

**How God  
Helps  
Us to  
Overcome**

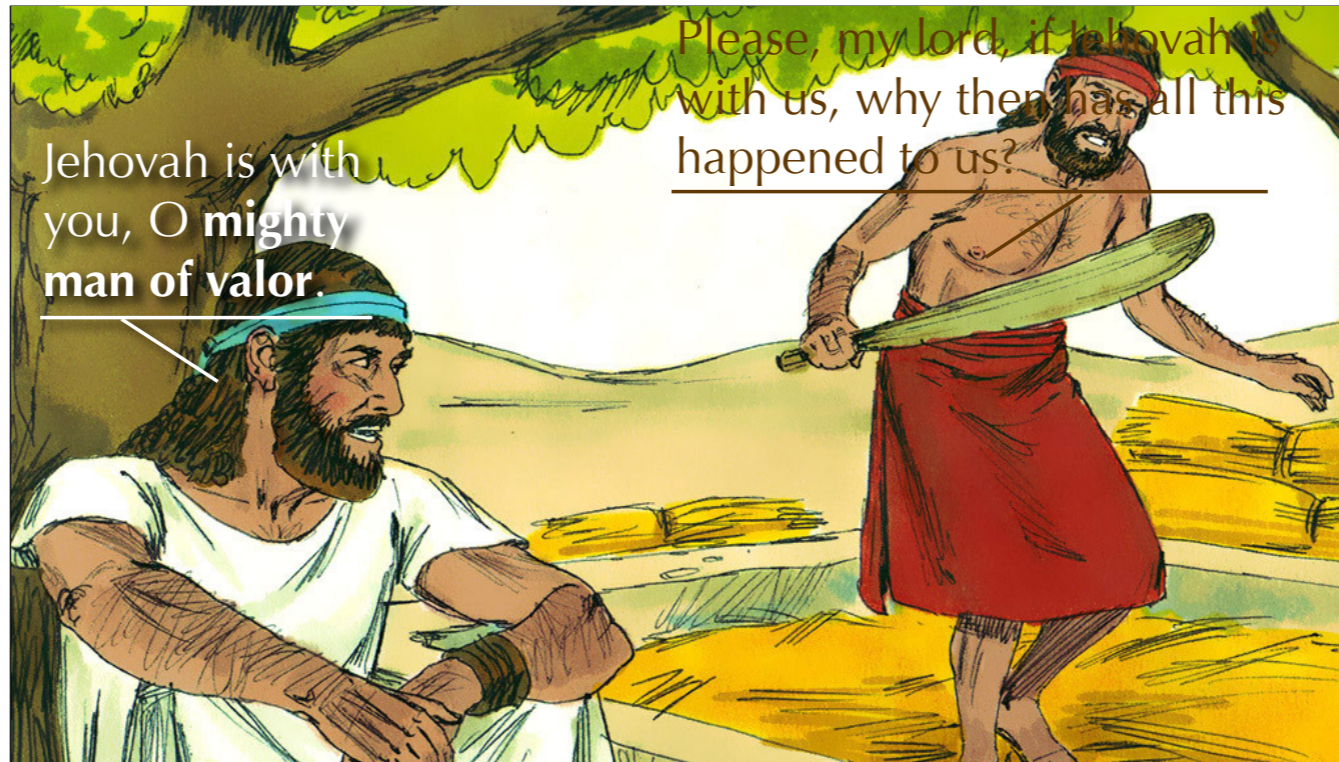
**Our Fear**  
and be **Zealous**

**Judges 6-9**





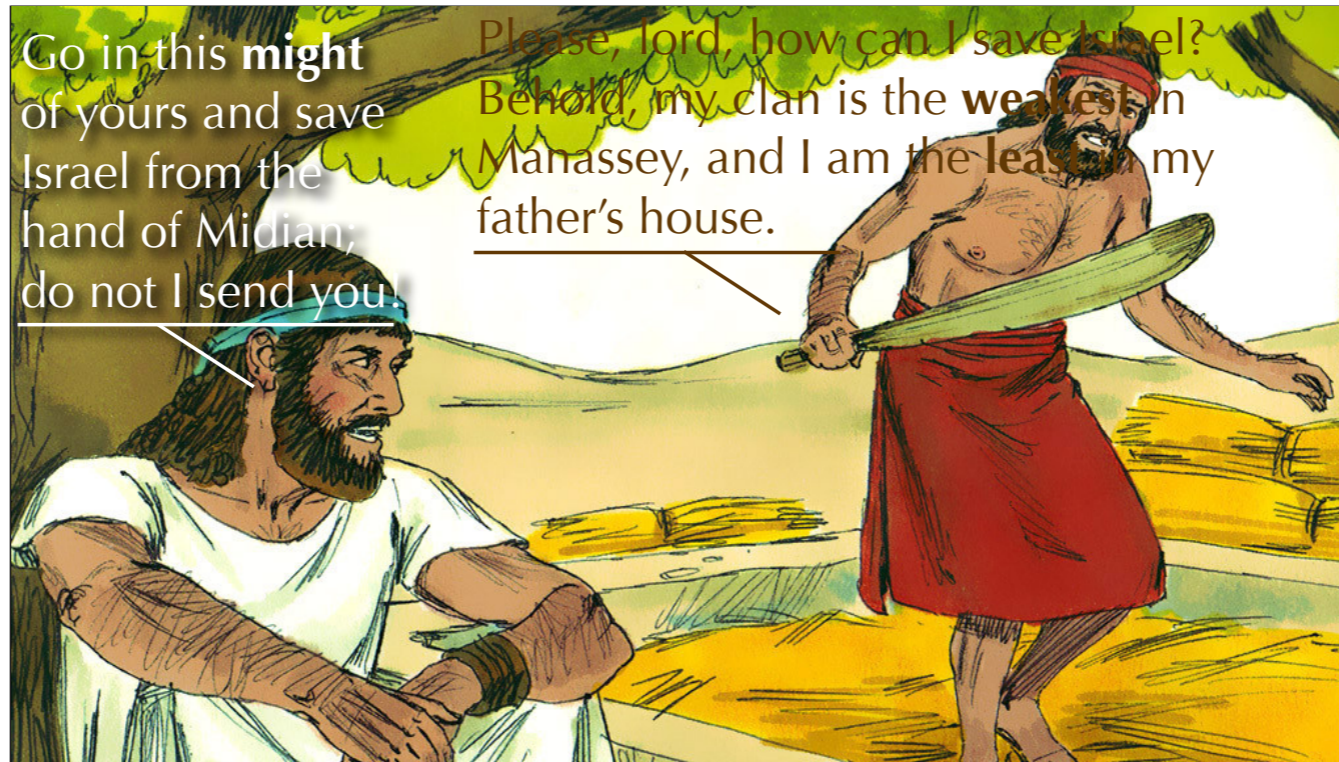
- 11 Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.”



- 13 And Gideon said to him, “Please, my Lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.”



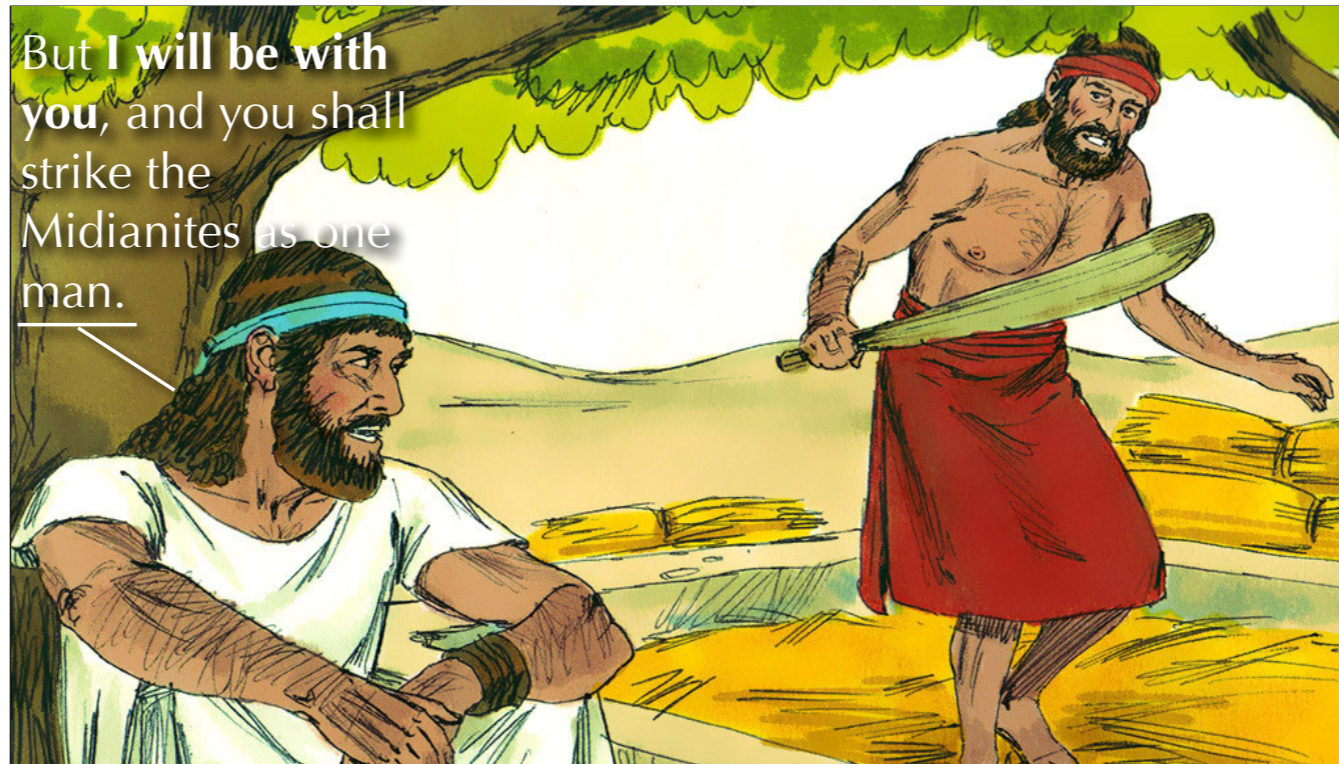
- 14 And the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?”



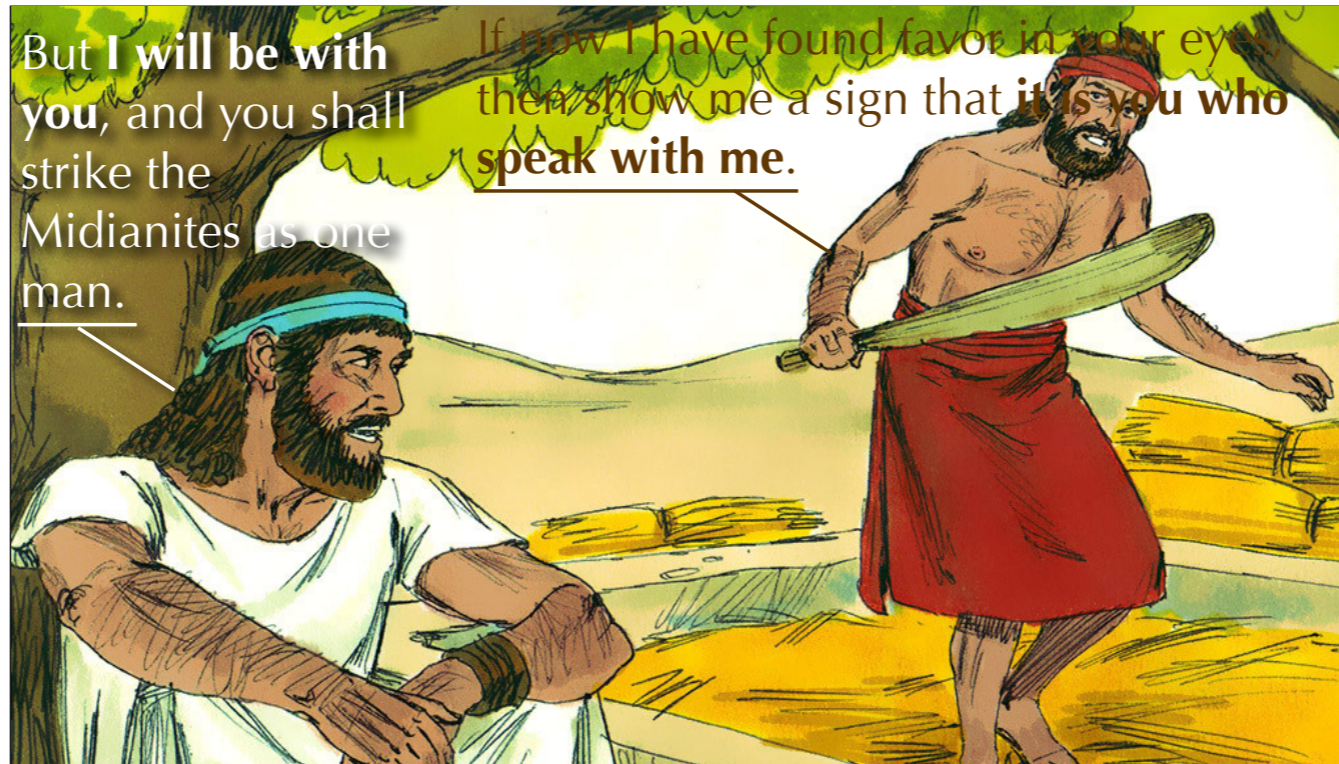
Go in this might  
of yours and save  
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hand of Midian;  
do not I send you.

Please, lord, how can I save Israel?  
Behold, my clan is the weakest in  
Manasseh, and I am the least in my  
father's house.

- 15 And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."



- 16 And the LORD said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.”



- 17 And he said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me."



- 18 Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you.” And he said, “I will stay till you return.”
- 19 So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. 20 And the angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.” And he did so.





- 21 Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. 22 Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." 23 But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." 24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace.

## Gideon's Fears



- Why Gideon Struggled with Jehovah's message: Fears

## Gideon's Fears

**FORSAKEN**



- His concept of Jehovah
  - Bad things are happening (How can God be with us?)
  - God's not doing anything about the bad things (How can God be with us?)
  - Why isn't God doing wonderful things?
  - We are forsaken by God
    - (through no fault of our own?)

## Gideon's Fears

How can I?



- His self-image
  - How can **I** save Israel?
    - Jehovah is with you (12)
    - Do I not send you (14)
  - Clan is the **weakest** (15)
  - I am the **least** (15)
    - (But 10 servants ... 27)
- There seems to be some misunderstandings on Gideon's part
  - Fails to consider the sins of his people and that God was allowing this to happen so that they would turn back to him.
  - God has been present all along.
  - His self-evaluation may be correct, but fails to consider the power and favor of God.
- It's no wonder that Gideon is doing enough to survive, and hiding even so, because he's afraid and doesn't expect any help from God.
- Why would he be zealous for God, when he feels forsaken by God?
- There are times when we are so afraid and hopeless that we just spend all our effort in maintaining our existence.
- How does God begin to change Gideon's fear into zeal?
- Gideon wants confirmation of who is talking to him.
  - He generally gets some grief for this: doubting.
  - To this point: he's talking to someone who looks like a man who is speaking for Jehovah and asking him to dangerous and impossible things
  - Why would Gideon listen to him? Is this message really from God?
- It's a good thing to be sure that we are listening to and obeying the voice of God.

## Gideon's Fears

**Who is this?**



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## Gideon's Fears



- There seems to be some misunderstandings on Gideon's part
  - Often true about our fears (unfounded,
  - Fails to consider the sins of his people and that God was allowing this to happen so that they would turn back to him.
  - God has been present all along.
  - His self-evaluation may be correct, but fails to consider the power and favor of God.
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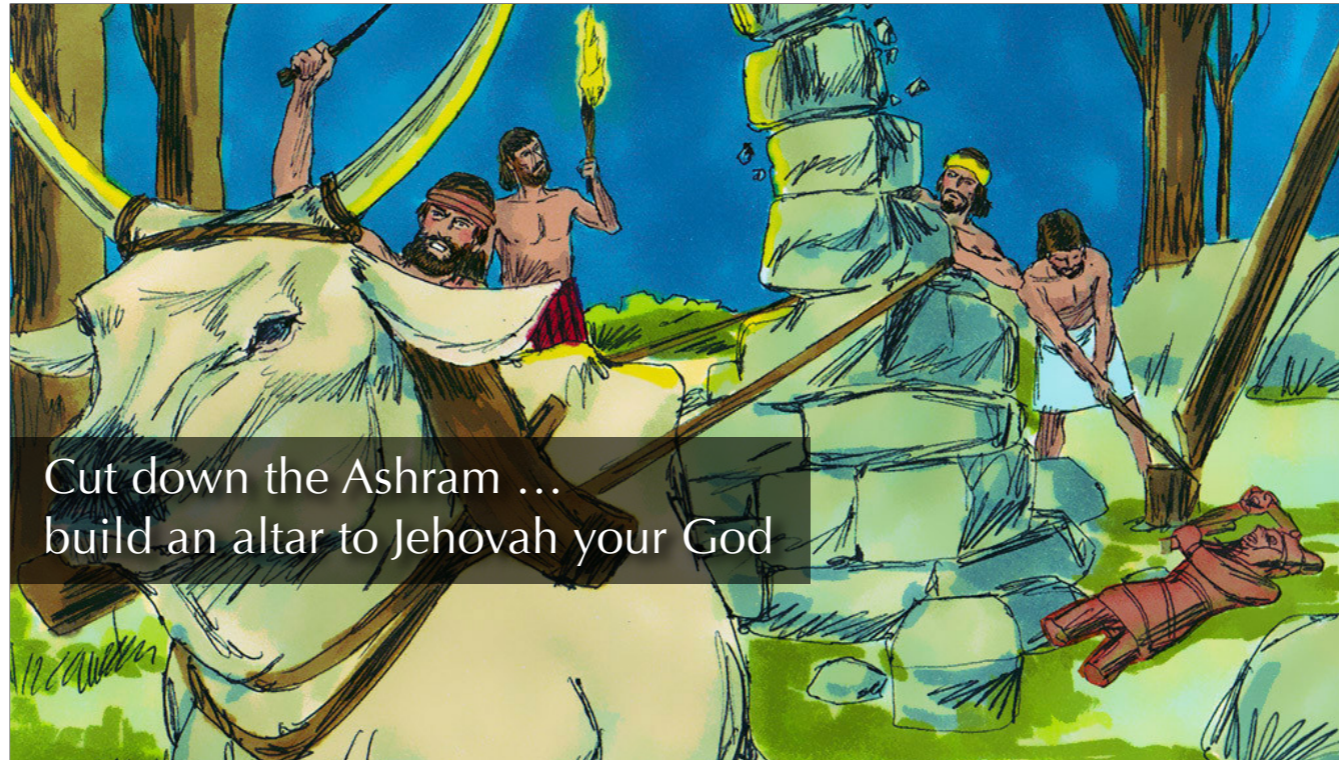
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## Gideon's Fears



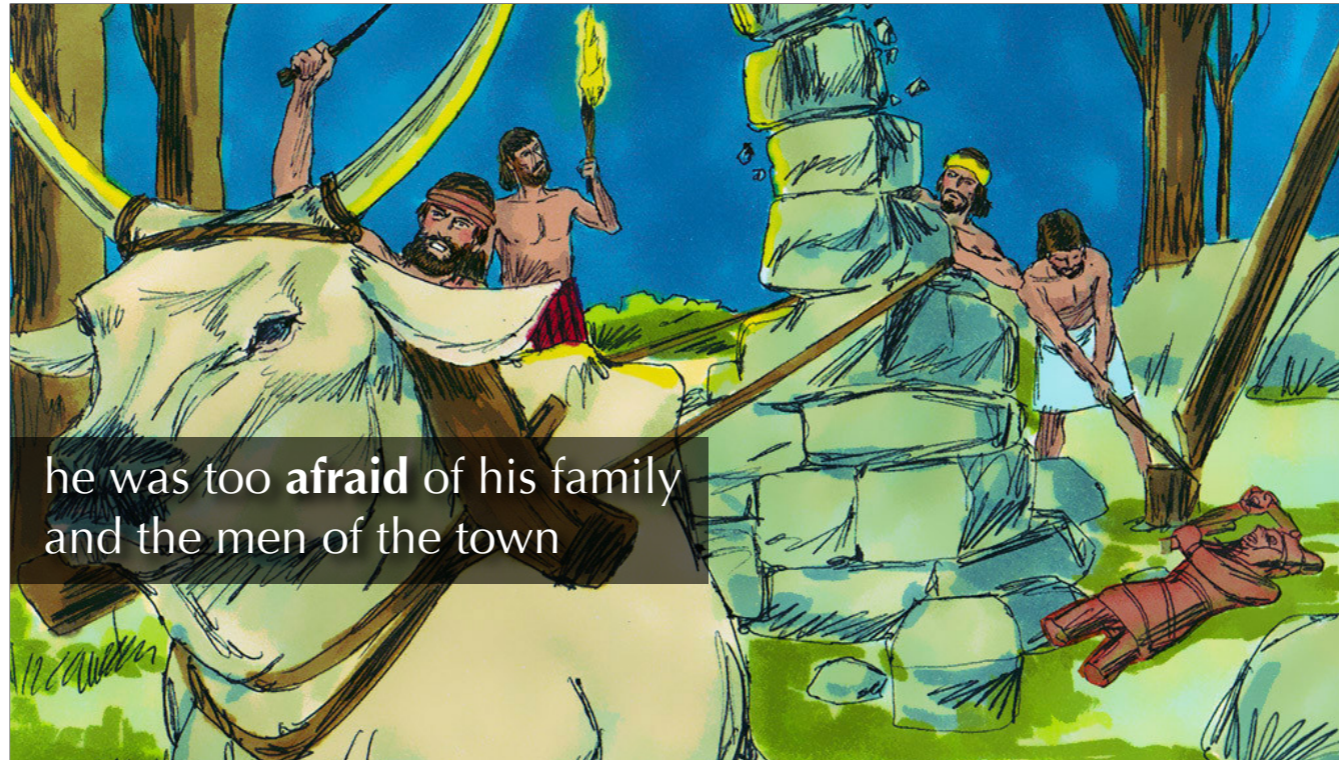
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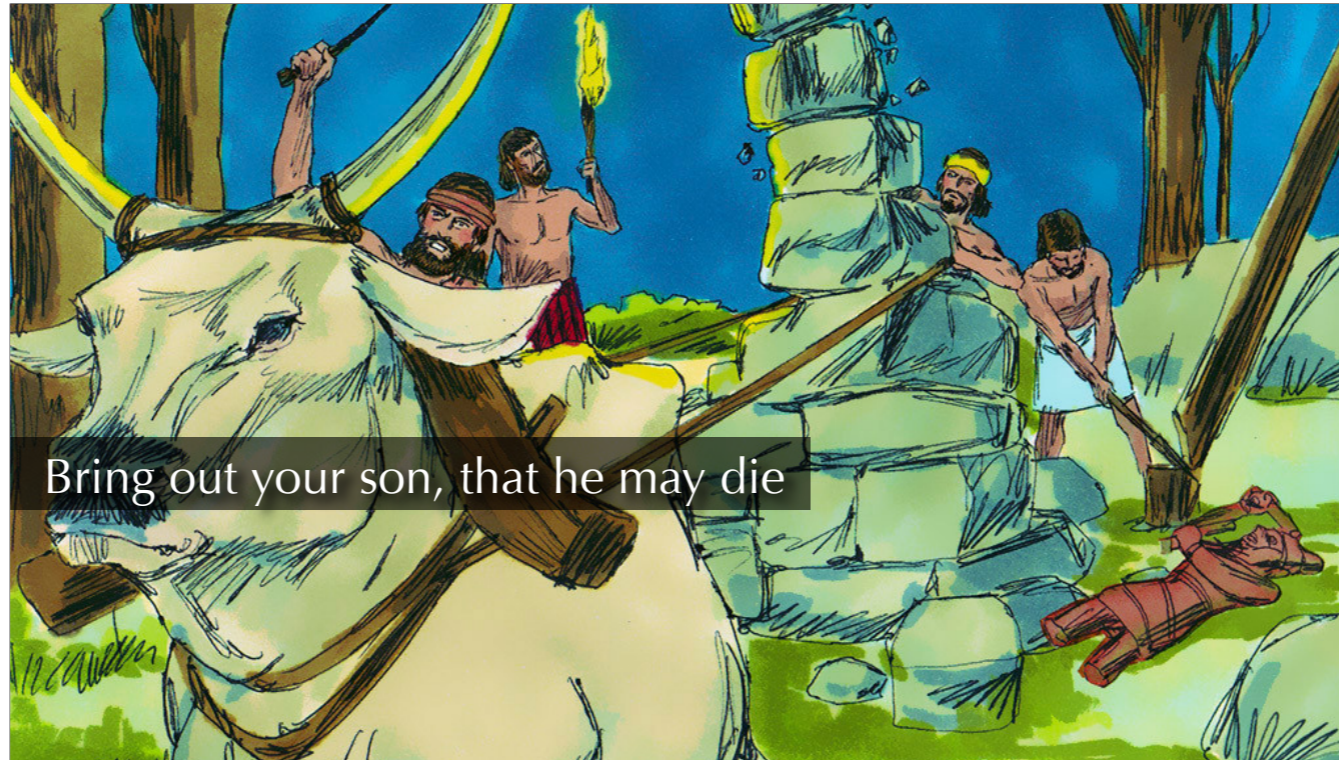
Cut down the Ashram ...  
build an altar to Jehovah your God

- 25 That night the LORD said to him, “Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down.”



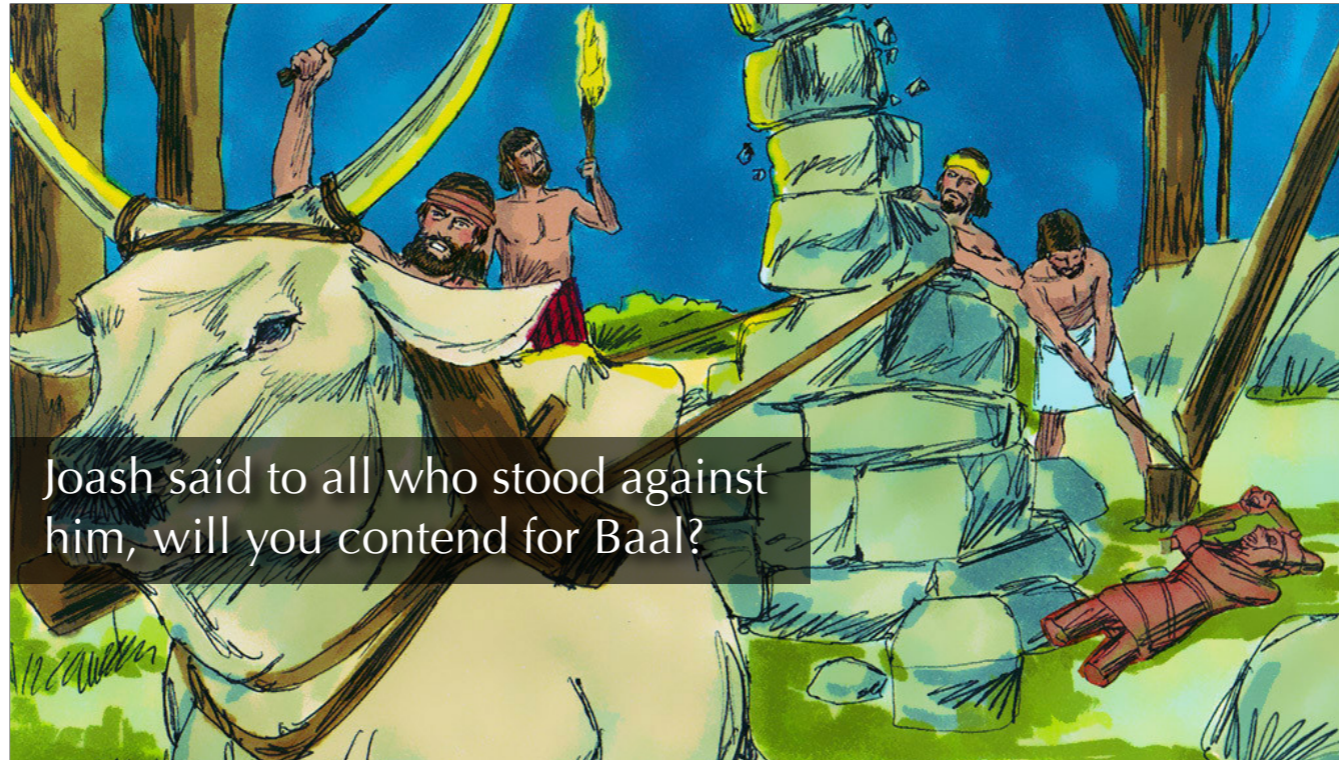
he was too afraid of his family  
and the men of the town

- 27 So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him.
- But because **he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town** to do it by day, he did it by night.



Bring out your son, that he may die

- 28 When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built. 29 And they said to one another, “Who has done this thing?” And after they had searched and inquired, they said, “Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.” 30 Then the men of the town said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that **he may die**, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it.”



- 31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down.”
- 32 Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, “Let Baal contend against him,” because he broke down his altar.

## God Prepares Gideon



- How God uses us to change things ...

# God Prepares Gideon

## From Fear to Faith



- From Fear to Faith
- Gideon was afraid ... justifiably.
  - But he still obeyed God
    - Ashram and Baal Torn down
    - Alter Built to Jehovah
- Gideon's father takes a stand
  - Father
  - Men of Town
- The People Turn to Jehovah?
  - Jerubabbel
- Important first step to change the minds of the people of Israel back to Jehovah
- Not possible to start building army without this step?

God Prepares Gideon

**From Fear to Faith**



- Gideon learns that Jehovah
  - Is with him (assurance)
  - Will protect him (might)
  - Is worthy of our trust and obedience (God, majesty)



- 33 Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 **But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon,** and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.





- 36 Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, 37 behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said.” 38 And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, “Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew.” 40 And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.



- 9:1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.
- 2 The LORD said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ 3 Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.” Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained.
- 4 And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ shall not go.” 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, “Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink.” 6 And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. 7 And the LORD said to Gideon, “With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home.” 8 So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.



- 9 That same night the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given 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 outposts of the armed men who were in the camp. 12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance. 13 When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, “Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat.” 14 And his comrade answered, “This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp.”
- 15 As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand.” 16 And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. 17 And he said to them, “Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, For the LORD and for Gideon.”



- 19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. 20 Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!” 21 Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled. 22 When they blew the 300 trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. 23 And the men of Israel were called out from Naphtali and from Asher and from all Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.
- 24 Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against the Midianites and capture the waters against them, as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan.” So all the men of Ephraim were called out, and they captured the waters as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan. 25 And they captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. Then they pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.



- 1 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, “What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight against Midian?” And they accused him fiercely. 2 And he said to them, “What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer? 3 God has given into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. What have I been able to do in comparison with you?” Then their anger against him subsided when he said this.



- 4 And Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the 300 men who were with him, exhausted yet pursuing. 5 So he said to the men of Succoth, “Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.” 6 And the officials of Succoth said, “Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?”
- 7 So Gideon said, “Well then, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.” 8 And from there he went up to Penuel, and spoke to them in the same way, and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9 And he said to the men of Penuel, “When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.”
- 10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with their army, about 15,000 men, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East, for there had fallen 120,000 men who drew the sword. 11 And Gideon went up by the way of the tent dwellers east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the army, for the army felt secure. 12 And Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and he threw all the army into a panic.
- 13 Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres. 14 And he captured a young man of Succoth and questioned him. And he wrote down for him the officials and elders of Succoth, seventy-seven men. 15 And he came to the men of Succoth and said, “Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your men who are exhausted?” 16 And he took the elders of the city, and he took thorns of the wilderness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth a lesson. 17 And he broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.
- 18 Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, “Where are the men whom you killed at Tabor?” They answered, “As you are, so were they. Every one of them resembled the son of a king.” 19 And he said, “They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you.” 20 So he said to Jether his firstborn, “Rise and kill them!” But the young man did not draw his sword, for he was afraid, because he was still a young man. 21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Rise yourself and fall upon us, for as the man is, so is his strength.” And Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and he took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.



- Clothed in the Spirit of God
  - Judges 6:34 — But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him.
- What a difference!
  - Doesn't go hide - he blows the trumpet
  - Gathers allies
  - Preparing for battle
- When we let the spirit lead us ... we are zealous



- Testing God .... again
  - Judges 6:36 (ESV) 36 Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said,
  - 39 Then Gideon said to God, “Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece.
- Is this lack of faith? Has doubt reasserted itself?
  - Gideon was human, taking on a much bigger task, leading others into danger
    - Perhaps, but this feels different to me.
  - Seeking assurance? Making sure?
  - When is the correct time to make certain that we are doing God’s will? and God is with us?





- How Jehovah provided strength (confidence) to fight
  - More is not always better.
  - Calls the armies
  - 32,000 - 10,000 - 300
  - no weapons
    - how do you convince someone to fight a battle without weapons?
- Like Paul's
  - 2 Corinthians 12:9 — But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.



- Don't Stop
  - in spite of obstacles
  - His own people complained
  - Other opposed him
  - Kept pursuing the Midianites.
- Too often we will let the opposition of others to keep us from doing what is right.
  - Don't stop.

**We implore you on  
behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God.**

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

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## How God Helps Us To Overcome our Fears and Become Zealous

Judges 6-9

Synopsis: Gideon and the people of Israel are in dire circumstances. Jehovah chooses Gideon and helps him to overcome his fear and be zealous to deliver Israel,

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**“Let all that you do be done with love.”**