

General Church Education



Gideon Defeats the Midianites

Judges 7

Lesson 22

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

Gideon Defeats the Midianites

Judges 7

Teacher Background

Gideon gathered 32,000 warriors from Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali to fight the Midianites, Amalekites and Sons of the East who were camped on the plain of Jezreel. But Gideon had too many warriors. With so many troops Israel could claim victory by their own hand. But this victory was to be the Lord's. First Gideon sent home those afraid of fighting: 22,000 left; 10,000 remained. The Lord said there were still too many. Next Gideon sent home those who knelt to drink from the well or spring of Harod. He kept the 300 men who lapped the water from their hands.

The Lord promised victory and offered final assurances. He let Gideon visit the Midianite camp where he overheard a dream predicting Israel's victory. With this, Gideon worshiped the Lord and roused his army to action. He divided the men into three groups. Armed with trumpets and pitchers with torches hidden in them, the three companies flanked the enemy camp. On Gideon's signal they blew trumpets, shouted and broke the pitchers so the torches shone out. The Midianites were confused. They fought each other, and then Gideon chased and killed those who remained.

Gideon's victory pictures the Lord's battles against the hells during His life on earth. It also pictures the victory we can achieve when we receive strength and courage from the Lord. The trumpets are the voice of the Lord in the Commandments and the Word. The pitchers, containers for water, are the Lord's plain truths that can give us light. True ideas from the Word have the power to dispel the false thoughts and unpleasant feelings that invade our minds, however strong they may seem.

Key Ideas

- Only 300 men would fight, so Israel would know the Lord had won the battle.
- The light of the torches was like the light of the Lord's truth leading the warriors.
- Trusting in the Lord can give us the courage to boldly obey His commandments.

From the Writings

'The three hundred men' means a complete amount. 'A hundred' in each line of battle means enough men to stand against Midian. Every detail was representative—the selection of those who lapped, the trumpets and the water-pots with torches inside them. This was because 'Midian', represented truth that was not truth because there was no goodness of life in it. See *Arcana Coelestia* 5955.2.

The trumpets of the three hundred men represented God's truth passing through the heavens. This truth perfects the good because they receive Divine good present within truth, but it destroys the evil because they do not receive the Divine Good present there. 'Midian, Amalek, and the Sons of the East', around whose camp Gideon's three hundred men blasted on their trumpets, meant those immersed in evils and in falsities arising from them. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8815.2.

By the seed of the field [in the dream] is meant the Word, and by the locust, the dense falsity from the sensual man, which consumes and destroys. See *Apocalypse Explained* 543.1.

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Vocabulary

lap—drink water using only the tongue

barley—a grain used for cooking

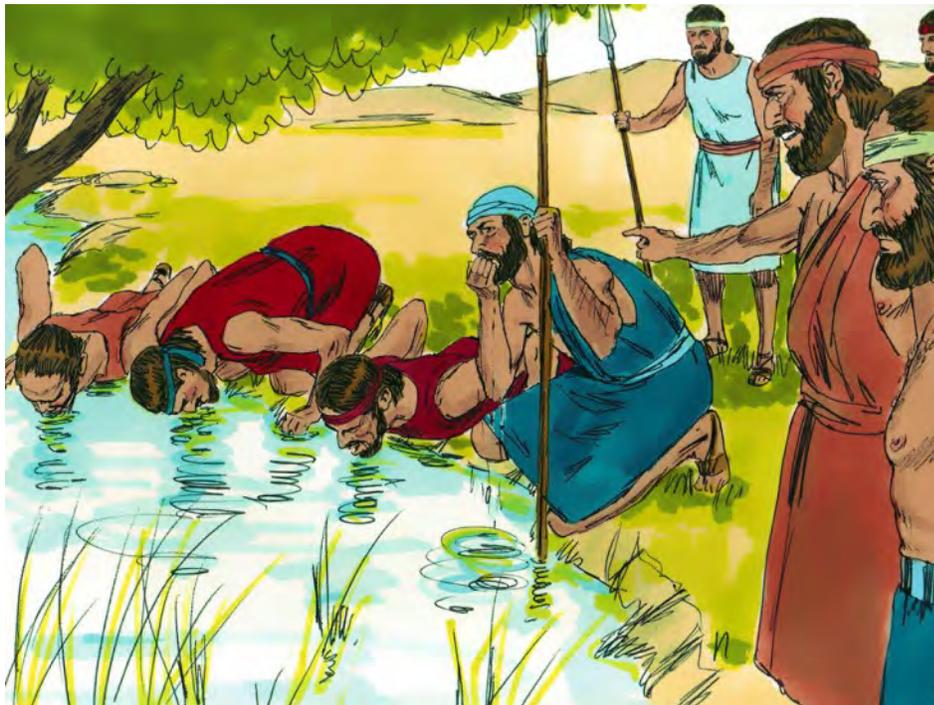
retain—keep

For seven years the Midianites, the Amalekites and the Sons of the East invaded Israel and stole their food at harvest time. The starving people hid in caves in the mountains. When they cried to the Lord, He raised up Gideon to fight these enemies. Gideon sent for help from the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali. As Gideon waited for help, the Lord assured him He would be with him. He gave Gideon the miraculous sign of the fleece.

Thirty-two thousand men heard Gideon's call and showed up to fight. But the Lord told Gideon this was too many men. If Israel won the battle people might think they had done this by their own power. They needed to be certain the victory would be the Lord's.

The First Test

Two tests were used to decide who would stay with Gideon and fight. First, the Lord said everyone who was afraid of fighting could go home. Twenty-two thousand men went home, so now there were only ten thousand men left to fight.



The Second Test

But the Lord said, “The people are still too many.” He told Gideon to take the men down to the well or spring of Harod, where He would test them. He said, “Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.” The men who got down

on their knees to drink were not chosen. Only those who lapped water by putting handfuls to their mouths were chosen. When all the men had been tested, only three hundred men were left to fight. The Lord promised he would deliver Israel from the Midianites with just these three hundred men.

Read Judges 7:1-8.

Gideon Again Receives a Sign



After all the signs the Lord had given him, Gideon was still afraid. So the Lord gave him one last sign. At night, Gideon and his servant secretly crept close to an enemy outpost and listened to what the soldiers were saying.

Gideon and his servant heard a man telling his companion about a dream. In the dream a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian. As it struck a tent, the tent collapsed. The man's companion knew the dream meant Gideon would overthrow Midian. Hearing the dream gave Gideon courage. He worshiped the Lord and prepared his men to attack.

Trumpet, Pitchers and Torches

Think back to how the children of Israel attacked the city of Jericho. Remember the six days of silent walking around the city? Then, on the seventh day, the trumpets blew, the men shouted, and the walls of the city fell down.

Gideon's attack on the Midianites was just as amazing! He divided the three hundred men into three groups. Each man was armed with a trumpet and a pitcher which hid a burning torch inside. As the middle watch of the night was changing, the men crept towards the enemy. One hundred men stood on each side of the camp waiting for Gideon's signal. When Gideon blew his trumpet, all 300 men blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers, and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

Read Judges 7:8-21.

The trumpet blasts, shouting and flaming light bursting from the torches took the Midianites by surprise and threw them into confusion. They began fighting each other! Then they ran towards the Jordan River, hoping to escape. Gideon called in more soldiers, and they chased the Midianites out of the land.

Lesson 22 • Gideon Defeats the Midianites

Read Judges 7:22-25.

With the Lord's power on his side, Gideon overthrew the enemies of Israel. Like Gideon, we can trust in the Lord and follow the light of His truth to overcome false ideas and selfish loves that trouble us.

Gideon was a great judge in war and in peace. Under him Israel had forty years of peace. After the great victory, people wanted to make Gideon king over them, but he did not want to be king because he knew that the Lord alone was king of Israel.



The Lord is our king too. He can give us the courage to do whatever He commands.

Discussion Questions

- How did the Lord test Gideon's willingness to obey?
- Describe how Gideon reduced his army of thirty-two thousand men to three hundred men.
- Why was it important for Gideon to fight with such a small army?
- What final proof gave Gideon the courage to fight?
- What battle strategy did the Lord tell Gideon to use this time?
- Gideon attacked Israel's enemies at night, while they slept. When might spiritual enemies "sleep"? Why might "night" be a good time to break bad habits?
- What weapons did Gideon use to fight Israel's enemies?
- What "trumpets" and "torches" can we use to fight our spiritual enemies?
- What happened to the Midianites?
- Gideon was humble and willing to obey the Lord. We need to be humble and willing to obey the Lord in order to do His work in the world. Discuss humility and willingness to obey. Why are these qualities important?

Activity Overview | Gideon Defeats the Midianites

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Do not be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord...

The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace. Exodus 14:13, 14

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- With God All Things Are Possible
- Judges Trading Cards—Gideon
- Picture to color—Gideon Blows the Trumpet (Judges 7)

Additional Activity Ideas

- Hear what the trumpets Gideon and his men used sounded like by watching a video online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-sound-of-the-shofar/>.
- Do a crossword about Gideon defeating the Midianites. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-gideon-defeats-the-midianites-crossword-puzzle-judges07.pdf>.
- Draw the weapons Gideon used to fight the Amalekites. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-draw-gideons-weapons-judges07.pdf>.
- Color and cut out pictures of a pitcher, torch, and trumpet. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-make-a-pitcher-torch-and-trumpet-for-gideon-judges07.pdf>.
- For additional oral review questions for the story of Gideon go to <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-gideon-review-questions-judges6-7.pdf>.

Activity 1 | With God All Things Are Possible

Gideon’s tiny army faced a battle that seemed impossible. Three hundred warriors faced an enemy force of thousands, perhaps even hundreds of thousands. But the Lord was with Gideon and promised He would bring victory.

Try doing an “impossible” task—going *through* a sheet of paper! Students should struggle on their own before being told how to do this. (To see how this works, watch a video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=71bzxv0032s.)



Materials Needed

a piece of scrap paper (8 ½” x 11” or A4 size)

Scissors

With God All Things Are Possible Solution

Directions

1. Have you ever struggled with an “impossible” task? How did things work out?
2. We’re going to attempt an “impossible” task. (Give each student a piece of scrap paper.) Your task is to put your entire body through the piece of paper.
3. Have scissors available for students to use if they choose. *Do not give away the strategy.* Let students struggle to find a solution. (If a student has done this before, encourage them not to give the answer away until others have had time to think it through.)
4. When students are ready to give up, show them how they can do it, using the directions on the following page.
5. The Lord said that “nothing will be impossible” (Matthew 17:20). What do you think He meant by that?
6. The Lord also said, “with God, all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). What kinds of things are possible with the Lord?

Activity 1 | With God All Things Are Possible Solution



Diagram 1

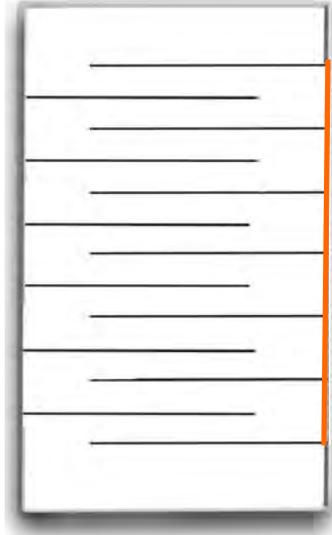


Diagram 2

1. Start by folding the paper in half along the long side.
2. Using scissors, from the open edge of the paper make straight cuts approximately 1” (3cm) apart cutting towards the fold but leaving the paper uncut 1” from the fold (where the orange line is). (See Diagram 1)
3. Turn the paper so the folded edge is towards you. Cut between the previous cuts, leaving 1” at the open edge of the paper. (See Diagram 2)
4. Now snip the paper on the middle of the fold on the orange line between the end cuts. Beware! **DO NOT CUT the folds at the two ends!** If you do, you will not be able to go “through” the paper!
5. Once the folds are cut, open the paper out into a circle. It should now be large enough to step through.

Activity 2 | Judges Trading Cards

Gideon

Learn about the Judges by making a trading card for each one. Collect the trading cards and use them to review or sequence the stories of the judges. This activity is repeated in future stories.

Do the following on the front of each card:

1. Write the name of the judge in the space at the top of the card.
2. Write the number of years of peace Israel had after this judge conquered Israel's enemy.
3. Draw a picture of the judge.

Fill in the following details given in the story on the back of each card:

1. Write the name of the region(s) or city in Israel being attacked.
2. Write the name of the judge's tribe.
3. Write the name of the enemy attacking Israel.
4. Write the kind of weapon used to fight the enemy.
5. Fill in the "other" box with any details from the story that interest you, e.g. how a judge escaped, the number of years he or she judged Israel, other things he or she did.

When you have completed the card, cut it out. Fold the card in half and tape the edges together.

Activity 2 | Judges Trading Card: Gideon

JUDGES FROM THE WORD		
		YEARS OF PEACE
	PLACE OR CITY	
	TRIBE	
	ENEMY	
	WEAPON	
	OTHER	

