

Gideon Bible Story

In the Bible: Judges 6 – 8

Israel was sinning greatly against God by worshipping idols and doing all kinds of other sins. Because of this, He sent the Midianites to rule over them for seven years. Every time Israel planted crops the Midianites would destroy them by moving on to the land and trampling everything.

Israel built camps and moved into caves on nearby hills because there were so many Midianites in the valley. Finally, Israel could take it no longer and cried out to God, "Father, please save us from these people!"

Gideon Bible story fact:
Midianites were descendants of Abraham, who lived among them for 40 years.

God answered them through a prophet, who proclaimed to all the people, "God saved you from Egypt with Moses guiding you through the Red Sea. He brought you out of the desert where you wandered for forty years. After all of this, you worship idols. So, He has sent these people to trample your crops and treat you badly."

Gideon Bible story fact:
After the fall of man in Genesis, God often used angels to communicate with his children.

A short time after, an angel of God descended from heaven to Israel. He sat under an old oak tree where a man named Gideon was working. The angel said, "The Lord is with you mighty warrior."

Gideon looked up from his work and replied, "If God is with us then why are the Midianites harming our crops and treating us badly? What happened to all those miracles that our fathers have told us about?"

The angel ignored his questions saying, "Go and save Israel with the strength you have, God is sending you."

Gideon Bible story fact:
Gideon was the fifth judge God raised up to defeat the enemies of Israel.

"How can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest of all Israel, and I am the weakest of my clan!" cried Gideon. "If this is true, give me a sign."

That night, Gideon prayed to God and said, "Father, if you are really going to use me to save my nation, make the dew form on just this fleece and keep the grass around it dry."

Teaching Gideon Bible story:
Note to the class how Gideon interacts with God. Gideon asked for a simple sign, twice, and God answered him each time. Point out that we can ask God for anything to!

He placed a wool fleece on the ground and went to bed. The next morning when he awoke, he checked the fleece. It was so wet, he wrung a bowl of water from it and the grass around it was dry.

That night he asked God, "Dear God, please don't be mad at me. I want to be sure you are going to use me to save my people. Tonight, make the fleece dry, and the grass around it wet."

He placed the wool fleece on the ground and went to bed. When he awoke the next morning, he picked up the fleece. It was as dry as popcorn without butter and his bare feet were soaked with water from the grass. It was true, God was going to use him to save Israel.

Gideon immediately called a meeting. "People of Israel. God came to me and said he was going to save our nation. I need warriors to help me get rid of the Midianites."

About thirty-two thousand men volunteered to help Gideon, but God had other plans. He came to Gideon and said, "Gideon, there are too many men to help you. When you defeat the Midianites with this many men you will say 'We did it by ourselves'. I will not get the glory I deserve. Lead these men to the hills, and I will tell you which ones I want you to take."

Gideon did as God had asked. God chose only three hundred men to fight against a million Midianites. Then he said, "If you are afraid, take your servant Purah and go down to the Midianite camp tonight to see what I have done."

Gideon Bible story fact:

Because God's people did not always have a bible (or scroll) to read and study, God often communicated through more miraculous ways.

That night, Gideon and Purah went to the camp. They tiptoed up to a tent and listened to a conversation between two men inside.

"I had a dream," one of the voices said. "A big loaf of bread came rolling through our camp and turned everything upside down."

"That can only mean one thing," replied a second voice, "that the God of Israel has given the Midianite camp to Gideon."

When Gideon heard this, he looked up to heaven and said, "Thank you God for providing me with the strength to accomplish what you want me to do."

Gideon Bible story fact:

Gideon was also known as Jerubbaal, or "a contender against Baal" because Gideon destroyed the alter to Baal his father erected.

He immediately ran back to his army of three hundred men. "Wake up everyone. God has given the Midianites into our hands. Listen to me and follow my orders exactly."

Gideon Bible story fact:

Gideon asked for signs from God because he did not have the resources, like the bible, to learn about how God "works". We should not go to God for a sign for every decision we make throughout the day. Doing so would put God to the test, which Jesus strictly forbade.

Teaching Gideon Bible story:

Note to the class how God communicated to the Midianites and to Gideon - through a dream and interpretation of the dream.

Gideon climbed up on a rock and shouted, "We are going to split into three groups and surround the Midianite camp. Each of you grab a trumpet, a clay bottle and a torch. When I give the signal, blow your trumpets and shout out to God."

All three groups of men grabbed their trumpets, bottles and torches, and silently ran to their positions around the camp. Gideon signaled and they all blew their trumpets and smashed their bottles on the ground shouting, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"

Teaching Gideon Bible story:

Emphasize that Gideon needed God's help to defeat the Midianites, and that God wanted him to know that!

As soon as the Midianites heard the trumpets, they ran in fear out of the camp pushing, tripping and hitting each other the whole way. So Gideon had beaten the Midianites with only three hundred men, and one very powerful God.

Gideon became proud of what he thought he had done. When all the men came back from the battle, Gideon asked of them, "Each one of you give me one gold ring from all the plunder you took from the Midianites."

Everyone gladly gave him a ring among other gold articles. Gideon melted all the gold and made an ephod. An ephod is a fancy vest that important Jewish leaders wore for certain ceremonies. Gideon put the ephod on display and all of Israel worshipped it. This made God angry and it became a snare for Gideon's family; but because of what God promised Gideon, He did not punish Israel until after Gideon died.

Gideon Bible story fact:

After Gideon defeated the Midianites, he judged Israel for 40 years.