

Midianite Oppression (c. 1219 – c. 1212 BC)

Judges 6:1–10

The Midianite Invasion

- 1 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of Yahweh, and Yahweh gave them into the hand of the Midianites for seven years.
- 2 The hand of the Midianites prevailed over Israel; because of the presence of the Midianites, the Israelites made for themselves hiding places that *were* in the mountains, caves, and strongholds.
- 3 And whenever Israel sowed seed, the Midianites, Amalekites, and the people of *the* east would come up against them.
- 4 They would camp against them and destroy the produce of the land as far as Gaza; they left no produce in Israel, or sheep, ox, or donkey.
- 5 For they, their livestock, and their tents would come up like a great number of locusts; they and their camels could not be counted; they came into the land and devoured it.
- 6 Israel was very poor because of the presence of the Midianites, and the Israelites cried out to Yahweh.

God Sends a Prophet to Urge the People to Repent

- 7 When the Israelites cried out to Yahweh on account of the Midianites,
- 8 Yahweh sent a prophet to the Israelites, and he said to them, “Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel: ‘I brought you up from Egypt; I brought you from the house of slavery.
- 9 I delivered you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors, and drove them out from before you; and I gave you their land.
- 10 And I said to you, ‘I *am* Yahweh your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you *are* living.’ But you have not listened to my voice.”

Rest Under Gideon (c. 1212 – c. 1172 BC)

Judges 6:11–8:28

God Calls Gideon (West Manasseh)

- 6:11 The angel of Yahweh came and sat under the oak that *was* at Ophrah that belonged to Jehoash *the* Abiezrite; and Gideon his son *was* threshing wheat in the winepress to hide *it* from the Midianites.
- 12 The angel of Yahweh appeared to him and said to him, “Yahweh *is* with you, you mighty warrior.”
- 13 Gideon said to him, “Excuse me, my lord. *If* Yahweh is with us, why then has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonderful deeds that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not Yahweh bring us up from Egypt?’ But now Yahweh has forsaken us; he has given us into the palm of Midian.”
- 14 And Yahweh turned to him and said, “Go in this your strength, and you will deliver Israel from the palm of Midian. Did I not send you?”
- 15 He said to him, “Excuse me, my lord. How will I deliver Israel? Look, my clan *is* the weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the youngest in my father’s house.”
- 16 And Yahweh said to him, “But I will be with you, and you will defeat Midian as if they are one man.”
- 17 And he said to him, “Please, if I have found favor in your eyes, show me a sign that you *are* speaking with me.
- 18 Please, do not depart from here until I come *back* to you and bring out my gift and set it out before you.” And he said, “I will stay until you return.”
- 19 And Gideon went and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes *from* an ephah of flour; he put meat in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and he brought *them* to him under the oak and presented *them*.
- 20 The angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes and put *them* on this rock; pour the broth *over it*.” And he did so.
- 21 Then the angel of Yahweh reached out the tip of the staff that *was* in his hand, and he touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and fire went up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of Yahweh went from his sight.
- 22 And Gideon realized that he *was* the angel of Yahweh; and Gideon said, “Oh, my lord Yahweh! For now I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face.”
- 23 And Yahweh said to him, “Peace be with you. Do not fear; you will not die.”
- 24 And Gideon built there an altar to Yahweh, and he called it “Yahweh *is* peace.” To this day it is still in Ophrah *of the* Abiezrites.

Gideon Tears Down His Father’s Altar to Baal

- 25 Now on that same night Yahweh said to him, “Take the bull of the cattle that belongs to your father, and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it;
- 26 and build an altar to Yahweh your God on the top of this stronghold in the proper arrangement, and take a second bull and offer *it* as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you will cut down.

27 Gideon took ten men from his servants, and he did just as Yahweh told him; and because he was too afraid of his father's family and the men of the city to do *it during* the day, he did *it during* night.

28 When the men of the city got up early in the morning, look, the altar of Baal and the Asherah that *was* beside it *were* cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built.

29 And they said to one another, "Who did this thing?" So they searched and inquired, and they said, "Gideon son of Jehoash did this thing."

30 And the men of the city said to Jehoash, "Bring out your son so that he may die, for he has pulled down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah that *was* beside it."

31 But Jehoash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Will you rescue him? Whoever contends for him will be put to death by the morning. If he *is* a god, let him contend for himself because his altar has been pulled down."

32 Thus, on that day he was called Jerub-Baal, which means, "Let Baal contend against him," because he had pulled down his altar.

Gideon Prepares for Battle

33 Then all the Midianites, Amalekites, and the people of *the* east gathered together and crossed *the Jordan*; and they camped in the valley of Jezreel.

34 So the Spirit of Yahweh took possession of Gideon, and he blew on the trumpet, and *the* Abiezrites were called to follow him.

35 He sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they were also called to follow him; and he sent messengers throughout Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.

Doubt Enters Gideon's Mind

36 Then Gideon said to God, "In order to see that you will deliver Israel by my hand, just as you have said,

37 I will place a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and all of the ground *is* dry, I will know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, just as you have said."

38 And it was so. He arose early the next day and squeezed the fleece, and he wrung out dew from the fleece, a full drinking bowl of water.

39 And Gideon said to God, "Do not let your anger burn against me; let me speak once more. Please let me test once more with the fleece; let the fleece be dry, and let there be dew on the ground."

40 And God did so that night; only the fleece was dry, and dew was on all the ground.

Gideon's Army is Reduced

7:1 Then Jerub-Baal (that *is*, Gideon) rose early, and all the army that *was* with him. They were camped beside the spring of Harod; the camp of Midian was north of the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And Yahweh said to Gideon, "The troops that *are* with you *are* too many for me to give Midian into their hands; Israel will boast, saying, 'My hand has delivered me.'

3 So then, please proclaim in the hearing of the troops, saying, 'Whoever *is* fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from the Mount of Gilead.'" About twenty-two thousand troops returned, and ten thousand remained. [[Deut 20:8](#)]

4 And Yahweh said to Gideon, "There *are* still too many troops; bring them down to the water, and I will sift through them for you there. For whomever I say to you, 'This *one* will go with you,' he will go with you; and for all whom I say to you, 'This *one* will not go with you,' he will not go."

5 So he brought down the troops to the water, and Yahweh said to Gideon, "You must separate everyone who laps up the water to drink with his tongue like a dog from those who kneel."

6 The number of those lapping up *the water* with their hand to their mouth was three hundred men; all the rest of the troops kneeled to drink the water.

7 And Yahweh said to Gideon, "I will deliver you with the three hundred men lapping up *the water*; I will give Midian into your hand, so let the *other* troops go, each to his own place.

8 So they took their provisions and their trumpets into their hand, and he sent all the men of Israel, each one, to his tent; but three hundred of the men he kept; the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

Gideon is Afraid

9 And that night Yahweh said to him, "Get up; go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand.

10 But if you *are* afraid, go down to the camp with Purah your servant,

11 and you will hear what they say; and afterward you will have courage, and you will go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men that *were* in the camp.

12 Now *the* Midianites, Amalekites, and all the people of *the* east *were* lying in the valley, like a great multitude of locusts; their camels were without number, as numerous as the sand that *is* on the shore of the sea.

13 When Gideon came, a man *was* recounting a dream to his friend, and he said, "Behold, I had a dream; a round loaf of barley bread *was* tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came up to the tent, it struck it, and it fell and turned it upside down so that the tent fell."

14 His friend answered him and said, “This cannot be anything except the sword of Gideon son of Jehoash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and the entire camp into his hand.”

15 When Gideon heard the recounting of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and returned to the camp of Israel; and he said, “Get up, for Yahweh has given the camp of Midian into your hand.”

God Gives Gideon and the 300 Men Victory

16 He divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put trumpets and empty jars in everyone’s hand, with torches inside the jars.

17 And he said to them, “Watch me and do the same. When I come to the edge of the camp, do just as I do.

18 When I and all who *are* with me blow on the trumpet, you must also blow on the trumpets and surround the camp, and you must say, ‘To Yahweh and to Gideon!’”

19 So Gideon and the hundred men who *were* with him came to the edge of the camp *at* the beginning of the middle night-watch, when they had just finished setting up the guards, and they blew on the trumpets and smashed the jars that *were* in their hands.

20 When three companies blew on the trumpets and broke the jars, they held in their left hand the torches and in their right hand the trumpets for blowing, and they cried, “A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon!”

21 And each stood in his place all around the camp, and all the camp ran, and they cried out as they fled.

22a When they blew the three hundred trumpets, Yahweh set *the* sword of each one against his neighbor throughout the whole camp,

The Midianites Flee South Along the Jordan Toward Ephraimite Territory

22b and the camp fled as far as Beth Shittah toward Zererah, up to Abel Meholah, the border by Tabbath.

23 And the men of Israel were called from Naphtali, from Asher, and from all of Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.

Ephraim Captures Oreb and Zeeb

24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down to oppose Midian, and capture from them the waters up to Beth Barah and the Jordan.” He called out all the men of Ephraim, and they captured the waters up to Beth Barah and the Jordan.

25 And they captured the two commanders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, and they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and they killed Zeeb at the wine press of Zeeb, while they chased Midian; and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon from beyond the Jordan.

Ephraim Resents Being Excluded from Gideon’s Battle Plans

8:1 The men of Ephraim said to him, “What *is* this thing you have done to us, not calling us when you went to fight against the Midianites?” And they quarreled with him severely.

2 And he said to them, “What I have done now in comparison with you? Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer?”

3 God has given into your hand the commanders of Midian, Oreb, and Zeeb. What have I been able to do in comparison with you?” And their anger against him subsided when he said that.

Gideon Continues His Pursuit of the Kings of Midian

4 Then Gideon came to the Jordan, crossing it with the three hundred men who *were* with him, weary and pursuing.

Succoth and Penuel Refuse Aid (Cities in the Transjordan Tribe of Gad, cf. Josh 13:27)

5 He said to the men of Succoth, “Please give loaves of bread to the people who *are* following me, for they *are* weary, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.”

6 The officials of Succoth said, “Is the hand of Zebah and Zalmunna in your hand now, that we should give bread to your army?”

7 Gideon said, “Well then, when Yahweh gives Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will trample your flesh with the thorns and briars of the wilderness.”

8 He went from there *to* Penuel, and he spoke similarly to them; and the men of Penuel answered him just as the men of Succoth answered.

9 And he said also to the men of Penuel, saying, “When I return safely, I will tear down this tower.”

Gideon Captures the Kings of Midian

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand men remained from the entire army of the people of *the* east; those that fell *in battle were* one hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen.

11 And Gideon went up the route of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and he attacked the army when it was off its guard.

12 And Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and he routed

the entire army.

Gideon's Vengeance on Succoth and Penuel

13 Then Gideon son of Jehoash returned from the battle by way of the ascent of Heres.

14 He captured a young man from Succoth and questioned him. *The young man* listed for him the commanders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.

15 He came to the men of Succoth, and he said, "Here *is* Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me, saying, '*Is* the palm of Zebah and Zalmunna in your hand now, that we should give food to your weary men?'"

16 He took the elders of the city and *the* thorn bushes and briars of the wilderness, and he trampled the men of Succoth with them.

17 He broke down the tower of Penuel, and he killed the men of the city.

Gideon Executes Zebah and Zalmunna

18 And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What type *were* the men whom you killed at Tabor?" And they said, "They were like you; each *one of them* had the appearance of the sons of the king."

19 He said, "They *were* my brothers, the sons of my mother. As Yahweh lives, if you had kept them alive I would not kill you."

20 And he said to Jether, his firstborn, "Get up, kill them." But the boy did not draw his sword, for he was afraid because he *was* still a boy.

21 Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Get up yourself, and strike us, for as *is* the man, so *is* his power." So Gideon got up and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and he took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.

Gideon Refuses to Rule Israel

22 The men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your sons, and your sons' son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.

23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; Yahweh will rule over you."

24 And Gideon said to them, "Let me make a request of you, that each of you give to me an ornamental ring from his plunder." (They *had* ornamental rings of gold, because they *were* Ishmaelites.)

25 They said, "We will gladly give *them*," and they spread out a garment, and everyone threw there an ornamental ring of his plunder.

26 The weight of the ornamental rings of gold that he requested *was* one thousand seven hundred *shekels of* gold, apart from the crescents, pendants, and purple garments that *were* on the kings of Midian, and apart from the pendants that *were* on the necks of their camels.

27 Gideon made an ephod *out of* it, and he put it in his town in Ophrah, and all Israel prostituted *themselves* to it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

28 And Midian was subdued before the Israelites, and they did not again lift up their head, and the land rested for forty years in the days of Gideon.

Scripture quotations are from the [Lexham English Bible](#) (LEB). Copyright 2012 [Logos Bible Software](#). Lexham is a registered trademark of [Logos Bible Software](#).