

JUDGES

Lesson 4 w/Answers

Gideon

In the book of Judges, Gideon was the most written-about Judge; only Samson comes close as the second. In this lesson, our study of Gideon will show us what we can accomplish with just a small amount of faith; and we will see how faithful God is in watching over His own.

Also on display in this lesson is the patience God, and how tolerant He is of our doubts, fears, and weaknesses. Perhaps most of all, we see the great things that God can accomplish in ways again that we would never expect.

God takes a man of faith (who has doubts about his own abilities) and a handful of committed warriors to defeat one of the most oppressive governments that Israel ever suffered under.

Our lesson covers Judges Chapters 6 through 8, which presents a single story. Read this story through and consider the following:

1. What happened after the forty years of peace during Deborah's judgeship? (Judges 6:1)
 - a. ANSWER: Seven years of repression under the hands of the Midianites.
2. For seven years, the Midianites caused Israel to do what? (Judges 6:2-6)
 - a. ANSWER: To live and hide in the mountains and to store their crops in the mountains. Each season, the Midianites would attack the land and overrun it with their people, camels, and livestock; ruining the crops and driving the Israelites into the mountains.
3. Who were the Midianites descendants of? (Genesis 25:1-2)
 - a. ANSWER: They were descendants of Abraham and his second wife, Keturah.
4. What did the Lord do in response to the Israelites' cry for help? (Judges 6:7-14)
 - a. ANSWER: He sent them a prophet who pointed out the error that they had made by sinning against God and following after idols. He also sent an angel who visited Gideon and told him to go and save Israel from the Midianites' hands.
5. How did Gideon respond? (Judges 6:15-19)
 - a. ANSWER: He questioned God's command, pointing out how weak that the Israelites were; and how insignificant he, Gideon, was compared to everyone else.
6. How did God respond? (Judges 6:20-23)
 - a. ANSWER: He told Gideon He would be with him. To assure Gideon that He was the Angel of the Lord, He performed a miracle and then immediately disappeared.
7. What was the first thing that Gideon had to do in order to save his people? (Judges 6:24-32)
 - a. ANSWER: Tear down the Asherah pole, which his father Joash had built to other gods, and burn it. Gideon was demonstrating the need to repent, and he was sending a loud and clear message to the people of Israel what God desired of all of them: that they would turn from worshipping idols and return to worshipping and following God.
8. Whose idol was it that Gideon destroyed? (Judges 6:25)
 - a. ANSWER: It was Gideon's father's idol. His own father was setting a bad example and teaching the worship of false gods to his children. Yet in spite of this, Gideon desired to follow God. It is interesting that Gideon's father had made such a giant idol (it took 10 people, plus Gideon, to tear it down). He was not much of a father figure, but Gideon turned out to be a good man in spite of it. This tells us something about ourselves and our responsibility to our children. How sad that God had to use Gideon, his son, to show him his shortcomings. This story also indicates to us that good children can come from bad parents.

9. To ensure God's will and backing in the coming battle that Gideon was told by God to lead, Gideon asked God for a sign. What did God do when Gideon asked for a sign? How many signs did Gideon ask for?
 - a. ANSWER: Gideon ended up asking for two signs. The first sign was asking God to have dew fall only on the fleece and not the ground, which God did. Then the next day, he asked God to have dew fall only on the ground and not on the fleece, and God did that as well.
10. How many men had the Midianites, Amalekites, and their allies gathered as an army? (Judges 8:10)
 - a. ANSWER: 120,000 plus 15,000 for a total of 135,000.
11. How many men had Gideon gathered as an army? (Judges 7:3)
 - a. ANSWER: 22,000 plus 10,000 for total of 32,000.
12. What did God say to Gideon regarding the size of Gideon's army going against the size of the armies comprising the Midianite alliance? (Judges 7:2)
 - a. ANSWER: God told him that he had too many men, and then he told him that again after 22,000 of them fled and he was left with only 10,000.
13. When God was done sifting out the size of Gideon's army, how big was it? (Judges 7:2-18)
 - a. ANSWER: God had reduced Gideon's army to just 300 men.
14. Did God ask Gideon to do something that he knew Gideon was incapable of accomplishing? How did God prepare Gideon for the battle? (Judges 7:9-15)
 - a. ANSWER: God sent him down to spy on the Midianite camp at evening. He heard them talking about the dream that they'd had, which indicated that Gideon would totally defeat them in the morning. This greatly encouraged Gideon, and he returned to his camp as an emboldened man.
15. What types of weapons did Gideon's men use to displace the Midianite army? (Judges 7:16-25)
 - a. ANSWER: They used trumpets, empty jars, and lanterns; not conventional wisdom nor weapons for fighting a battle, and certainly not anything that you would imagine that it would take to defeat such a large and powerful army.
16. How many men did Gideon's army of 300 kill? (Judges 8:1-12)
 - a. ANSWER: 120,000.
17. When the enemies of Israel were defeated, Israel asked Gideon to rule over them. What was his response? (Judges 8:22-23)
 - a. ANSWER: Gideon told them that God should rule them, not him.
18. What did Israel do upon Gideon's death? (Judges 8:33-35)
 - a. ANSWER: They prostituted themselves; they went right back to worshipping Baal and forgot about Gideon and his family.

Again, so many lessons from this story can be applied in our lives today. We see that God is sovereign over all His creation; and that He can, and does, accomplish anything He desires. Nothing can defeat us, as long as God is for us – nothing. Correspondingly, we should ensure that God gets the glory, not man. So, as God works out his plan in our lives and blesses us, we should reflect His glory and not our own.

Even if we are faithful to God in small things, He will honor it in our lives. God understands our weaknesses and is willing to allow us to argue and even disagree with Him at times. And yet, His great grace and love for us is never-ending. With love He will lift us up and equip us for the task at hand. Never asking us to do anything on "blind" faith, He wants His presence with us known and felt in our lives every step of the way.

Finally, this story teaches to us that we should never feel as though God is demanding more of us than we are capable of. Whatever God calls you to do, He will be faithful to equip you and walk with you every step of the way. May He continue to richly bless you as you continue to faithfully study His Holy Word.

Yours in Christ, Wes