

Conquest and Challenges of Israel's Settlement

- 1. Dec 4 Commissioned Joshua 1 Lord Calls Joshua
- 2. Dec 11 Conquest Joshua 6 Jericho Walls Down
- 3. Dec 18 Savior Announced Luke 1 Angel Gabriel to Mary
- 4. Dec 25 ... Merry Christmas ...
- 5. Jan 1 Settled Joshua 22 Heart, Honor, Home
- 6. Jan 15 Value All Prov. 24 & Mark 10 Sanctity of Life Sunday
- 7. Jan 22 Rebellion's Cycle Judges 2 Return to God to Live
- 8. Jan 29 Willing Servants Judges 4 Deborah Lifts Barak
 - Feb 5 Timid Warrior Judges 6 Angel Charges Gideon
- 10. Feb 12 Compromised Potential Judges 16 Samson & Delilah
- 11. Feb 19 Faith Through Trials Ruth 1 Ruth Helps Naomi
- 12. Feb 13 Redeemed & Secure Ruth 3-4 Noble Ruth Wins



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Lesson Author's Theme

God restores His people to freedom using faithful and willing servants

Judges 6:1-10 Midianites Oppress 7 years

- 6:11-16 Unsure & Tested Angel Appears to Gideon
- 6:17-24 Sign of Favor Meat Burned
- 6:25-27 First Step Take Dad's Baal Down
- 6:28-32 Father's Defense
- 6:33-40 Gideon's Fleece
- 7:1-8 Gideon's 300 Men Chosen
- 7:9-25 Gideon's Lamps & Trumpets by Night



Key Verse Judges 6:34

Spirit of the Lord enveloped Gideon, and he blew the ram's horn and the Abiezrites rallied behind him.



Alternate Title

I so NEED to Do This

But God KNOWS
I Do NOT Want to

God really, really DOES know



11 The Angel of the Lord came, and He sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite.

His son Gideon was threshing wheat in the wine vat in order to hide it from the Midianites.

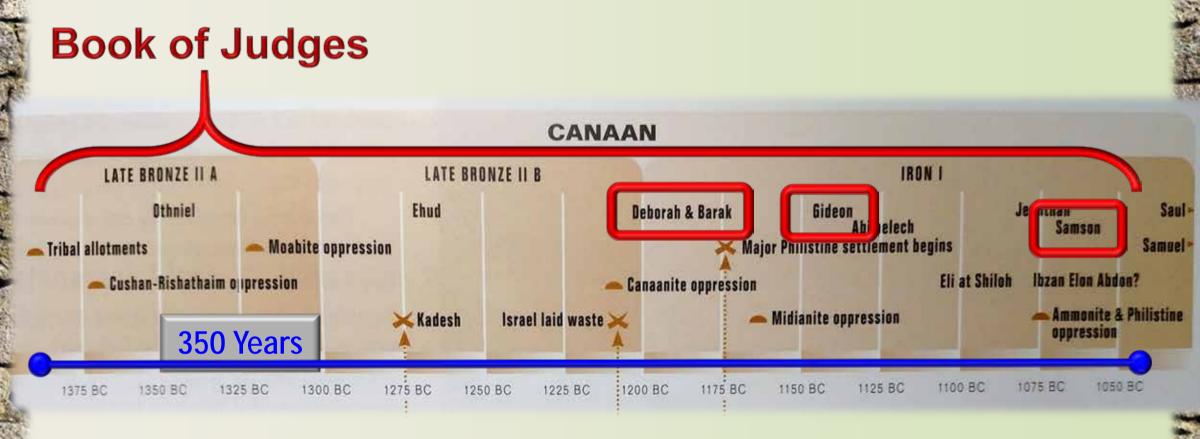
¹² Then the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "The Lord is with you, Mighty Warrior."

Gideon ... a Mighty Warrior

Does not START out so brave



Angel of the Lord by James Shaw Crompton



- ✓ For 7 years Midianites are harassing Israel
- ✓ Gideon follows Deborah & Barak's 40 years of peace
- ✓ Stories of Deborah & Barak still fresh ...
- ✓ Gideon's father, Joash, leader of clan, worships Baal

6:1-10 Midianites Oppress 7 years

Before the angel comes ...

¹ Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD

For 7 years Midianites harass

² Midian so oppressive ... Israelites prepared shelters in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.

3-4 Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded ... camped ... ruined the crops ...

did not spare a living thing for Israel



Midianites—where from?—see Genesis

Gen. 23, Abraham's wife Sarah dies, she is buried in Hebron

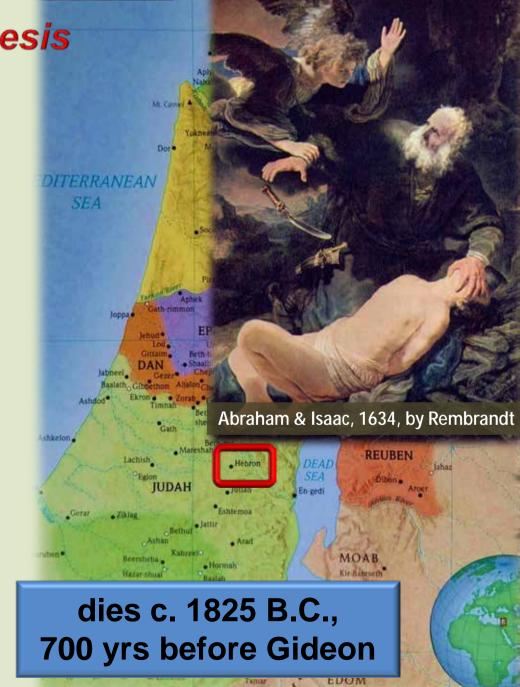
Gen. 24, long chapter—Abraham's old

- ✓ God "blessed him in every way"
- ✓ Sends servant to get wife for Isaac
- ✓ Isaac brought Rebekah to Sarah's tent, loved her, was "comforted" in lost of his mother ... hahhhh??

Gen. 25, Abraham takes ANOTHER wife Keturah, means "incense"

Six Kids: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.

Abraham gives all to Isaac & dies @ 175





6:1-10 Midianites Oppress 7 years

⁵ They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it.

⁶ Israelites cried out to the LORD

7-9 When the Israelites cried out ... God sent a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD.... I brought you up out of Egypt ... delivered you....

¹⁰ 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."



¹¹ The Angel of the Lord came, and He sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite.

1st Ophrah – meaning "fawn" Josh 18:34, to tribe of Benjamin

2nd Ophrah of Abiezrites 6 miles SW of Shechem

6:15, "Look, my family [clan] is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the

Judges 8:32, Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.



11 The Angel of the Lord came, and He sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite.

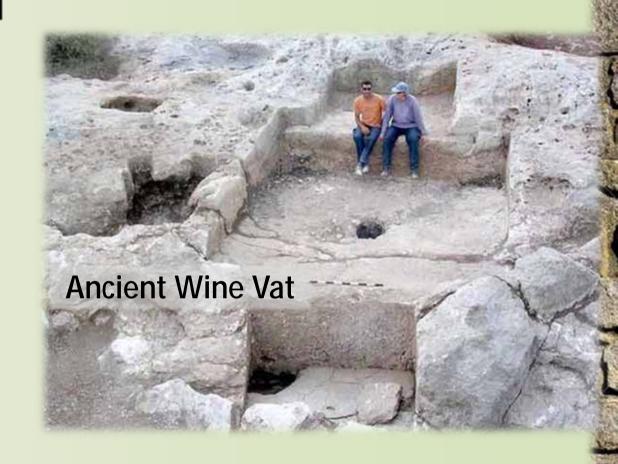
His son Gideon was threshing wheat in the wine vat in order to hide it from the Midianites.

12 Then the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

I can imagine Gideon saying ...

"Yeah, now I am hearing voices."

"I'm in a WINE VAT ... what am I?"



"The Wheat Wine Warrior?"
"Someone's a LITTLE tipsy here."



12 Then the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

Now, all this time, Gideon is beating the wheat, not throwing it up.

Gideon is doing this in **SECRET!**

Because the Midianites are near, and will TAKE ALL ...

Imagine: tilling, planting, praying for water, watching it grow ...

Then harvesting and threshing, kneading and baking—for a Loaf

And Midianite takes your grain!



"Gideon (sketch)" by Anton Franz Maulbertsch, 1794, Episcopal Palace, Szombathely, Hungary

13 Gideon said to Him, "Please Sir, if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened? And where are all His wonders that our fathers told us about?"

Good question ... been asked for millennia ... MANY millennia

WHY has all this happened?

Where are God's wonders?

HOW can a GOOD God allow evil?

Why do bad things happen to good people?



"Gideon (sketch)" by Anton Franz Maulbertsch, 1794, Episcopal Palace, Szombathely, Hungary

They said, 'Hasn't the Lord brought us out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian.

Well now ... Gideon was RIGHT.

Yet, Gideon was a GOOD MAN!

Last 7 years ... no good

Last 7 years ... hiding in mountains

Last 7 years ... Midianites OPPRESS

Who deserves this?

Notice: other than IDOLS, there is NO reason given



"Gideon (sketch)" by Anton Franz Maulbertsch, 1794, Episcopal Palace, Szombathely, Hungary

14 The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and deliver Israel from the power of Midian. Am I not sending you?"

Did you see that?
Now the LORD is speaking

15 Gideon said to Him, "Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house."

16 "But I will be with you," the Lord said to him. "You will strike Midian down as if it were one man."



Angel to Gideon, in "Story of the Bible" by Charles Foster, Drawings by F.B. Schell and others, 1873

¹⁷ Then he said to Him, "If I have found favor in Your sight, give me a sign that You are speaking with me.

18 Please do not leave this place until I return to You. Let me bring my gift and set it before You."

And He said, "I will stay until you return."

¹⁹ Gideon ... prepared a young goat and unleavened bread ... meat in a basket and the broth in a pot. He ... offered them to Him under the oak.



Gideon's sacrifice, 1640, by Ferdinand Bol Museum Cahtarijneconvent, Utrecht

²⁰ The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat with the unleavened bread, put it on this stone, and pour the broth on it." And Gideon did so.

²¹ The Angel of the Lord extended the tip of the staff that was in His hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread.

Fire came up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread.

Then the Angel of the Lord vanished from his sight.



Sacrifice of Gideon, 1728 by Francois Bouchert, The Louvre, Paris



²² When Gideon realized that He was the Angel of the Lord, he said, "Oh no, Lord God! I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face!"

²³ But the Lord said to him, "Peace to you. Don't be afraid, for you will not die."

Did you hear that?

²³ But the Lord said to him, "Peace to you. Don't be afraid, for you will not die."

Gideon ... Mighty Warrior ...

You have a journey ... I am with you



Sacrifice of Gideon, 1728 by Francois Bouchert, The Louvre, Paris

²⁴ So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it Yahweh Shalom. It is in Ophrah of the Abiezrites until today.

"To this day" – means author's view or as to the end of Judges

Yahweh Shalom – God of Peace

God of Peace in oppressive times

Did God come too late?

At least God DID COME ...

Why does God allow evil?

Gideon—he is listening to God!



Sacrifice of Gideon, 1728 by Francois Bouchert, The Louvre, Paris

6:25-27 First Step – Take Dad's Baal Down

²⁵ On that very night the Lord said to him, "Take your father's young bull and a second bull seven years old. Then tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father and cut down the Asherah pole beside it."

We don't know precisely what an Asherah pole is ...

Earliest is 2350 B.C. in Ebla Tablets a hoard found in in Syria in 1974

1,800 complete clay tablets, 4,700 fragments, 1,000s chips in palace archives of ancient city of Ebla, Syria



Gideon Takes Down Baal



Worship of Baals

Baal means lord, owner, possessor ... or or *HUSBAND*

Baal is a god that provides fertility ...

There were many KINDS of Baals

Baal is often shown with a sister or consort

They worshiped Ashtoreths, in Greek, Astarte

Female god of fertility, sexuality and war

We don't know what an Asherah Pole was

So much for their gods ... we DON'T know precisely what they ARE

We DO KNOW, sadly, Israel loved them



"Baal of the Lightning," a stele from Ugarit, in Syria showing the god holding a lance in the form of lightning Height 4 ft. 8 in., in Louvre in Paris – *Encyclopedia Judaica*

6:25-27 First Step – Take Dad's Baal Down

26 Build a well-constructed altar to the Lord your God on the top of this rock. Take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down."

²⁷ So Gideon took 10 of his male servants and did as the Lord had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the city to do it in the daytime, he did it at night.



Gideon Takes Down Baal

²⁸ When the men of the city got up in the morning, they found Baal's altar torn down, the Asherah pole beside it cut down, and the second bull offered up on the altar that had been built.

²⁹ They said to each other, "Who did this?" After they made a thorough investigation, they said, "Gideon son of Joash did it."

Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die, because he tore down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it."



Gideon Takes Down Baal

What is SURPRISING ...

Reaction of the FATHER

Gideon FEARED his father and town folk ... but the reality was different

I suppose, like a good MAYOR, Joash simply ALLOWED the Baal to stand

You see ...

Joash was Politically Correct

When his son Gideon tore it down, I do suspect the Father KNEW

Father KNEW Gideon was RIGHT

Father was PROUD of Gideon



Gideon Takes Down Baal

Gideon—FACED HIS FEAR
Father defended son ...

How many years ... we are not told Daddy Joash led the Abiezrtie Clan Joash was Mayor of Abiezriteville

Years on end ... the people had their Nativity Scene on Courthouse Square

Years on end ... the people had their Santa & Reindeer next to baby Jesus

Years on end ... the Mayor KNEW it was wrong to worship Baal ... Santa

PEACE was easier than RIGHT

Abiezriteville – Political Correctness ruled Mayor Daddy Joash ...



Gideon Takes Down Baal

Though Joash KNEW it was bad and sad all along

31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead Baal's case for him? Would you save him? Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by morning!

If he is a god, let him plead his own case, because someone tore down his altar."

³² That day, Gideon's father called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead his case with him," because he tore down his altar.

Jerubbaal = Contender with Baal Gideon was a God Contender!



Gideon Takes Down Baal

Gideon – Mighty Warrior ...

Now Gideon is God Contender

Another amazing part of this story ...

Though the town folk wanted to kill Gideon, they did NOT try too hard

Ah, their heart was NOT in their God!

Yet Gideon's Father ... his FATHER nicknames his son "Baal Contender"

Tad timid and youngest brother Gideon WAS respected ...

Seems a bit quiet ... but he certainly was a man of action ... action for God

No matter what God said Gideon followed God, not Baal



Gideon Takes Down Baal

No indication Gideon EVER followed or respected Baal

6:33-40 Gideon's Fleece

³³ All the Midianites, Amalekites, and Qedemites gathered together, crossed over the Jordan, and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.

That's about 300 miles from Midian

Midianites have been

HARASSING all the way!

Fortunately ...

the Lord was right there





6:33-40 Gideon's Fleece

34 Spirit of the Lord enveloped Gideon, and he blew the ram's horn and the Abiezrites rallied behind him.

of Manasseh, who rallied behind him. He also sent messengers throughout Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, who also came to meet him.

Then Gideon has some doubts He wants to make sure ...



6:33-40 Gideon's Fleece

36 Gideon said to God, "If You will deliver Israel by my hand, as You said,

³⁷ I will put a fleece of wool here on the threshing floor. If dew is only on the fleece, and all the ground is dry, I will know that You will deliver Israel by my strength, as You said."

38 And that is what happened.
When he got up early in the morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung dew out of it, filling a bowl with water.

Well then ... enough?

Not for Doubting Gideon



6:33-40 Gideon's Fleece

³⁹ Gideon then said to God, "Don't be angry with me; let me speak one more time.

Please allow me to make one more test with the fleece. Let it remain dry, and the dew be all over the ground."

⁴⁰ That night God did as Gideon requested: only the fleece was dry, and dew was all over the ground.

Have you ever put out a Fleece?

I have not ... not like that ...

You ARE asking for a miracle ...

N.T. gives principles to find God's Will



Chapter 7
God helps Gideon select
300 dedicated men

¹ Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the Spring of Harod.

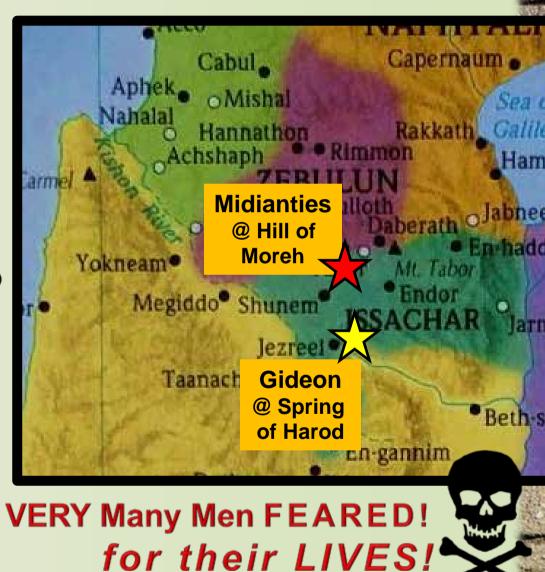
The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the Hill of Moreh.

² LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would BOAST."

God knows HUMANKIND too well

³ Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'

So 20,000 men left, 10,000 remained.



⁴ LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men.

Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there...."

⁵ Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him,

"Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink."



Gideon Choosing 300, c. 1885, by Gustave Doré

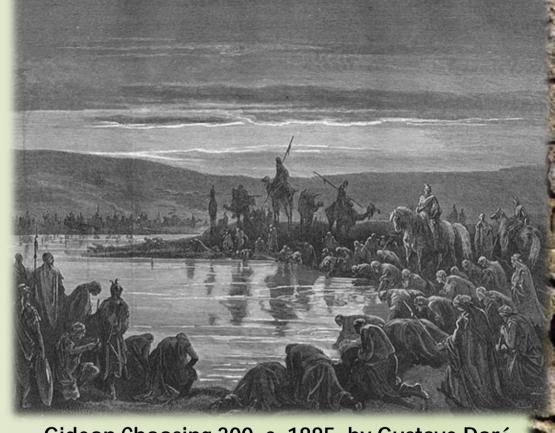
⁶ 300 of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

Strange, cause in WAR one NEVER has too many soldiers

Cause we all know there is NO SUCH THING as

- √ Too much Fun
- ✓ Too much Money
- √ Too much Horsepower

Except in Gideon's case



Gideon Choosing 300, c. 1885, by Gustave Doré



⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home."

⁸ Gideon sent the rest home ...

⁹ During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands.

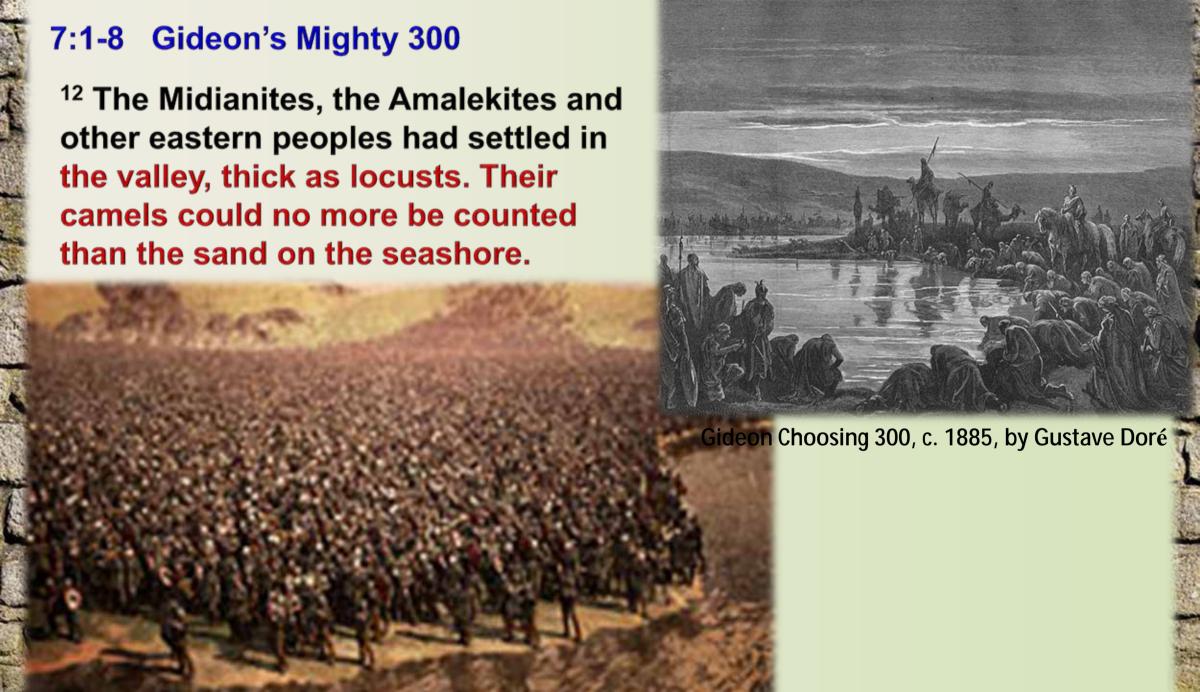
10-11 If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah and listen to what they are saying.

Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp."



Gideon Choosing 300, c. 1885, by Gustave Doré

So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp.



13 Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying.

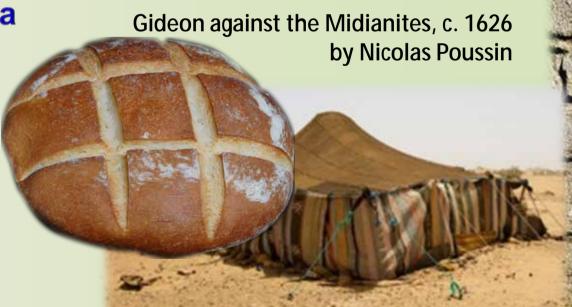
"A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed."

Dream of barley loaf TUMBLING into a Midianite tent ... Gideon BELIEVES

Where was Gideon when Angel appeared? – threshing wheat!

God will relate to what you KNOW!





Dream of a loaf of barley tumbling in the Midianite tent ...

Gideon believes ...

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream ... bowed down and worshiped.

Gideon returned to Israel, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."

It sinks in: God is with Gideon
God OFTEN speaks through others
Gideon was not slow ...
Gideon was HONEST ...



Gideon against the Midianites, c. 1626 by Nicolas Poussin

Gideon was NOT slow
He followed his heart ...
Following your heart ...
takes a bit of time

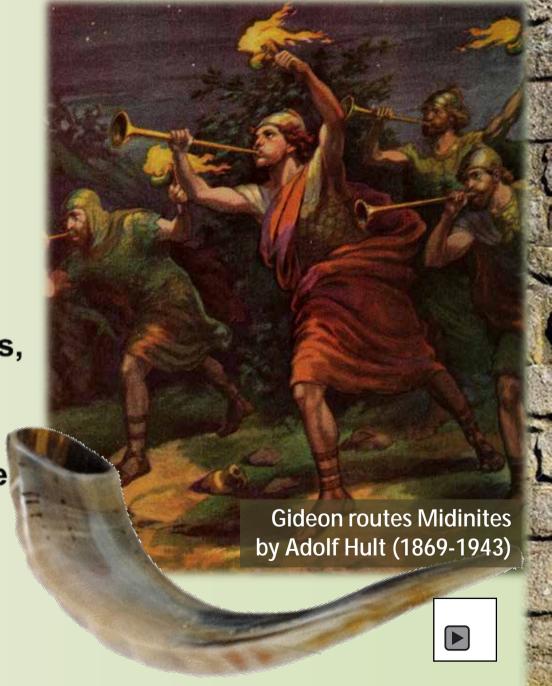
16 300 divided into 3 companies Gideon placed trumpets & empty jars into hands of all, with torches inside.

¹⁷ "Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do.

18 When I and all with me blow trumpets, then ... blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD & for Gideon.'"

of the camp at ... middle watch, just after they had changed the guard.

They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.



²⁰ Three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars.

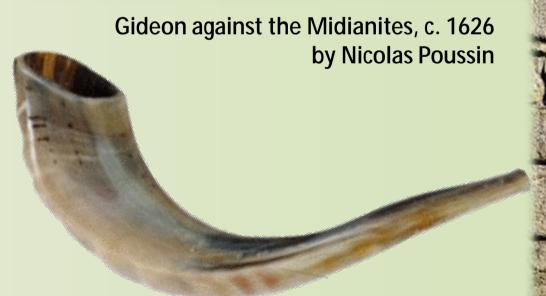
Torches in left hand ...

Trumpets in the right hand ...

Shouting, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"

- ²² LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. Midianite army fled ...
- ²⁵ Captured the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb.... Killed them ... brought their heads to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.





Gideon's Great Victory

Most amazing throughout is

God's Patient Consideration

- Gideon admits his small tribe
- ➤ He beseeches the Angel ... who fires the offering
- ➤ He sets out a Fleece ... TWICE
- His 1,000s of men too many
- ▶ 300 chosen ...
- God motivates with a dream
- > Trumpets and Torches ...



Greatest Victory
Is watching God work

NO WHERE in the Bible

Do we see God so closely attentive to anyone

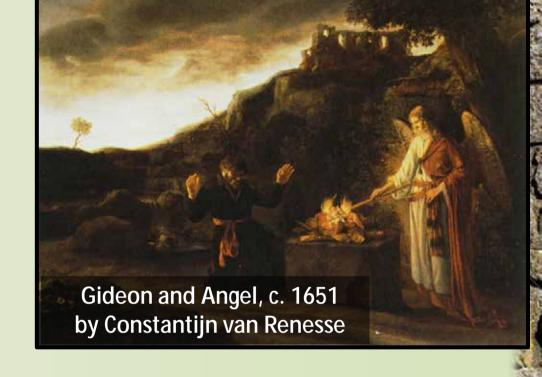
God sends an angel ...

Gentle ... catering ...

Almost as though Gideon could have asked for ANYTHING

Gideon's EVERY concern is

CATERED TO



Though we KNOW Jesus walked with God in the New Testament

We almost see God as attentive to Gideon ... as to Jesus

What kind of a man or woman?

Gideon ... a man without guile

Gideon ... an honest man

Gideon ... honest to GOD

God wants our HONESTY

God wants our HEART

God wants our WORRIES

God does NOT want our whines

God does NOT want our pride

God does NOT want us weak

Gideon ... asks the most important questions



If God is good ... why evil?

If God CHOSE us ... why evil?

Why do BAD things happen to GOOD people, like my father & me?

You, mean, Gideon, OTHER than your father worshipping BAAL?

Father worshipping Baal?

That is a low blow ... a Baal Blow Ohh ...

Father did NOT Know Best

Gideon might have even pleaded, "God, my Daddy did not REALLY worship ... Baals

"Dad was just ...

"Being Politically Correct"

However,

God will judge idolatry



God does not rate 2nd Choice God will not tolerate it ...

However ...

Gideon's question is OLD—why evil?

People have asked it FOREVER!

I wrote a book on it – sure did, Would You Lie to Save a Life?

What is MOST remarkable ...

Is that God guides ANYWAY

Yet—God does NOT answer Gideon's question

For 1225 B.C. Israel ... Gideon

God chose Gideon ...





Yet ... so much going on ...

Some leadership ... is just that

Is there any ADULT who has escaped from ALL evil?

Is ANYONE here been able to avoid ALL injustice?

Gideon's question is OURS too.

- ✓ We do NOT know why God allows evil.
- ✓ We do NOT know IF God allows evil.
- ✓ Or if God allows us OUR evils.





Gideon ... Secret Wheat Thresher
As the Angel worked with Gideon
Then God worked with Gideon
At the start, I suspect Gideon is
thinking ...

- ✓ I am not Deborah or Barak
- ✓ I am not Shamgar, killer of 600
- ✓ I am Abraham or Jacob
- ✓ I am certainly not Moses
 Then, time and again,
 God proves himself to Gideon





Gideon ... grows and grows
Then Gideon BELIEVES
But not *MERELY* believes
Gideon becomes CONVINCED

even
demons
BELIEVE
and
shudder

That GOD IS ON HIS SIDE

You see, once you KNOW ...

KNOW that God is on your side

Most of the questions fade.

With GOD on your side ...

With TRUE Faith in God ...

Little room for questions ...





