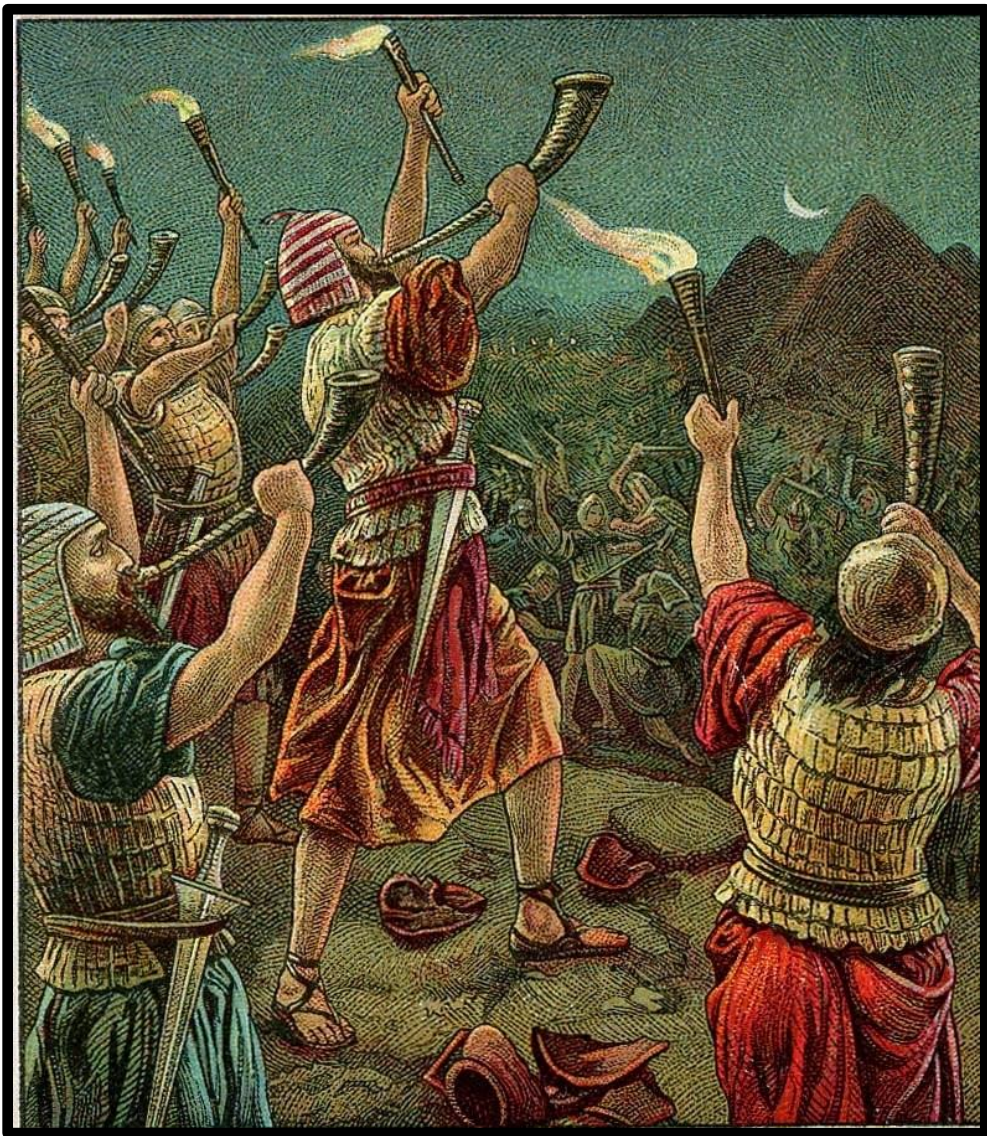


LIVING GODS WILL

Vessel of God

GIDEON



Gideon and the three hundred

Born: Ophrah

Died: Ophrah

Gideon was a **military leader, a prophet and a Judge** of Israel.

Gideon was from the **tribe of Manasseh**.

Gideon was the fifth **Judge of Israel for 40 years**.

Gideon defeated the **Midianite army** with only **300 men (1169 BC)**

The account of **Gideon's** life is recorded in **Judges 6:11-8:32**. The backdrop for **Gideon's** biography begins with the Israelites being ravaged by the **Midianites** as a consequence of their disobedience to **God (Judges 6:1)**. For seven years they faced invasions from the **Midianites, Amalekites, and Eastern** foreigners who ruined their crops and destroyed their cattle.

Although they had been unfaithful to **God** by worshiping the gods of the **Amorites**, they cried out to **God** for His help without realizing why this was happening to them (**Judges 6:6**). And so **God** sends them a prophet to remind them of how the one true **God** had provided for them in the past and yet how quickly they had forsaken Him (**Judges 6:8-10**).

God hears their cries and graciously intervenes by sending an **angel** to **Gideon** to call him into service (**vss. 11-14**). **Gideon**, whose name means "**cutter**" or "**cutter of trees**," belonged to an undistinguished family of the **Abiezrites**, but from the angel's greeting we can assume that **Gideon** had already proved to be a **mighty warrior (Judges 6:12)**.

Though **Gideon** was a willing servant of **God**, he needed assurance that it was, in fact, **God** calling him to this divine service (**vs.17**). In accomplishing the mission set before him by **God**, **Gideon** proves himself to be faithful, a mighty warrior, a strong leader of men (**Judges 7:17**), and a diplomat (**Judges 8:1-3**).

As such, he is included in a fitting testimonial for the great men of faith in **Hebrews 11:32-34**. **Gideon** was the **fifth judge and renowned as the greatest of Israel**.

The highlights of **Gideon's** life include his victorious battle against Israel's enemies. However, we mustn't overlook his amazing faith, by which he carried out **God's** mission and which was first put to the test and confirmed when he destroyed the **Baal** idols his father and the community had been worshiping (**Judges 6:25-27**).

Gideon's battle triumph is preceded by **God's** anointing (**Judges 6:34**). It was no small feat that **Gideon** managed to enlist his tribesmen, the Abiezrites, to go into battle with him.

These were the men whose idols he had destroyed and who had renamed him **"Jerub-baal"** (**Judges 6:32**). Before entering battle, **Gideon's** troops number 32,000, but in obedience to **God** he reduces them by 22,000 (**Judges 7:2-3**). Again in obedience to **God** he decreases the remaining 10,000 by a further 9,700, leaving him with just **300 men** (**vss. 7-8**).

This was against an enemy that is described as **"thick as locusts" with "camels as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore"** (**Judges 7:12**). With the battle finally won, the people suggest that **Gideon** rule over them as their king, but he declines their accolades and tells them the **Lord** will rule over them (**Judges 8:22-23**).

Gideon had proved his faithfulness to **God**, and his obedience had required him to take a stand against his own father and tribe. And, although he feared his own people (**Judges 6:24**), from the three requests he made for the **Lord's** confirmation of His will, it is evident he feared **God** much more.

In battle he took on far greater odds than were realistic to mere mortals. When the Israelites wanted to honor him as their king for triumphing over their enemies and restoring Israel's pride, **Gideon**, recognizing **God** as the real victor in the battle, declines their request and affords the rightful sovereignty to **God**.

This was a great test of **Gideon's** faithfulness, when he could so easily have succumbed to pride by accepting the people's honor. So, it is with great surprise that we see **Gideon** go on to **compromise his faith** by requesting they all contribute gold from the plunder of the battle so he could create an **"ephod,"** a breastplate or mask used in cultic worship (**Judges 8:24-26**). And, as we see in **verse 27**, it became a snare to **Gideon** and his family.

From **Gideon's** example we can learn that no matter how great the odds against us may be, our faithful **God** is sovereign, and He will always see us through whatever battles we face in life, as long as we remain faithful to His calling and obedient to His commands.

"Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (**Proverbs 3:5-6**).

We can also see how **God** uses ordinary people to accomplish His plans, although with **Gideon**, the key factor was his willingness to obey **God**.

Sometimes, the most difficult people to witness our faith to are our families. And we can see after **Gideon** destroys the false gods his family had been worshiping that he receives an anointing from the **Lord**.

It was because of this anointing that he was able to accomplish the mission that **God** had set before him.

And it is with **God's** anointing on our lives that we can truly claim **"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength"** (**Philippians 4:13**).

Gideon had gone from being a warrior in hiding, threshing wheat at the foot of a hill out of sight of the enemy, to vanquishing the same enemy in battle. However, he was careful to ensure that it was **God's** will he was obeying.

As the **Apostle Paul** wrote, **"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will"** (**Romans 12:2**).

However, unlike **Gideon**, who had proved his faithfulness to **God** and received **God's** answers to his requested signs as an encouragement, we must not expect **God** to do likewise for those who request signs from **God** because of their doubts or weak faith.

There may be times when everyone around us does lack the faith to go on, and it is up to us, like **Gideon**, to take the lead by our example and encourage the weak among us (**Judges 7:17; Romans 15:1**).

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Judges 6:23 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-Lord-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Judges 7:7 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."

Judges 7:15 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."

Judges 7:22 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.

Judges 8:23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."

Judges 8:30 Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. **31** And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. **32** Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.



**Gideon thanks God for the Miracle of the Dew
by Maarten van Heemskerck**