

## GIDEON—THE JUDGE WHO HAD TO BE SHOWN

Judges 6:1-8:32

**G**ideon, the fifth of fifteen judges that ruled Israel, was not a self-confident man. Israel was oppressed by the Midianites. When tapped on the shoulder by God and given the task of delivering his nation, Gideon said, "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." It is a theme of the Biblical account of Gideon that God does not save by the strength of man but by the hand of God working through servants who willingly serve Him. It is in rebuke of his excuse that God told Gideon and us, "Surely I will be with you!" We are reminded of God's statement to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." II Cor. 12:9.

To prove his credentials the messenger of God touched his staff to the sacrifice Gideon had placed on a rock. Fire, unlit by human hands, consumed it. But Gideon demanded and got more proof. A fleece left out at night had dew upon the fleece only. The next night, the dew was on the earth only and the fleece was dry. Gideon was slow to believe but having believed he valiantly went forth to do God's bidding. God said the 32,000 men Gideon had with him were too many, that if all were allowed to fight, Israel would feel they had won the battle by their own strength.

## ENDURANCE

Twenty-two thousand men who were afraid were encouraged to return home. God said the remaining ten thousand were still too many. The number was further reduced and with *three hundred* men and what appeared to be a totally unworkable plan the battle was engaged. With a pitcher, a candle inside, and a trumpet they surrounded the enemy. At the signal, they broke their pitchers exposing the lights, and blew their trumpets and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The Midianites were so astonished that, in their pandemonium they turned their swords against one another and Gideon, with God's help, broke the reign of the Midianites.

Gideon, as with many of the other judges, was not a perfect servant of God. In his later years he made an ephod of gold that was so magnificent that Israel worshiped before it. The Bible says, "...which thing became a snare to Gideon and his house."

From this great judge we can learn two lessons: First, with God's help we can accomplish whatever He wills. And second, with success we should give glory to God and humbly seek to continue to do His will.

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