

## JUDGES: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

### GIDEON VERSUS MIDIAN: 6:1-8:32

CALL	PREPARATION	BATTLE	PEACE
<p style="text-align: center;">6:1-6</p> <p>Israel did evil Midian invaded like locusts and destroyed crops and animals Cave living. Israel was impoverished. They cried to God</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6:33-35</p> <p>Midian camped in Jezreel The Spirit came on Gideon Gideon recruited. He blew the trumpet and sent messengers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7:19-22</p> <p>Gideon attacked at night. They broke the clay jars, blew the trumpets, and shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon." The Midianites and their allies fled killing each other</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8:13-17</p> <p>Gideon punished Succoth and Peniel for not giving bread to his troops while they pursued the Midianites He tore down the tower &amp; killed their men</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">6:7-10</p> <p>The Lord sent a prophet and he said, "The Lord freed you from: A. Egypt B. The nations of Canaan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6:36-40</p> <p>Gideon asked for confirmation through the fleece A. Fleece with dew B. Dry fleece</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7:23-8:3</p> <p>Ephraim took the fords of Jordan and killed the 2 princes, Oreb &amp; Zeeb Ephraim criticized Gideon. Gideon answered peacefully</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8:18-21</p> <p>Gideon killed the two Midianite kings because they had killed his family. He told his son to kill them but he feared to do it. So Gideon executed them</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">6:11-24</p> <p>God called Gideon Gideon complained to God He prepared a meal for God. He was face to face but did not die He built an altar, "Jehovah-Shalom."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7:1-8</p> <p>The 300 were chosen Commitment through reduction of the army of 32,000 Many Israelites might lead to pride: A. Fearful dismissed B. Unwatchful "</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8:4-9</p> <p>Gideon &amp; 300 were tired but pursued They asked for bread and are rejected by A. Succoth B. Peniel – "facing God."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8:22-28</p> <p>Israel offered Gideon the kingdom but he refused it, and says, "The Lord is to reign over you". Gideon's golden ephod led Israel into spiritual prostitution</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">6:25-32</p> <p>Gideon destroyed the Baal altar and Asherah image. Ten servants helped. He raised an altar to Jehovah Death threat came from the town. His father supported him The people named him Jerubaal.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">7:9-18</p> <p>The Lord told Gideon to go to the Midianite camp if he still feared. He heard the dream of the barley loaf that turned over the tent, and he worshipped Gideon divided his army in 3 groups</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8:10-12</p> <p>Gideon pursued the 15,000 troops left of the Midianites. He captured the two kings, Zeba &amp; Zalmuna. 120,000 Midianites and allies fell. The Midianites are filled with fear</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8:28-32</p> <p>Midian was subdued and Israel enjoyed peace Gideon had 70 sons His concubine in Shechem bore a son he names Abimelech Gideon died and was buried in his father's tomb</p>

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## QUESTIONS

### Gideon versus Midian:

1. God took some very important initiatives in the story of Gideon. First he sent the Midianites against Israel to pressure them into returning to the Lord, 6:1-6. To what animal are the Midianites compared? What destruction do they cause? In spiritual terms for us, to what enemy or enemies can we compare the Midianites? What was the second initiative the Lord took, 6:7-10? Would you have done the same in order to conquer such a huge army? Does the Lord do the same for us today? When we are in spiritual and moral difficulties and we recognize our plight, how does He often help us?
2. In the story of Gideon the two sides that are in fierce conflict are described through two scenes and two names, 6:11-24 and 6:25-32. What are those names and what do they mean? How do they describe the side we are to take in the spiritual war?
3. What do you think was the real purpose of Gideon's fleece? Was it for guidance or for some other purpose? 6:36-40. Have you ever done something similar? Explain.
4. Why did God reduce Gideon's army? The reason is stated in 7:1-8. In spiritual warfare and victory has this ever happened to you? What was the state of mind of Israel before the battle and how would this differ greatly after the battle if they had an army the size it was before the reduction? Can you think of other references in Scripture to the relative unimportance of the size of the army if God is with that army? For those labouring in the Muslim world, with only 2-3% of the evangelical missionary force working amongst Muslims, how can this story help them in their work?
5. Compare Gideon's warfare in chapters 6-8:32, with II Corinthians chapter 4. Are there any parallels? Notice the images of light and darkness, the broken vessels, the treasure within, the images of Baal, whose altar Gideon broke down, and that of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God.
6. The element of surprise was key in Gideon's attack on the Midianite camp. When did he attack and what were the elements that threw the enemy into confusion? The Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples of that army actually turned on each other with their swords. How can we use these same tactics in today's spiritual battles?
7. At the beginning of his ministry Gideon tore down an altar and an image. After his victory over the Midianites he set up another image. How did these images differ in appearance? In what way were they the same in their spiritual influence? Any parallels to spiritual realities today, especially when we think of the religious world? What does this warn us about winning the war and losing the peace? Any personal experiences that line up with Gideon's experience?
8. Gideon persevered through thick and thin! List the various difficulties, fears and setbacks he had to face in his long drawn out preparation and battle with Midian. How do perseverance and patience play a part in what you face in your ministry?
9. What can we learn from Gideon's handling of Ephraim's criticism, 7:24-8:3? What is the difference between this altercation and that which he had with Succoth and Peniel, 8:5-9 & 14-17?

## LESSONS

Midian, a characteristic of the enemy: "Grasshoppers" or "Locusts" for multitude. The NIV says, "They came up like swarms of locusts." One locust or grasshopper on its own can do little Harm, but when they come in swarms they are devastating!

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When the little cares of life, the odd jobs, the small pressures mount up, it becomes overwhelming! Taken separately no one of them would be a problem, but all together they can destroy us. Small sins and wrong attitudes that we allow to accumulate can knock us out!

Often the first element, of major importance in our lives, to suffer is our times of communion with the Lord. Those are the times when we talk with Him alone, to pray. Those are the times of reading and meditating on His Word. How are we doing in this area?

Meeting with the Lord from day to day actually clears my thinking for me. The Lord helps us to plan, think through important issues and struggle through challenges.

Midian, another characteristic of the enemy: Midian came and went, from time to time. After the Israelites had planted their crops the enemy came and destroyed them. The small things in life are often those things that come and go constantly. Many are important but must not crowd out the major things.

What are some of these things at the beginning of a day that crowd out times of fellowship with the Lord. I don't think missing times of fellowship occasionally should cause you a nervous breakdown, but if day after day you allow these things to crowd out prayer and reading the Bible that is not good. I actually enjoy a cup of tea with Bible reading and prayer.

1. Breakfast
2. Planning for the day
3. Getting children to school
4. Urgent phone calls
5. Cleaning the house or office
6. Reading an interesting article
7. Walking the dog (Maybe not a bad idea if it gives prayer time).
8. Changing a light bulb
9. Fixing a leaking tap
10. Morning TV
11. Playing on the computer
12. Office work taken home that you didn't finish the night before

Judges 6:3 And [so] it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them;

The enemies: The Midianites, the Amalekites and the children of the east.

The Midianites: A son of Abraham by Keturah. Genesis 25:1-4. They sold Joseph into Egypt. Genesis 37:28, 36.