

The Book of
JUDGES

Testing the Heart of God's Children



The Battle belongs to the Lord

Judges 7:1-24
Lesson 7

Introduction

For eight years Midian invaded the land at harvest time. They came fully expecting to carry out their usual mission of uncontested pillageing of the land. This year was different, they met opposition.

The **Midianites** were related to Israel through Abraham's wife, Ketura. At one time they were friends of Israel. Moses found refuge in the tents of the Midian priest, Jethro and married his daughter. Later we find the elders of Midian aligned with Moab in calling Balaam to curse Israel. The Doctrine of Balaam scripture says in Rev. 2:14 ... "taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality."

The **torches** that Israel brandished would have most likely been made of material such as reeds that would smolder until exposed to the air and waved. The pitchers covered the glow of the smoldering torch until the proper moment. Usually only a few of the soldiers carried trumpets for signaling because hands were needed for weapons and shields. Likewise, for night battle a certain number would be assigned to hold the torches that would illuminate the battle area and block retreat at the perimeter. It would be expected then, that the trumpet blowers and torch holders would represent only a small percentage of the army, with the rest charging in to fight. Therefore, when the Midianites heard the blast of three hundred trumpets and saw the myriad of torches around the perimeter, they naturally assumed there was a massive army that would be charging into the camp, whereas Gideon had instructed his men to hold their positions around the perimeter. -IVP Bible Background Commentary

God used a Spirit empowered leader, a small army of 300 men, torches and pitchers to defeat the enormous army in front of them. God wanted Israel to learn that it was not "their own hand" that would save them, but the battle belonged to God.



LOOKING FOR GOLD - WHAT DOES IT SAY?

The first step in mining for gold is getting the lay of the land. **Carefully observe the text** looking to see where you might dig to find hidden treasure. **Mark your text** looking for repeated words, contrasts or similarities. Look for answers to, Who? What? When? Where? Why or How?

Setting the scene: Read Deuteronomy 20 paying special attention to v. 16-18, for more insight into the law of war. Use an atlas or other sources to place the cities in the appropriate place on your map. Pay attention to who's inheritance they are occupying.

Judges 7:1-8

1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

2 And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' 3 Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

4 But the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom 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." 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, "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." 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. Let all the other people go, every man to his place." 8 So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

Judges 7:9-18

9 It happened on the same night that 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 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. 12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.

13 And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." 14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." 16 Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. 17 And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall 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 say, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!'"



Judges 7:19-25

19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. **20** Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers — they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing — and they cried, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" **21** And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. **22** When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the Lord set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

23 And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

24 Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. **25** And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. 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 on the other side of the Jordan.



BOILING IT DOWN – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



What **lesson** can I draw from my observations?

State each lesson in a simple sentence (aim for 10 words or less).

Judges 7:1-8 _____

Judges 7:9-18 _____

Judges 7:19-25 _____



REFINED AS GOLD - HOW CAN I APPLY IT?

How should it change me? Ask yourself, "What **course of action** do I need to take to apply each lesson?" (aim for 10 words or less)

Judges 7:1-8 _____

Judges 7:9-18 _____

Judges 7:19-25 _____

CHALLENGE: Use cross-references to find correlating scripture that backs up a main point of the chapter. Summarize your findings in your own words.



STORING UP YOUR TREASURE . . .

What was God's command? Judges 6:14, 7:7

How did God address Gideon's fear?

How did the enemy respond when they heard the trumpets? v 22

What did Gideon learn about God?

What words or phrases are repeated?

CHECKING FOR CLARITY: See if you can boil down the meaning of **each section** into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you catch the vision?

Judges 7:1-8 _____
Judges 7:9-18 _____
Judges 7:19-25 _____

BARS OF GOLD: State the main **point** of the passage in the form of a title.

FLEX YOUR MUSCLES: Can you discover an N.T. example of this O.T. truth?



HIDE YOUR TREASURE IN YOUR HEART

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 2 Cor 4:7

Radiating His Truth . . .

Rather than helping us see our strengths, God often causes us to confront our weaknesses before He reveals His complete sufficiency. -Gary Inrig

