

# JUDGES

Gideon: Mission Impossible



# GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6:1 The Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. So the LORD handed them over to the Midianites for seven years.

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>2</sup> The Midianites were so cruel that the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds. <sup>3</sup> Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, marauders from Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east would attack Israel, <sup>4</sup> camping in the land and destroying crops as far away as Gaza. They left the Israelites with nothing to eat, taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys.

# GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>5</sup> These enemy hordes, coming with their livestock and tents, were as thick as locusts; they arrived on droves of camels too numerous to count. And they stayed until the land was stripped bare.

<sup>6</sup> So Israel was reduced to starvation by the Midianites. Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help.

<sup>7</sup> When they cried out to the Lord because of Midian, <sup>8</sup> the Lord sent a prophet to the Israelites. He said,

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>8</sup> “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of slavery in Egypt. <sup>9</sup> I rescued you from the Egyptians and from all who oppressed you. I drove out your enemies and gave you their land. <sup>10</sup> I told you, ‘I am the LORD your God. You must not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you now live.’ But you have not listened to me.”

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>11</sup> Then the angel of the LORD came and sat beneath the great tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. <sup>12</sup> The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, “Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!”

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>13</sup> “Sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn’t they say, ‘The LORD brought us up out of Egypt’? But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites.”

# GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD turned to him and said, “Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!”

<sup>15</sup> “But Lord,” Gideon replied, “how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!”



# GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>16</sup> The LORD said to him, “I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.”

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>30</sup> “Bring out your son,” the men of the town demanded of Joash. “He must die for destroying the altar of Baal and for cutting down the Asherah pole.”

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>36</sup> Then Gideon said to God, “If you are truly going to use me to rescue Israel as you promised, <sup>37</sup> prove it to me in this way. I will put a wool fleece on the threshing floor tonight. If the fleece is wet with dew in the morning but the ground is dry, then I will know that you are going to help me rescue Israel as you promised.” <sup>38</sup> And that is just what happened. When Gideon got up early the next morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung out a whole bowlful of water.

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 6: <sup>39</sup> Then Gideon said to God, “Please don’t be angry with me, but let me make one more request. Let me use the fleece for one more test. This time let the fleece remain dry while the ground around it is wet with dew.” <sup>40</sup> So that night God did as Gideon asked. The fleece was dry in the morning, but the ground was covered with dew.

# GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 7: So Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon) and his army got up early and went as far as the spring of Harod. The armies of Midian were camped north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. <sup>2</sup> The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many warriors with you. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved themselves by their own strength. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, tell the people, ‘Whoever is timid or afraid may leave this mountain and go home.’” So 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were willing to fight.

# GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 7: <sup>4</sup> But the LORD told Gideon, “There are still too many! Bring them down to the spring, and I will test them to determine who will go with you and who will not.” <sup>5</sup> When Gideon took his warriors down to the water, the LORD told him, “Divide the men into two groups. In one group put all those who cup water in their hands and lap it up with their tongues like dogs. In the other group put all those who kneel down and drink with their mouths in the stream.”

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 7: <sup>6</sup> Only 300 of the men drank from their hands. All the others got down on their knees and drank with their mouths in the stream.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD told Gideon, “With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home.” <sup>8</sup> So Gideon collected the provisions and rams’ horns of the other warriors and sent them home. But he kept the 300 men with him.

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 7: <sup>19</sup> It was just after midnight,<sup>[c]</sup> after the changing of the guard, when Gideon and the 100 men with him reached the edge of the Midianite camp. Suddenly, they blew the rams' horns and broke their clay jars. <sup>20</sup> Then all three groups blew their horns and broke their jars. They held the blazing torches in their left hands and the horns in their right hands, and they all shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"



## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 7: <sup>21</sup> Each man stood at his position around the camp and watched as all the Midianites rushed around in a panic, shouting as they ran to escape. <sup>22</sup> When the 300 Israelites blew their rams' horns, the LORD caused the warriors in the camp to fight against each other with their swords. Those who were not killed fled to places as far away as Bethshittah near Zererah and to the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath.

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 8: <sup>10</sup> By this time Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with about 15,000 warriors—all that remained of the allied armies of the east, for 120,000 had already been killed.

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 8: <sup>22</sup> Then the Israelites said to Gideon, “Be our ruler! You and your son and your grandson will be our rulers, for you have rescued us from Midian.”

<sup>23</sup> But Gideon replied, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you!”

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 8: <sup>27</sup> Gideon made a sacred ephod from the gold and put it in Ophrah, his hometown. But soon all the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping it, and it became a trap for Gideon and his family.

<sup>28</sup> That is the story of how the people of Israel defeated Midian, which never recovered.

Throughout the rest of Gideon's lifetime—about forty years—there was peace in the land.

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 8: <sup>29</sup> Then Gideon son of Joash returned home. <sup>30</sup> He had seventy sons born to him, for he had many wives. <sup>31</sup> He also had a concubine in Shechem, who gave birth to a son, whom he named Abimelech.

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 8: <sup>32</sup> Gideon died when he was very old, and he was buried in the grave of his father, Joash, at Ophrah in the land of the clan of Abiezer.

<sup>33</sup> As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping the images of Baal, making Baal-berith their god.

## GIDEON: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



Judges 8: <sup>34</sup> They forgot the LORD their God, who had rescued them from all their enemies surrounding them. <sup>35</sup> Nor did they show any loyalty to the family of Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon), despite all the good he had done for Israel.