

The People of Midian Oppress Israel

1 Then the sons of Israel did evil before the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, 2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. The sons of Israel made dens for themselves in the mountains and caves, and strongholds away from the presence of the Midianites. 3 So it was, whenever the sons of Israel had sown, Midianites would come up, and the Amalekites and the sons of the East would come up with them. 4 Then they encamped against them and destroyed the fruits of the earth until they came to Gaza, and left no substance of life in the land of Israel, not even an ox or a donkey among the herds. 5 For they came up with their livestock and their tents, and appeared just as numerous as locusts; they and their camels were without number; and they came into the land of Israel and destroyed it. 6 And Israel was exceedingly destitute before the face of the Midianites, and the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord 7 because of the presence of the Midianites. 8 And the Lord sent a prophet to the sons of Israel, who said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘I am He who brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of your bondage; 9 and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 And I said to you, I am the Lord your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But you did not obey My voice.’” Gideon 11 Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree in Ephrathah which belonged to Joash the father of Esdri, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress in order to hide from the presence of the Midianites. 12 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you, mighty one of the armies!” 13 Gideon said to Him, “It is I, my Lord? If the Lord is with us, why then have these evils come upon us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has driven us out and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.” 14 Then the Angel of the Lord turned to him and said, “Go with this strength of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Indeed, I have sent you.” 15 And Gideon said to Him, “Be gracious with me, my Lord, for how can I save Israel? My thousand is weakened in Manasseh, and I am the smallest in my father’s house.” 16 And the Angel of the Lord said to him, “The Lord will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.” 17 Then Gideon said to Him, “If now I have found mercy in Your sight, then You shall do everything for me today that You have told me. 18 Do not leave here, I pray, until I come to You and I will bring out my offering and set it before You.” And He said, “I am. I will wait until you come back.” 19 So Gideon went in and prepared a goat kid, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. He put the meat in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and approached. 20 The Angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so. 21 Then the Angel of the Lord stretched out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. 22 Now Gideon perceived this was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, “O Lord, my Lord! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face.” 23 Then the Lord said to him, “Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.” 24 So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it the Peace of the Lord. To this day it is still in Ephratha of the father of Esdri. 25 Now that same night the

Lord said to him, “Take your father’s young bull, and the second calf of seven years old, and tear down your father’s altar to Baal, and destroy the sacred grove beside it. 26 Build an altar to the Lord your God on top of this stronghold in the proper arrangement, and take the second calf and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the sacred grove which you cut down.” 27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the Lord had told him. But because he feared his father’s household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night. 28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, the altar of Baal was torn down; and the sacred grove beside it was destroyed, and they saw the second bull being offered on the altar which had been built. 29 And one man said to his neighbor, “Who did this?” Then they inquired and learned that Gideon the son of Joash had done it. 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son and let him die, because he tore down the altar of Baal, and because he destroyed the sacred grove beside it.” 31 But Joash said to all the men who stood against him, “Are you now going to plead for Baal? Do you want to save him? Let the one who wants to plead for Baal be put to death by morning! If he is a god, because his altar is torn down, let him plead for himself!” 32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, “Let Baal plead against him, for it is his altar that is torn down.” 33 Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the sons of the East, gathered together and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of the Lord empowered Gideon, and he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were terrified behind him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh and to Asher, and to Zebulun, and Naphtali; and he went up to meet them.

The Dewy Fleece

36 So Gideon said to God, “If You save Israel by my hand as You said, 37 then look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You said.” 38 And it was so. And he rose early the next morning and wrung the fleece and from the fleece dropped enough dew to fill a pan full of water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, “Indeed, I pray, do not let Your anger be aroused at me, and I will speak but once; I will yet make one more trial with the fleece. This time, let it be dry on the fleece, but let there be dew all over the ground.” 40 And that night God made it so; on the fleece it was completely dry, but there was dew all over the ground.

Judges 7

Gideon’s Three Hundred Defeat the Midianites

1 Then Jerubbaal—that is, Gideon—and all the people with him rose early and encamped at the spring of Harod. To the north of him was the camp of the Midianites, stretching from Gabaath Moreh in the deep valley. 2 And the Lord said to Gideon, “The people with you are too numerous; I dare not deliver Midian into their hand, lest otherwise Israel boast against Me, saying, ‘This my own hand, it saved me.’ 3 Now therefore, proclaim within the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.’” And twenty-two remained. 4 But the Lord said to Gideon, “There are still too many people; bring them down to the water, and there I will purge them for you. And it will be that of whomever I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ the same shall go with you. And of whomever I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ the same shall not go with you.” 5 So he brought the people down to

the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, “Everyone who laps water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.” 6 And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. 7 Then the Lord said to Gideon, “By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. All the other people shall go, every man to his own place.” 8 So they took the provision of the people in their hand, and their trumpets; and he sent away every man of Israel, every man to his tent, and he strengthened the three hundred. And the army of Midian was below him in the deep valley. 9 On that same night the Lord said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. 11 Listen to what they shall say, and afterward your hands shall be strong and you shall then go down into the camp.” And he went down with Purah his servant to the edge of the camp of the fifty. 12 And Midian and Amalek and all the sons of the East were scattered as numerous as locusts throughout the valley; and their camels were without number, as the sands on the seashore. 13 And Gideon came, and there was a man telling his companion a dream. He said, “Behold, I had a dream. Hear me: A cake of barley bread rolling into the camp of Midian came as far as a tent and struck it so that it fell, flipped over, and collapsed.” 14 Then his companion answered and said, “This is nothing but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the entire camp.” 15 When Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped the Lord. He returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into our hand.” 16 Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies and put a trumpet into every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. 17 And he said to them, “Watch me and do as I do; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp, do as I do. 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and shout, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’ ” 19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, and they completely roused the guards. And they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands, 20 and the three companies sounded the trumpets and broke the pitchers and held the torches in their left hands. In their right hands they held their trumpets to sound with, and they cried out, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” 21 And every man stood in his place round about the camp; and the entire army of men ran and sounded a warning and fled. 22 They sounded with three hundred trumpets, and the Lord set every man’s sword against his neighbor throughout the entire camp; and the army fled as far as Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. 23 And the men of Israel, from Naphtali, from Asher, and from all Manasseh, shouted out and pursued after the Midianites. 24 Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, saying, “Come down to meet in battle with the Midianites, and take for yourselves the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the River Jordan.” And every man of Ephraim cried out, and they seized the water as far as Beth Barah and the River Jordan. 25 And they captured Oreb and Zeeb, rulers in Midian. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon from the other side of the Jordan.