

52 Gideon's 300

MEMORY VERSE: "For my power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9

SCRIPTURES: Judges 6 - 9

AIM: To teach that God is powerful, and we all need His saving grace

After Jerub-Baal (that is Gideon) destroyed the alter of Baal, a large army of Midianites and other enemies gathered together fight Israel. But, the Bible tells us that the *Spirit of the Lord was with Gideon*. Even so, Gideon was weak in his own strength, and attempted to gather up a huge army of his own to fight the enemies, and he even tested God by asking for signs of God's presence. God was gracious because He had a plan to put His glory on display for all to see, so He provided the answers Gideon was looking for.

Then, early in the next morning, Gideon and his army gathered to prepare for battle. The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. **In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her**, tell the people, 'Anyone who is afraid to fight can go home' " So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will tell you who you should keep."

So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Watch how they drink. If they kneel down and drink directly from the water, tell them to go home, but if they use their hands like cups, they are the ones to select."

After that, Gideon's army was only three hundred men! Now God was ready to put his power on display. But first, he had to give encouragement to Gideon, who was very afraid. He told Gideon to sneak into the enemy camp to hear what they are saying. So Gideon took his servant Purah, and together they snuck into the enemy camp.

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."

His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."

When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands." Dividing the three hundred men into three groups, and he gave everyone trumpets and empty jars with torches inside.

"Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. When everyone was in place, Gideon's group blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands so that the torches could be seen. The other groups did the same, and shouted "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" At this Midianites ran, crying out as they fled, and the LORD caused the Midianites to turn their swords on one another!

Gideon and his men then pursued the armies and drove them back across the Jordan River. After the victory, the people of Israel asked Gideon to be their king. And though Gideon said no – for the right reason, which is that God is their King – he secretly he desired to be king. So even though God saved the Israelites from the sin of worshipping false gods, this wouldn't be the last time. Because like us all, the Israelites had sinful hearts that were rebellious toward God. Happily, God had a bigger plan to provide salvation from sin through a perfect King, Jesus, who would defeat sin once and for all.