

GIDEON'S VICTORY

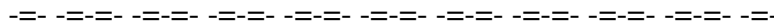


Passages to Study: Judges 7:1-25
 Read with the class: Judges 7:7-22.
 Texts for memorization:
 Younger: Matthew 24:44.
 Older: Revelation 19:15



OBJECTIVES: To teach that:

1. The power of God can achieve that which is impossible for man to carry out.
2. Total dependence on God accompanied by obedience to His directives is the key to victory.
3. God knows our needs when facing the enemy and He gives help to those who submit themselves to His will.
4. God wants to show what a person can do when he puts him/herself completely in His hands
5. For many, the coming of the Lord will be like the sudden awakening of the Midianites when attacked by Gideon's army.



SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS: At the well (or Spring) of Harod figures of Gideon watching his soldiers, some of whom drink lifting their cupped hands with water to their mouth, maintaining a vigil, while others kneel down oblivious to possible danger.

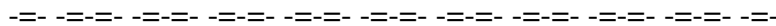
DEVELOPMENT:

- Gideon has destroyed the image of Baal.
 - Gideon received the nickname Jerubbaal (meaning "let Baal plead [or contend] with him") for destroying the altar of Baal. Jud 6.32. The name was taken from an expression his father used when the Israelites became angry over what Gideon had done.
 - To show his disdain for the false god, Gideon raised an altar to Jehovah in its place.
 - Enemies threaten Israel because they have abandoned the worship of the true God and have served false gods instead.
 - Many of the Israelites gathered at Gideon's call and are willing to fight the invaders.
 - The people's willingness to go to war is accompanied by the danger that they might think victory will be theirs due to the size of their army, rather than realizing it is God Himself who brings about a great victory.
- Cns.** Having pride in one's imagined strength to accomplish great deeds, is robbing God of glory.
Cmt. It is man's sin that leads him to rob God of the glory that is rightfully His. (v.2)
- Of the original army, 22,000 return home when the opportunity is given for those who are afraid to do so. (v.3)
- Cns.** Fear is regarded as a justifiable reason for not going to war.
- Only 10,000 soldiers remain, and they must learn that God does not need a big army to carry out His purposes.
 - In the test at the waters of the Harod Spring, another 9,700 are shown to be lacking in assessing danger.
 - This was a test ordered by God. (v.4)
 - Unaware that God was testing them, the ten thousand are taken to drink water.
 - Those who calmly drink, kneeling and putting their faces down to the water instead of standing on guard against the enemy, are rejected as unsuitable for the task ahead.
- Cns.** At times God tests His servants in simple things in order to see if they are capable of carrying great responsibility later on.

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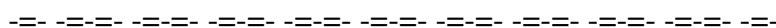
- The way in which they drank the water showed whether the soldiers perceived the danger they were in.
- 1. Some scooped up the water in their hand and lapped it while keeping an alert eye open for the enemy.
- 2. Others, thinking of their own comfort, knelt down to drink the water without worry about the enemy.
- Only 3% passed the test.
- Cmt.** Those who knelt down forgot about the enemy. Their carelessness cost them the privilege of serving God who needs soldiers who are alert.
- Now, with none of the self-indulgent nor the cowards remaining, only 300 men remain for the battle.
- With their numbers reduced to such a few, the Israelites would realize that the victory is to be the Lord's and not by their own strength.
- They will learn to depend on God and recognize the uselessness of their idols.
- Cmt.** The object of this lesson is to stress the power of God in the face of man's weakness.
- Lxn.** When God acts, He does things in such a way that He will receive the glory, which does not belong to man.



SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS A night scene with figures of some Midianite tents and Gideon and his servant crawling along outside of them.

DEVELOPMENT:

- God uses a clandestine investigative operation to encourage His servant.(v.9)
- Ccl.** If God is able to protect Gideon while going alone into enemy territory, He is able to give him the victory.
- God wanted him Gideon go alone, but in His mercy allows him to take Fura, his servant, with him. (v.10)
- Perhaps Gideon, with only 300 men remaining, was afraid once again, for he was looking at an enemy described as "grasshoppers for multitude", and camels "without number".
- Sug.** Encourage the students to tell how they would have felt in such a situation. No doubt, they will speak of the large number of animals and men. The teacher should stress the effect this could have on Gideon who saw his side as being of little account.
- Gideon and his servant draw near to the enemy tents and listen outside one to what the Midianites inside are saying.
- God provides Gideon with encouraging information before he goes into battle.
- Cmt.** What Gideon hears is a Midanite telling a friend of a dream he had in which a loaf of barley bread which, despite its small size, destroys the large tent of Midian. The Midianites themselves give the meaning of the story. (vv.14-15).
- The barley bread was cheaper and less desirable than wheat bread, thus it was a figure of the Israelites.
- Although poor and less numerous than the Midianites, they were going to gain the victory in the power of God.
- Gideon worshipped God before going forth to work for Him.
- They returned to the Israelites with an encouraging message, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered ...". (v.15).





SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS Figures of 3 groups of soldiers with their trumpets and torches hidden within pitchers surrounding the Midianite camp at night.

DEVELOPMENT: - Gideon's strategy is to divide his company into three groups.

- The soldiers have trumpets and the lighted torches are within the pitchers so their light is not seen.
- **LAMPS** or **TORCHES**. A bundle of sticks soaked in resin, which burned giving off a bright light.
- Having previously offered to God the valuable seven year old bullock, and having seen the greater part of his army depart, Gideon faces the battle with nothing to depend upon but God.

Cns. God had been taking away the things on which Gideon might have depended in order that he relies on God alone God for help.

Lsn. When God calls a person to commit himself to Him, it means the surrender of the entire being and all that he possesses.

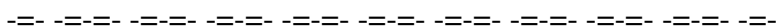
- God uses Gideon to demonstrate what He can do with a man wholly given over to Him, one who places himself in His hands.
- The crucial moment arrives with the sound of the trumpet and the shout: "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"
- This cry was heard in the dark hours after midnight.
- The Midianites awakened to find themselves surrounded by a ring of fire and the sound of trumpets.
- They tried to flee but it was too late.
- In the darkness, they could not distinguish between one and another, and began killing each other. Gideon and his men, with their lamps burning, were above the Midianite camp, shouting praise to God.

Apl. (1) The victory gained was designed to call Israel to repentance and to glorify God as He demonstrated His power in their midst. Gideon was the one chosen to teach this lesson.

Apl. (2) This event in the life of the Midianites teaches that God can break suddenly into the affairs of men and come upon them with unexpected destruction.

Cns. The Midianites did not take into account the God of the Israelites. In the parable recounted by the Midianites and overheard by Gideon, it is evident that they had a previous warning.

Cmt. The gospel is the means used in the world today to make known the coming of the Lord. There are signs in the life of many to warn them that "Christ is coming".



SCENE No. 4. VISUAL AIDS Figures that represent activities in which people will be engaged when Christ comes back.

DEVELOPMENT: Sug. If figures are used, find some that show people engaged in normal daily activities in order to show how the coming of the Lord will come as a surprise for the unprepared.

- Matthew 24:44 gives a Biblical warning about the necessity of being prepared.

Suggested figures or situations:

- Children playing a game such as football or tennis.
- Someone asleep in bed.
- A businessman seated at his office desk.
- A housewife occupied in her kitchen.

Sug. If a world map or globe is available, show the sun's movement over the face of the earth, leaving part of it in darkness. No one knows the date, nor the hour nor the minute of the coming of the Lord.

Lsn. From all nations on earth, only those who know Christ as Saviour will go when He comes.

GIDEON' S VICTORY



Ctr. Gideon proved the protective power of God in his life. The lost will experience His power in judgment.

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