



# Conquering Canaan

## Lesson 8: Gideon

(Judges 6:1-8:35)

The Israelites continued to do what was evil in God's sight. This time, God gave them to the Midianites for seven years. The Israelites hid themselves in mountains, caves, and other places so the Midianites, Amalekites, and Quedemites (people of the East) could not hurt them. The Midianites destroyed their food and left no sheep for them. They came with their cattle and tents like they were a great swarm of locusts. They had more camels than could be counted. They destroyed the land.

The Israelites were now very poor and afraid. So, they cried out to God for help. Then, God sent a prophet to them to tell them His words. God reminded the Israelites how He had brought them out of slavery in Egypt and given them the land of Canaan. Still, they did not obey Him.

Later, the angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak tree in Ophrah that belonged to Joash. Joash's son, Gideon, was beating wheat to separate the grain from the stalks while hiding in a winepress so the Midianites would not find him. The angel appeared to Gideon and told him God was with him.

Gideon asked why God had let all of this happen if God was with them. The angel replied and told Gideon to go in his strength and deliver the Israelites from Midian because God was sending him. Gideon asked how God could use him since he was the youngest in a weak family. Yet, God said He would be with Gideon and Gideon would defeat Midian as if Midian was only one man.

Gideon asked for a sign to know that it really was God speaking with him. So, he brought a gift of meat and unleavened bread to the angel of God. The angel told Gideon to put it on a stone and pour broth on it. Then, the angel of God touched the

meat and bread with his staff and fire came up from the rock so that it burned up the gift – and the angel disappeared. Gideon now realized he had seen the angel of God face to face.

That night, God told Gideon to destroy his father's altar that was used to worship the false god Baal and cut down the pole for the false god Asherah. Then, he was to build an altar to God and make an offering to God. So, Gideon took ten servants and did what God said. However, he did it at night because he was afraid.

All the Israelites' enemies were gathered in the Valley of Jezreel. Then, Gideon blew the ram's horn so that many of the Israelites came out for battle. But, before Gideon fought, he wanted God to prove that He was going to save Israel. First, Gideon put out a piece of wool and asked God to make only the wool wet and all the ground around it dry. Then, Gideon asked for the wool to be dry and all the ground around it to be wet. Each time, God did as Gideon asked and proved that He would save Israel.

As Gideon was about to attack the enemies, God told Gideon he had too many soldiers in his army. God knew that if the Israelites defeated the enemy with so many soldiers, they might think they had been strong enough to win the battle by themselves. So, after God told Gideon to send all the soldiers home who were afraid, only 22,000 remained. But, this was still too many. Next, Gideon was told to take the soldiers to the water. The soldiers who drank water like a dog would stay. This time, only 300 soldiers remained.

Gideon divided these soldiers into three groups. Each one was given a trumpet in one hand and an empty pitcher in the other, with a torch inside of it. Then, when Gideon gave the signal, they all were to blow their trumpets and say, "For the Lord and for Gideon" (Judges 7:18)! They blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers, held up their torches, and shouted. All the Midianites were confused and started fighting each other. And, Israel defeated Midian and had peace in the land for 40 years.

# Study Questions:

1) Who captured the Israelites?

2) Why did God allow Israel's enemies to capture them?

3) Why were the Israelites so afraid?

4) Who did the angel of God call to save the Israelites?

5) Where was he when he was called? What was he doing?

6) How did God prove that He was going to save Israel?

7) Why did God want most of the soldiers to be sent home? How were the soldiers chosen and how many soldiers stayed?

8) How did the Israelites defeat their enemies?

## Memory Verse:

“The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord handed them over to Midian seven years” (Judges 6:1).

**Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about:**