

GIDEON'S VICTORY

The hand of the Lord saved Israel.

THE STORY: JUDGES 7:1-8

MONDAY

**God reduced
Gideon's
numbers**

God reduced Gideon's numbers. God wanted the victory over the Midianites to glorify Himself, not Gideon or the strength of the Israelite army. Gideon was prepared to battle Midian with 32,000 men but if they overcame Midian with such a large number of men it would speak of man's victory, not God's. Israel would have then been tempted to boast and give themselves credit for the victory (see Judges 7:2). In order to reduce the number of men who would fight, God told Gideon to allow the fearful to return home and a whopping 22,000 men went. This may have seemed unwise but God actually served Gideon by letting them go! God further reduced the remaining 10,000 to 300 and told Gideon that He would save Israel and defeat Midian with the remaining 300 men.

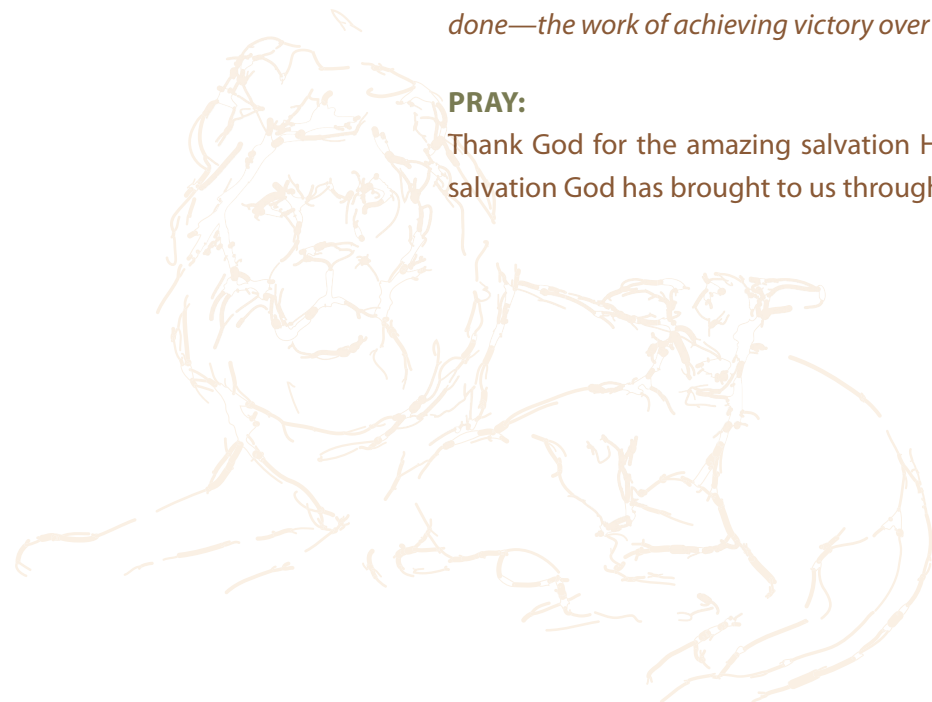
TALK ABOUT IT:

Why did God want to use so few men? *(God wanted to be sure that the victory belonged to Him alone. God reduced 32,000 to 300 so that all the people would know that they were delivered by the Lord's hand.)*

How is God's victory through Gideon like God's salvation through Jesus Christ? *(Jesus won the victory, not through a battle with swords and spears, but by defeating sin and death. Jesus was the one who told Peter to put away his sword at the time of His arrest. Jesus could have called down legions of angels but there was a greater work to be done—the work of achieving victory over the curse of sin.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for the amazing salvation He brought Gideon as well as the amazing salvation God has brought to us through the work of Jesus Christ.





God built Gideon's faith

God built Gideon's faith. Imagine yourself in Gideon's place—about to face over 130,000 men in battle with only 300 of your own! You would most certainly be afraid and it was likely that Gideon was afraid. In God's kindness, He instructed Gideon to take a servant and spy on the Midianite camp. Gideon did so and there he overheard a conversation between two Midianite soldiers. One soldier had a dream while the other interpreted the dream to predict an Israelite victory. This built Gideon's faith and he immediately rallied the 300 men to action.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How did God demonstrate grace to Gideon by having him overhear the conversation of the Midianite soldiers? *(God knew Gideon's faith was weak and needed to be strengthened. The dream of the Midianite soldier was not an accident but all a part of God's plan to strengthen Gideon.)*

What was Gideon's response to hearing the enemy soldiers' comments? *(Gideon worshipped God (see Judges 7:15).)*

PRAY:

Thank God for giving us His Word which strengthens our faith to believe. Take time to praise God for His salvation and have each person in your family give praise to God for what He is doing in their lives.





Where is Jesus?

Gideon's faith to go into battle with so few men did not come quickly. In fact, God was patient with Gideon and built his faith with many miraculous signs, the most important of which was the visit from the pre-incarnate Christ (the angel of the Lord in Judges 6:11-24). In Judges 6:16, the Lord answered Gideon's concerns about being the weakest of his family, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

Our salvation comes today as it did to Gideon then; we can only be saved if the Lord saves. We, like Gideon, face impossible enemies in sin and death. Only the blood of the Redeemer can bring us the victory.

The story of Gideon is a story of God saving His people. Gideon followed the Lord in faith during the battle, but it wasn't long after the battle's end that Gideon fell into sin. He made a golden ephod (a vest-like outer garment) and all of Israel came to see it and sinned in its presence. Not only did Gideon make a golden ephod, a garment that only the priest in Shiloh was to wear, he created his own alternate place of worship. The house of God was in Shiloh but Gideon set up a different place of worship in his city, Ophrah. Gideon sinned but one day a deliverer would come who would not sin—Jesus the Lord.

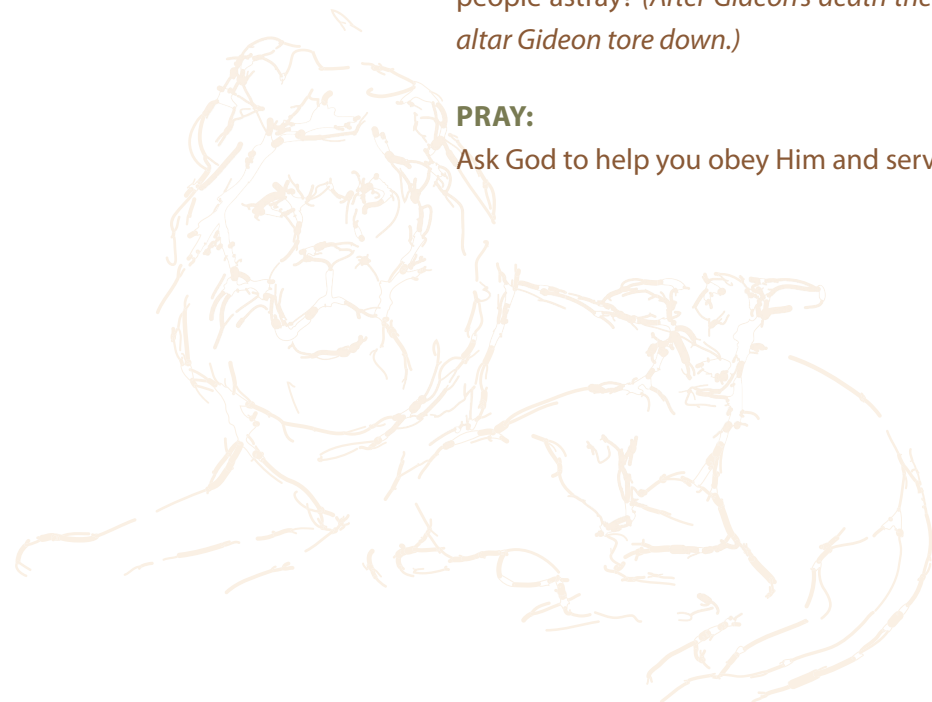
TALK ABOUT IT:

How is salvation from Christ better than that from Gideon? (*Gideon saved Israel for a short time from earthly enemies. Jesus saves us for all time from every enemy, both natural and spiritual. This victory will ultimately be accomplished in heaven where we will live in peace with one another and sin and death will be defeated.*)

Gideon did not finish well. How did his poor example in making the ephod lead the people astray? (*After Gideon's death the people worshipped Baal, the very god whose altar Gideon tore down.*)

PRAY:

Ask God to help you obey Him and serve Him all of your lives.





God threw the Midianites into confusion

God threw the Midianites into confusion. When Gideon marched with his soldiers, he instructed them to bring jars, torches, and trumpets along. At the signal, all the men broke their jars and shouted, “For the Lord and for Gideon!” The noise startled the Midianites; however, it was the Lord who threw Israel’s enemy into confusion. The Midianites started attacking each other and then fled. We should remember that the whole battle could have gone much differently. If the Lord had not thrown the Midianites into confusion the men would have been startled but, in the absence of any real attack, they would have likely mocked the Israelite drama and attacked them instead. As it was, the Midianites attacked each other and only 15,000 escaped. God won a victory for Himself and for His people!

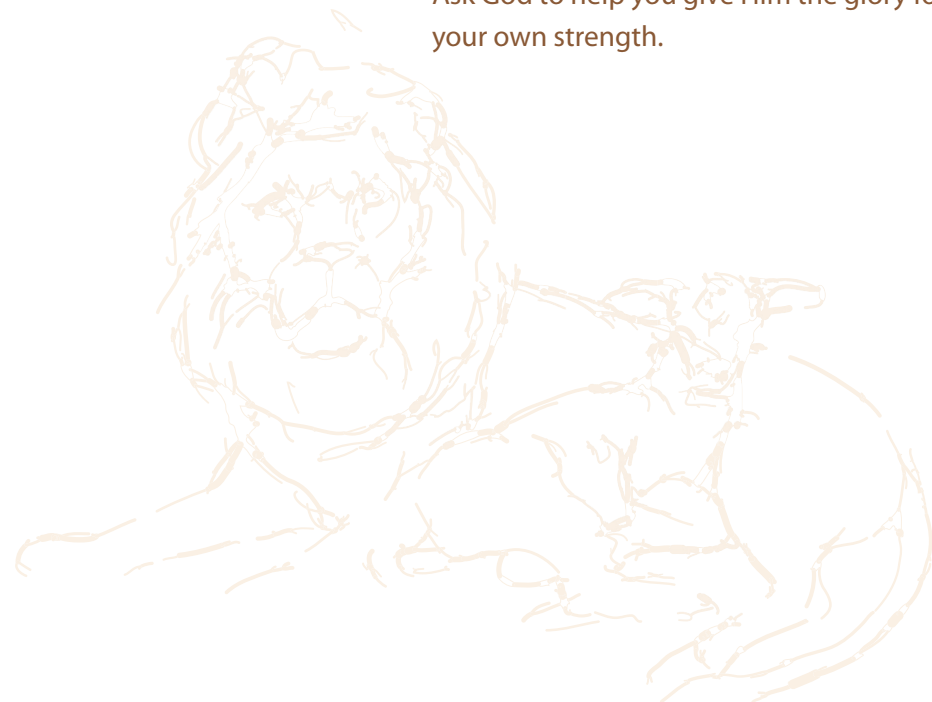
TALK ABOUT IT:

How did God use the trumpets, jars, and torches to scare the Midianites? *(The Midianites thought each of the trumpets, jars, and torches represented a large group of men surrounding them. In their fear and confusion, they began to fight each other and then fled.)*

In the end, to whom do you think the Israelites gave credit for the victory? *(Though the victory should have been attributed to God, the people told Gideon that he had saved them (see Judges 8:22). This shows just how sinful our hearts are. In spite of all that God did to ensure the victory belonged to Him alone, the people gave the glory to Gideon and not the Lord.)*

PRAY:

Ask God to help you give Him the glory for all that you accomplish—not to boast in your own strength.





On the road to Emmaus.

Jesus is the final King who sits upon the throne of the house of Israel forever. Once

Jesus assumed the throne in the line of David, no other king was needed. In Matthew 27:11, Pilate directly asked Jesus if He was King of the Jews and Jesus replied, "Yes." Paul also calls Jesus the eternal King in 1 Timothy 1:17.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How does Jeremiah 33:17 point forward to Jesus? *(Jesus is the eternal King who sits upon the throne forever, thus fulfilling this promise.)*

Read Luke 1:32-33. How does this passage connect Jesus to the passage in Jeremiah? *(The angel Gabriel prophesied to Mary that Jesus would be given the throne of David and reign over Israel forever. Jeremiah wrote of this same time—when there will always be a man from the line of David sitting on the throne of Israel.)*

PRAY:

Thank God for sending His Son Jesus to be our eternal King; a King without sin who reigns in righteousness and peace.

