to Stand in the Gap

In a 2006 “**Signs of the Times**” article printed on a foreign website, Oorsprong van artikel writes of Christianity in America: “**Mainline Christianity** continues to flourish abroad and languish in the U.S. ... Now whether you agree or not, something has radically changed in the eyes of our brothers and sisters around the world. *They see the American Church at best adrift, and at worst, apostate.*” (Emphasis added.)

Many individual US congregations within mainline denominations, be it Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians or Southern Baptists, there is a widespread sense that this is a growing problem. In whatever denomination you look, individual congregations are leaving because they sense that the Ecclesiastical Leadership is moving away from the Bible. In Ezekiel 22:30, the prophet writes:

**I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.**

In this **At the Movies** anthology, I’ve selected key movie scenes where the story’s hero had to “stand in the gap” for a fundamental principle. Consider the story of William Wilberforce, who fought for over 20 years in the British Parliament to abolish the slave trade. He also sought to lead a movement that he referred to as “the reformation of manners” because of the levels of debauchery and selfishness that British society had sunk. In our day, God is looking for men and women of faith to stand in the gap, just as Wilberforce did, and reverse this senseless decent into the dust heap of history.

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In *Discovering How to Stand in the Gap At the Movies*, I believe you'll be inspired by the themes I've selected to illustrate and discuss issues of faith that consume a culture which is becoming increasingly hostile to God's word. Just as Gideon arose as a "Valiant Warrior" to stand in the gap, we will need God's courage to speak His word in love to a culture which desperately needs to hear the truth of the Scriptures. In our day, God is looking for men and women of faith to stand in the gap, and reverse this senseless decent into the dust heap of history.

Perhaps He's looking for you.

Please be sure to go to my website at [www.wisejargon.com/at-the-movies/](http://www.wisejargon.com/at-the-movies/) to see *additional e-books I've created based on my newsletter, Conversations with the Culture*. And don't forget to **sign up to receive this free monthly newsletter** in the future!

### At The Movies



In 2005, God laid on my heart the concept for a newsletter I've come to call **Conversations with the Culture**, to talk about the truths of the bible with an increasingly secular society. Since starting, I had no idea where the journey of writing it each month would take me. I've written about 150 issues over years. And now, I'm starting to organize them thematically so that you can order/download them as PDF documents. If you are someone who wants to identify trends in society, discuss current events, and see how to reach the culture around us with a biblical world view, I think you'll find this series I'm calling *Discovering Truth At the Movies* a valuable tool – especially if you work in youth/young adult ministry.



#### David Describes Conversations with the Culture

In the fragmented, multicultural world in which we live, one vehicle provides a means to have a conversation about common values. **Conversations with the Culture** is a monthly newsletter using the themes of modern movies and TV shows to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people in search of an answer to the question, "What is Truth?"

**Discovering Godly Leadership at the Movies:** In this e-book, I've taken compiled ten newsletters I wrote to accompany my book *Think Like Jesus, Lead Like Moses: Leadership Lessons from the Wilderness Crucible*. I believe you'll be inspired by the themes I've selected to illustrate the ten principles of Godly leadership.

#### Discovering Truth at Movies:

**Discovering Mere Christianity at the Movies** In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis dealt with all sorts of questions about God and Jesus. It is a book that has had a profound effect on my life, and I encourage you to buy a copy and read it yourself. I've compiled a series of newsletters based on Lewis' work, using movies from the last 25 years to illustrate his points.

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