

foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved... EPHESIANS 1:3-6.

Now look at JUDE 1:1 *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,...* . This younger brother of Jesus, and James also wrote an epistle where some unique things are mentioned in this short book of 25 verses. Jude mentions in verse 9 of Michael the archangel contending with the devil as he disputed about the body of Moses. In verses 14 & 15 Jude writes: *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Since we don't read these statements anywhere else in scripture, where do you suppose Jude came up with this information? Consider this as you ponder an answer to this question. We read above in JOHN 1:1 & 2 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God.* We also read in ISAIAH 46:9 & 10 -- *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* And back again in JOHN 1:14 we also read above that *...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... ..full of grace and truth.* Three verses earlier John wrote: JOHN 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* With these scriptures in mind we can easily see that He who was in the beginning with God, who also knew the end from the beginning, who was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, He could have very easily revealed to His own brothers the words spoken by Enoch, and facts about Michael the archangel contending with the devil as he disputed about the body of Moses, even though at the time He made known these facts His brothers didn't believe in Him. However Jesus knowing the end from the beginning, also knew that after His resurrection His brothers would become believers, and the Holy Ghost would remind them of the words they heard from Jesus as He carried on conversations with them during His many years growing up with them. I believe that is where Jude came up with the information he wrote in his little epistle of JUDE. Thus we find a very happy ending to our story of Jesus brothers reaffirming what is said in ISAIAH 55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

Gideon

In JUDGES 6 through 8 we find the story of Gideon, who is also found mentioned as one of the hero's of faith in HEBREWS 11:32. In this story we find the children of Israel were greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, which is noted in JUDGES 6:6. The meaning of the word "impoverished" as used here means: to be brought low; to be laid low; to be low; to be made thin; to be brought very low; and to be of distress. The same Hebrew word that translates "impoverished" in JUDGES 6:6 is also found in a psalm of David; a prayer of his when he was also in a cave. PSALMS 142:6 *Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.* Such circumstance defines a dark **midnight** time. David and Gideon are left for us in scripture as two heroes of faith, who went through some very dark and trying **midnight** times in their lives, and came out Old Testament overcomers. We read why the children of Israel were greatly impoverished because of the Midianites in the introduction our next **midnight** Bible story in JUDGES 6:1-6.

JUDGES 6:1 *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. 2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. 3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites*

came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; 4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. 5 For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. 6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

The first thing to take special note of in these verses is that *...the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD*. Of course the end result of this was that they became “impoverished,” and had to live in caves, and dens, and strongholds to avoid the Midianites. The phrase “did evil” is found twenty times in scripture, and all of these scriptures are found in the Old Testament. The book of JUDGES contains seven of these “did evil” statements! The phrase “did evil in the sight of the LORD” is found thirteen times in scripture, and thirteen is the number of REBELLION. The children of Israel had a long history of being rebellious, which is noted several times in the Old Testament. We read this in Moses last speech unto the children of Israel starting in DEUTERONOMY 9:6 *Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people. 7 Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. 8 Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.* Moses goes on to say in DEUTERONOMY 9:24 *Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.* Later in DEUTERONOMY 31:27 Moses asks a question, which really is a prophetic statement: *For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?* The events of JUDGES 6 through 8 were about two hundred years after Moses spoke these words.

JUDGES 6:1 *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.* Midian means strife. Midian was the fourth son of Keturah by Abraham found first mentioned in GENESIS 25:2. Midian is found named in thirty-eight scriptures, and the number thirty-eight points to MAN LOOKING AT SOMETHING OTHER THAN GOD, which was exactly why the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. We know the number seven has two distinct meanings: SPIRITUAL PERFECTION is probably the meaning we discuss more often, but the second meaning of the number seven is SPIRITUAL COMPLETION, which references the complete work of God. In GENESIS it took seven days in God’s creation to complete a week. It takes seven notes to complete a musical scale. The book of REVELATION is full of sevens, and is a book that shows the completeness of all things. It took seven years being completely impoverished by the hand of the Midianites before the children of Israel cried unto the Lord in NUMBERS 6:6 at long last seeking His SPIRITUAL COMPLETION.

A quick side note here. We noted above that Midian is found named in thirty-eight scriptures, and the number thirty-eight points to MAN LOOKING AT SOMETHING OTHER THAN GOD. Gideon (with this spelling) is found named in thirty-seven scriptures, and we learned in our meaning of Bible numbers study that thirty-seven is the number pointing to THE WORD OF GOD! THE WORD OF GOD is another name for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as is noted in REVELATION 19:13. Gideon listened to the voice of the Lord, and heard spoken unto him THE WORD OF GOD. Ponder that thought as we proceed with this **midnight** Bible story of Gideon.

As we continue on in JUDGES 6 after learning that the Lord delivered the children of Israel into the hand of Midian seven years, we read in verse 2 *And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. 3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; 4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. 5 For they came up with their cattle and*

their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. The people of contention and strife, the Midianites, caused the children of Israel to flee to the mountains, and caves, and strongholds. The Midianites were joined by the Amalekites, who formed a confederacy with the Midianites against Israel. The Amalekites are a people who licks up, or laps up, and Sister Bodie notes that they figure those caught up with the lust of the world, and the lust of the flesh. The Midianites, and the Amalekites are joined in this confederacy by “the children of the east.” This confederacy greatly outnumbered the children of Israel, and destroyed the crops of Israel, leaving nothing for them or their sheep, oxen, and mules. Israel was left with no animals to work or worship with! All of this was a result of God’s chosen people Israel doing evil in the sight of the Lord. Verse five tells that this confederacy was innumerable, and that they had entered the land of Israel to destroy it! What do grasshoppers do? Destroy the land. Jesus said in JOHN 10:10 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* NUMBERS 6:6 *And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.* Again the meaning of the word “impoverished” as used here means: to be brought low; to be laid low; to be low; to be made thin; to be brought very low; and to be of distress. This was a dark **midnight** time in the history of the children of Israel.

We read in JUDGES 6:7 *And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites,* 8 *That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage;* 9 *And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;* 10 *And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.*

Let’s examine this portion a little closer. Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and they cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, and guess what? The Lord heard their cry, and sent an unnamed prophet unto them. This prophet is unnamed in scripture because the Holy Ghost wanted his message from the Lord noted, and not the prophet. We are to put the Lord first in our life, meaning to also put the word of the Lord first in our lives. As we also noted above His word is perfect and complete, which thought is brought out in the number seven. The prophet here in JUDGES 6:8-10 brings out seven spiritually complete points for the children of Israel to consider. Point one: *I brought you up from Egypt.* Egypt is a type of the world, and speaks of the bondage of sin in our natural state, out of which a divine voice must call us. All Christians, figuratively speaking, are delivered from Egypt the moment they accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour. Point two: *I ...brought you forth out of the house of bondage.* Point three: *I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians.* Point four: *I delivered you ...out of the hand of all that oppressed you.* Point five: *I drove ...them out from before you.* Point six: *I ...gave you their land.* And point seven: *I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.*

Note what is stated in this seventh point: *I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; ...but ye have not obeyed my voice.* The facts of ROMANS 10:17 must be engraved in the heart of all full overcomers: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* To hear the word of God means to hear the voice of God. The Holy Ghost makes the word of God come alive in our hearts. The word of God is our scripture as well as the voice of God that speaks to our heart. JOHN 17:17 says this of the word of God: *...thy word is truth.* Again JUDGES 6:10 ends with these words: *I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; ...but ye have not obeyed my voice.* Thus we see here at this point in time that the children of Israel had no faith because *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...* and if they heard the word of God, they obeyed not the voice of God. It is also interesting, and important to note that the phrases “not obeyed,” and “obeyed not” are both found ten times in scripture. Ten recall is the number having to do with RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY, meaning we have a responsibility to believe God, and in His ability,

and in turn God's responsibility is to do even the impossible! HEBREWS 11:6 informs us that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Our responsibility is to believe God, and His responsibility is to perform what He said He would do according to His infinite ability to do all things! Here in JUDGES 6:10 we find unbelief rampant in the house of Israel simply because they have not obeyed the voice of the Lord.

So to summarize these introductory verses of JUDGES 6 we find the children of Israel were greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and they cried unto the Lord in JUDGES 6:6. The Lord then sent them a prophet, who explained unto the children of Israel how it was they had got to this point in their lives where they were greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the reason they were so impoverished boiled down to the fact that they have not obeyed the voice of the Lord.

JUDGES 6:11 & 12 are key verses in this **midnight** Bible story, as our main character Gideon is introduced. JUDGES 6:11 *And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.* 12 *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* Often times in scripture we find that the angel of the Lord is none other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, which is the case here as is obvious in the dialog we find later here in JUDGES 6. Earlier in this study we found in JOSHUA 5:13-15 that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself appeared unto Joshua as the Captain of the Lord's host, who helped Joshua conquer the land of Canaan. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself will also help Gideon in this **midnight** Bible story deliver the children of Israel from the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east.

There are some other points to also take note of found in JUDGES 6:11. We find the Lord sitting under an oak tree, and the mighty oak tree is a symbol of power and strength. Ophrah on the other hand speaks of dust. Your Bible dictionary may show Ophrah to mean "fawn-like," but the likeness is as to its color, that being the color of dust. Ophrah comes from a root word that means to pulverize. When something is pulverized it basically turns to dust. In GENESIS 2:7 we find the LORD God created man out of the dust of the ground. In 1 SAMUEL 2:8 we also find that the LORD *...raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.* Joash means: Jehovah has helped, and Abiezrite means: the father of the helped. Gideon means: the cutter down. It is also noted in verse 11 that *...Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress.* Sister Bodie, who always noted types, and shadows here points out that the wheat is a figure of the word of God, and the winepress a picture of the cross of Christ. Thus we see that Gideon is representative of the few in the unbelieving world he lived in, who still believed in the word of God. Gideon was busy occupying, and preparing food. As he did so he was no doubt reflecting upon the words of the prophet, and his message, and he also was doing some serious communing with the Lord. At the same time Gideon *...threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.* Bread is made from wheat. In JOHN 6:22-59 Jesus gives His great discourse on the bread of life. Jesus says in JOHN 6:35 *...I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* Jesus continued in JOHN 6:48 *I am that bread of life.* Jesus went on to say in JOHN 6:51 *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* Gideon didn't hear these words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but as he *...threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites...* this was the kind of communing he was doing with the Lord. The Midianites would not find this food just as those who reject the Lord will not find the bread of life from heaven.

The Lord communes back unto Gideon, as we read in JUDGES 6:12 *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* If these words "the Lord is with thee" sound familiar it's because the angel Gabriel spoke these very same words unto Mary as he addressed her in LUKE 1:28. This phrase "the Lord is with thee" is

found three times in scripture, and in all three cases it marks a high water mark portion of scripture. The third scripture where the phrase “the Lord is with thee” is found is in 2 SAMUEL 7:3, which portion you can study further on your own. 2 SAMUEL 7 is where the Davidic covenant is found. Here in JUDGES 6:12 the Lord assured Gideon that *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* By this statement we see that the Lord knew Gideon to be a man of faith because *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...* as is noted in ROMANS 10:17, but at this point in time Gideon did not see himself as this mighty man of valour. It is interesting to note that the Lord here speaks ten words to Gideon. We just went over in the preceding paragraphs of these notes that ten is the number having to do with RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY, meaning we have a responsibility to believe God, and in His ability, and in turn God’s responsibility is to do even the impossible! HEBREWS 11:6 tells us that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Our responsibility is to believe God, and His responsibility is to perform what He said He would do according to His infinite ability to do all things! In this **midnight** Bible story it was the Lord who encouraged Gideon to believe Him for the impossible deliverance over the Midianites, and the Lord knew the heart of Gideon, and that he would have the faith to believe God for this deliverance.

These ten words found in JUDGES 6:12 *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour...* are divided in our King James version into two five word statements: *...The LORD is with thee...* and *...thou mighty man of valour.* Note that the LORD is mentioned first. The emphasis in all full overcomers lives is the LORD. The Apostle Paul spent his life since the day he got saved on the road to Damascus focused upon the LORD. The LORD was first and foremost in his life. Here in Sunday School we spent about two years going over HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 where Paul emphasized to us New Testament worthies of faith that in order to be a successful race course runner our focus needs to be upon *...Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* HEBREWS 12:2. Here in JUDGES 6 the angel of the LORD, who was indeed the LORD Jesus Christ Himself, announced to Gideon this very same thought as He stated *...The LORD is with thee.* As we go through this **midnight** Bible story we will see that it took Gideon some convincing that he even was indeed being visited by the angel of the LORD, so it took Gideon some time to also realize that *...The LORD is with thee.* It also took Gideon some time to realize that he was the *...mighty man of valour...* that the LORD saw him as. The LORD sees our hearts, and that is what He looks at, our heart. In REVELATION 2:23 our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ expresses the fact that He can see our hearts, and states: *...all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* Jesus here is quoting Himself from JEREMIAH 17. JEREMIAH 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* Again in 1 SAMUEL 16:7 we read: *...for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.* When the LORD looked upon Gideon’s heart, He saw the heart of an overcomer, which is why He stated *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* Also notice with these words that three times the LORD addresses Gideon calling him “thee,” “thou,” and “man.” Specifically The Lord calls Gideon *...thou mighty man of valour!* We find the phrase “mighty man of valour” four times in scripture, and “might men of valour” twenty five times in our Bible. Recall that David had thirty-seven might men found listed in 2 SAMUEL 23! Again the number thirty-seven points to THE WORD OF GOD. REVELATION 19:13 again tells us that THE WORD OF GOD is indeed Jesus, who in our **midnight** Bible story calls Gideon *...thou mighty man of valour.* Remember ISAIAH 46:9 and 10 tells us that the LORD knows and declares *...the end from the beginning...*, so even if Gideon at this time didn’t see himself as this mighty man of valour that the LORD saw him as, he still was a mighty man of valour, who at this time needed some convincing by the LORD. The depth of the word “valour” expresses: strength, might, ability, efficiency, and wealth. None of this defines Gideon per say, for Gideon himself states in JUDGES 6:15 that *...behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.* When the LORD declares Gideon to be a *...mighty man of valour...* He is

announcing to Gideon that he is a man of unlimited resources! There is no limit as to what one man with God can do, which is the whole point of the story about Gideon in the Bible. Gideon's unlimited resources were to be tapped into by faith in God. The Apostle Paul also wrote of tapping into this unlimited resource by stating in PHILIPPIANS 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*. In our **midnight** Bible story Gideon wasn't there yet, but in the eyes of the LORD he was, for again the angel of the LORD told him in JUDGES 6:12 *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour*.

Let's read a little further. JUDGES 6:13 *And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites*. Here Gideon asks two questions, and makes a statement. Carefully note the language used here by Gideon in response to the LORD. The LORD addresses Gideon personally in JUDGES 6:12 calling him "thee," "thou," and "mighty man of valour." Gideon doesn't acknowledge the reference himself alone, but rather mentions "us" six times referring to the children of Israel, who as we know from JUDGES 6:1 "did evil in the sight of the LORD," who also have not obeyed the voice of the LORD according to JUDGES 6:10. Again the LORD looks on the heart, and saw in the heart of Gideon a mighty man of valour. In Gideon's own heart the words of the LORD hadn't yet registered: *"...The LORD is with thee."* Gideon was focusing upon past events, and the LORD wants him, (and us), to move forward by faith knowing that *"...The LORD is with thee."*

Another thing to take note of here in Gideon's questioning the LORD here was his mention of all the miracles that LORD had done in delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt. Gideon himself hadn't seen any of these miracles, but had only heard of them. Gideon didn't doubt the miracles either, but in his question the LORD perceived that Gideon was, let's say, fascinated by the thought of miracles, and expected to see some miracles that would convince him that the LORD was truly with him as was announced in JUDGES 6:12. It's kind of ironic to note here that Gideon didn't view this appearance unto him by the angel of the LORD to be a miracle, yet in a sense it was. Moving forward, the LORD will meet, and exceed Gideon's expectations. It is interesting to also note that the word "miracles" Gideon used here in JUDGES 6:13 is found twenty-seven times in scripture, and twenty-seven is the number pointing to THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL. Preaching the gospel means preaching the word of God. The LORD, who was speaking to Gideon here in these verses of JUDGES 6, was the Word of God Himself, thus we find Gideon was being preached the gospel by the Word of God Himself, who had preformed all the miracles Gideon had heard about! It is interesting to also note that the Hebrew word (pala' -- number 06381 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance) that translates into "miracles" here in JUDGES 6:13, also translates into work, wonders, wonderful, wonderfully, marvelous, marvelously, and several other words that express the thought of, to be marvelous, to be wonderful, to be surpassing, and to be extraordinary. The first time "pala" is found in scripture is in GENESIS 18:14 when the LORD announces His miraculous intentions to Abraham and Sarah saying: *Is any thing too hard for the LORD?* A year later Isaac was born to Sarah, who was then 90 years old! And a personal note concerning miracles: my observation throughout scripture, and throughout life, the LORD enjoys performing miracles, and gets the biggest kick out of not doing them necessarily the same way twice. The LORD *...is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think...* according to EPHESIANS 3:20. LUKE 18:27 tells us: *...The things which are impossible with men are possible with God*. Only believe.

We read the LORD'S response to Gideon, and his questions in verse JUDGES 6:14 *And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* The first thing to notice here is that the angel of the LORD that appeared unto Gideon in verse 12 is none other than the LORD Jesus Christ Himself here in verse 14, who now looked upon Gideon. Sister Bodie wrote the following while studying this verse: "This means literally that the LORD turned His face upon Gideon, (and) let it shine, with all its warmth of love and power, down on him." {End of quoting Sister Bodie.} Recall for a moment when Jesus

appeared unto the two disciples going to Emmaus the day of His resurrection in LUKE 24. Something held their eyes from immediately seeing it was Jesus who talked with them, and went with them on their way expounding unto them all the scriptures concerning Christ Himself. We read in LUKE 24:30 *And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* Their depression, and discouragement had also vanished as soon as their eyes were opened, and knew it was Jesus who had been speaking unto them. Now think about Gideon when *...the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* Don't you suppose that Gideon's heart also burned within him as saw the LORD's penetrating eyes, and felt the powerful loving words of the LORD melt his heart?

The second thing to note here in JUDGES 6:14 is the LORD's three-part response to Gideon's questions, and comments of verse 13. In verse 13 Gideon wasn't yet focused on moving forward with the LORD, but was stuck in the present impoverished condition that he and all Israel were now living in because of the Midianites. Then in verse 14 the LORD tells Gideon: *...Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* With these words Gideon's own depression, and discouragement were about to change. The LORD's first response to Gideon was to *...Go in this thy might.* Secondly the LORD told Gideon, *...and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.* Recall also when the LORD appeared unto Moses back in EXODUS 2 & 3 that Moses had similar arguments that He was now hearing from Gideon. Moses asked the LORD in EXODUS 3:11 *Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?* The LORD's answer to Moses is recorded in EXODUS 3:12-14, where He told Moses: *Certainly I will be with thee; and... ...I have sent thee:... ...I AM THAT I AM:... ...Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* The LORD had been looking upon Gideon from the ages past, and was now appearing unto him face to face. When the LORD looked upon Gideon what did He see? Surely the LORD saw that Gideon was a man, and the LORD knew his weakness as a man. The LORD had been encouraging Gideon starting with His greeting in verse 12 *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour... ...The LORD is with thee.* Here in verse 14 the same LORD who spoke to Moses now was looking at, and speaking unto Gideon: *And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* The very same I AM THAT I AM that sent Moses forth to deliver the children of Israel out from the land of bondage in Egypt was now telling Gideon almost the very same message: *Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* Note that the LORD's third response to Gideon was actually a question. Questions are asked to make one think of the answer. The Lord had already answered this question He asks of Gideon, but Gideon had not yet learned the answer. *"...The LORD is with thee..."* Gideon, all you have to do is go in the strength that is now upholding you, My strength Gideon, and the LORD who is with thee will help you to *...save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* Gideon didn't quiet yet get it. Brother Hill used to often say: "one with God is a majority." This is the lesson The LORD is trying to teach Gideon, but like us, Gideon is slow to receive this message. Only believe.

Gideon will not save Israel from the hand of the Midianites in his own strength, not in a million years. Gideon knows this too, and asks the LORD in JUDGES 6:15 *And he said unto him, 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.* The Lord knows Gideon is the man for the job, and that his qualifications are being poor in Manasseh (causing to forget), the least in his father's house. This kind of sounds a little like David, who lived about 430 years after Gideon. David too was the least in his father's house, yet the LORD sent Samuel to anoint David king over Israel. David sang a song of deliverance so important, and profound that it is recorded twice in scripture: first in 2 SAMUEL 22, next in PSALMS 18. In this song of deliverance of David's he acknowledges where his strength came from.

Here is part of David's song, which is recorded in PSALMS 18. PSALMS 18:1 *I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.* 2 *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. ...29 For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall. 30 As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. 31 For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God? 32 It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. 33 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places. 34 He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. 35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. 36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. 37 I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. 38 I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. 39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.* It sounds like David, the least in his father's house, had learned real well the lesson that the LORD was now teaching Gideon. In JUDGES 6 Gideon had a ways to go to learn the lesson that the LORD was his strength, and that the LORD was his might that would be on display to deliver the children of Israel out of the hands of the Midianites.

The LORD continues teach Gideon the lesson he needs to learn in order to deliver Israel. Again in JUDGES 6:15 Gideon asks: *Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel?* Gideon asks, "how can I deliver Israel," and the LORD answers in verse 16 -- *And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* Here the LORD expounds upon what He has already told Gideon in JUDGES 6:12 *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* Now Gideon has been told: *...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* We read this statement in 1 SAMUEL 14:6 *...the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.* Gideon was being told by the LORD the very same thing: *...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* In other words, Gideon, one with God is a majority. Here we also see that the LORD viewed that multitude of Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east that could not be numbered as one man. Additionally the LORD saw Gideon to be stronger than this multitude because it was the LORD that was with Gideon, who had told Gideon: *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour... Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*

The Lord didn't waste His time making His various appearances unto man in scripture, and the LORD appearing unto Gideon was no exception to this fact. Each time the LORD, or the angel of the LORD appeared unto man is a high water mark portion of scripture. And in each case the over ruling power of the LORD was magnified. These appearances unto man in scripture by the LORD, or the angel of the LORD also mark turning points in the lives of the men and women who the LORD appeared unto. These events changed the course of their lives, and often had a far-reaching effect on the lives of many others, including nations. All of these points are amplified in our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon, yet it would take a little time, and a little more learning before Gideon really realized the importance of this event.

As we get to JUDGES 6:17 and 18 Gideon has heard from the LORD Himself that *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. ...Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? ...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* Then in JUDGES 6:17 & 18 Gideon asks the LORD: *And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. 18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.* Obviously Gideon had a little struggle within himself believing the words the LORD had spoken unto him, and wanted further assurance that he indeed had been sent forth by the LORD to deliver Israel. Gideon was stalling for more time with the LORD as he makes this request: *...If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my*

present, and set it before thee. Gideon here was making three requests: (1) *...If now I have found grace in thy sight,* (2) *...then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.* (3) *Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee.*

In Gideon's first request he says: *...If now I have found grace in thy sight.* Do you think Gideon already realized that he had indeed found grace in the eyes of the LORD? As he spoke these words I think Gideon did know he had found grace in the eyes of the LORD, otherwise why had the LORD appeared unto him in the first place?

In your own studies take the time to look up the phrase "have found grace," and you will find it ten times in scripture. We keep coming across the number ten in this **midnight** Bible story of Gideon, and again ten is the number having to do with RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY, meaning we have a responsibility to believe God, and in His ability, and in turn God's responsibility is to do even the impossible! Our responsibility is to believe God, and His responsibility is to perform what He said He would do according to His infinite ability to do all things! In this **midnight** Bible story it was the Lord who encouraged Gideon to believe Him for the impossible deliverance over the Midianites, and the Lord knew the heart of Gideon, and that he would have the faith to believe God for this deliverance. The phrase "I have found grace" is found eight times in scripture. The number eight has five (GRACE) meanings depending upon context: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and BRIDE. In our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon we will find a NEW BEGINNING for the children of Israel. It is interesting to also note the characters associated with the phrase "I have found grace." Jacob, who is also called Israel, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, and David, all of whom are Old Testament icons of faith mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11, spoke these words: "I have found grace." While studying the phrase "I have found grace" you will read the following account in EXODUS 33 concerning Moses, during which time assuring words were spoken unto Moses by the LORD concerning his leadership of the children of Israel. EXODUS 33:12 *And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. 16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. 17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.* In our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon we will find that Gideon truly found grace in the eyes of the LORD, and that the LORD knew him by name also. All believers in the LORD Jesus Christ as their Saviour have found grace in the eyes of the LORD, and He truly knows us all by name. He knows the very hairs on our head, and has even numbered them. {Study MATTHEW 10:30 and LUKE 12:7.} He want us all to *...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...* as is recorded in 2 PETER 3:18.

As Gideon desired a closer acquaintance with the LORD he also made this second request that the LORD *...shew me a sign that thou talkest with me...* JUDGES 6:17. Moses too was given a sign by the LORD that the LORD had indeed spoken unto him, and that sign was the rod in his hand, which became a scary serpent when Moses cast it on the ground at the request of the LORD. You can read further about this in EXODUS 4:2-9. We read in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:22 this statement made by the Apostle Paul, that famous Jewish Pharisee we were give to follow as our Apostle: *For the Jews require a sign...* . Who was the sign for here in JUDGES 6:17? The sign was for Gideon, and him alone. Gideon required a sign from God to show to Gideon in his heart that he indeed had found grace in the sight of the LORD, and that the LORD had indeed talked with him. Gideon wanted some sign from the LORD, some further proof that these words were true: *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour... thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? ...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*

The third request Gideon made unto the LORD is found in JUDGES 6:18 *Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee.* The LORD had indeed spoken unto Gideon some incredible things that we just noted. Let's note something here that will help our understanding of where Gideon was coming from in his thought process. We see this in Gideon's use of the term "the Lord." We mentioned earlier that here in JUDGES 6 the angel of the LORD was indeed the LORD Jesus Christ Himself who appeared unto Gideon. Note in your King James Version that in His discussion with Gideon the word "LORD" has all the letters capitalized. We first find the "LORD" capitalized in GENESIS 2:4, and those of you with a Scofield Bible can read his note about this stating when the "LORD" is capitalized it references JEHOVAH the proper name of the One True God. "LORD" capitalized is number 03068 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance. Gideon addresses the LORD in verse 13 not as JEHOVAH, but "my Lord" meaning as we would think of it as "sir;" in other words a reference to a man. The Hebrew word used here is adown {aw-done'}, number 0113 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance. Note that only the letter L in "Lord" here is capitalized. In JUDGES 6:15 Gideon again addresses the LORD as "my Lord" here using a different Hebrew word, 'Adonay {ad-o-noy'}, number 0136 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance. Here "my Lord" as Gideon uses it, is a respectful term acknowledging authority, but a word that also means a lord of men, not JEHOVAH LORD. Thus when Gideon makes this third request unto the LORD in JUDGES 6:18 *Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee,...* Gideon thinks he is addressing a hungry man of authority, perhaps a prophet. Jump ahead for a moment to JUDGES 6:22 and read of Gideon's "ah ha" moment: *And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD* {JEHOVAH number 03068 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance}, *Gideon said, Alas, O Lord* {'Adonay, number 0136 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance} *GOD* {03069 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance meaning: Lord JEHOVAH}! *for because I have seen an angel of the LORD* {JEHOVAH number 03068 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance} *face to face.* In other words it took Gideon up to JUDGES 6:22 before he recognized that he had indeed been visited by the LORD Jesus Christ Himself!

Let's now put Gideon's thought process together as we read again here in JUDGES 6:17 & 18 Gideon's words to the LORD, realizing that at this point in time that Gideon was still unsure of who it was that appearing unto him, a man or an angel, so Gideon makes this request: *...If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee.* Focus now upon the word "present" here. "Present" means as gift, a tribute, and comes from the Hebrew word minchah {min-khaw'}, number 04503 in the Strong's Hebrew Concordance, which most often is used in reference to a meat offering. Hold that thought for a moment as the rest of JUDGES 6:18 records the LORD's reply unto Gideon: *...And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.* Note that the LORD was very patient with Gideon, and would wait under the oak until Gideon came unto Him again with this "present." NUMBERS 14:18 reads in part: *The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression...* . We also find in 2 PETER 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* Peter learned first hand about the patience of the LORD in his life, and also wrote about *...the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing...* in 1 PETER 3:20. GENESIS 6:3 indicates that a hundred and twenty years was the ark in preparing, so that is how long the LORD was patient in the days of Noah. Yes the LORD was very patient with Noah, and with Gideon, and He is very patient with us too, and the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 some instructions for us concerning patience: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* The LORD is very patient with us, and we should be patiently waiting for His soon return!

Meanwhile here in JUDGES 6:19 we read: *And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.* It seems that Gideon in seeking a sign from the LORD here was going to prove to himself who this extraordinary person was, so in essence

Gideon prepared a meal. Recall also from JUDGES 6:4 that the Midianites “...*left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.*” This meant that Israel had no animals to work with, or worship with, and that is why in verse 11 Gideon himself was threshing wheat by himself, for he had no animals to do this work making this task easier for himself. So for Gideon to make ready a kid in verse 19 was a big deal. Furthermore in Gideon’s thinking Gideon thought if this visitor ate of Gideon’s present as of common meat, Gideon would suppose him to be a man, a prophet. If the visitor did otherwise it would be the sign Gideon needed to prove he was indeed visited by an angel of the LORD. Note here that the LORD hadn’t moved since Gideon first saw Him in verse 11 and 12 for He was still under the oak, the tree symbolic of power and strength. JUDGES 6:19 *And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.* The following verses explains what happened next: JUDGES 6:20 *And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.* Wow!!! Gideon wanted to see a miracle, Gideon wanted to see a sign, and here he did.

There are a couple of things to highlight here in JUDGES 6:20 & 21 that might be missed otherwise. This meal Gideon had prepared was received by the LORD as an offering. The LORD gave Gideon instructions as to what to do with his present, which was to lay it upon “this rock.” This Rock figures Jesus the Rock of our salvation spoken of in the Song of Moses in DEUTERONOMY 32, and in the Song of David in 2 SAMUEL 22 and PSALMS 18. Paul writes in 1 CORINTHIANS 10:4 that *...that Rock was Christ...* who followed the children of Israel in the wilderness. “This rock” will be mentioned twice in JUDGES 6, and in MATTHEW 16:18 Jesus spoke these words unto Peter about “this rock:” *And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.* “This Rock” Jesus was referencing to Peter was Jesus Christ Himself the solid foundational Rock. {Study LUKE 6:47-49.} Once Gideon’s “present” was placed upon “this rock” as he was instructed to do: *Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes...* JUDGES 6:21. We find the phrase “out of the rock” eight times in scripture. We have noted this already in this study that the number eight has five (GRACE) meanings depending upon context: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and BRIDE. In our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon we find a NEW BEGINNING for the children of Israel. Moses witnessed fire out of the midst of the bush that wasn’t consumed, and here Gideon witnessed fire out of the rock that wasn’t consumed, but the flesh and unleavened cakes were consumed as the LORD supped with Gideon. *Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight...* JUDGES 6:21. This whole scene left Gideon in awe, and no doubt shaking as is evident in the next verses.

JUDGES 6:22 *And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. 23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. 24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.* Gideon now has perceived that the LORD Jesus Christ Himself truly visited him as we discussed above. And the LORD truly now has Gideon’s undivided attention. Gideon now indeed realizes that “...*The LORD is with thee...*” as he was told in JUDGES 6:12. Gideon is now fearful for his life, thus the LORD calms him down in verse 23 saying: *...Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.* Gideon hears the voice of the LORD speaking to his heart. *Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites...* JUDGES 6:24. Jehovah-shalom in simplest terms means: Jehovah is peace. To Gideon Jehovah-shalom signified The LORD is my Peace. Recall from verse 11 that Ophrah speaks of dust, and Abiezrite means: the father of the helped. In Ophrah of the Abiezrites is where the LORD appeared unto

Gideon face to face, and where Gideon has now built this altar called Jehovah-shalom, Jehovah is peace, number 03073 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance. Gideon had now learned that Jehovah is peace as well as the LORD is with thee.

Here is what we have learned in our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon so far. Before Gideon is introduced we find it was a dark **midnight** time in the history of the children of Israel. We found in JUDGES 6:6 that *...Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.* The reason God allowed His chosen people to become greatly impoverished was because *...the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years...* as is noted in JUDGES 6:1. In JUDGES 6:7-10 we read as a result of the children of Israel crying unto the LORD that He sent an un-named prophet unto them, who laid out a seven part indictment unto them that ended with these words found in JUDGES 6:10 *...but ye have not obeyed my voice.* We noted that at this point in time the children of Israel had no faith because *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...* (ROMANS 10:17), and if they heard the word of God, they obeyed not the voice of God. Gideon is then introduced in this **midnight** Bible starting in JUDGES 6:11. The LORD Himself appears unto Gideon as the angel of the LORD in verse 12, and makes this announcement unto Gideon: *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* The HEBREW word translated "mighty" here is gibbor, {01368 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance}. Gibbor literally means champion! The LORD saw Gideon as the champion warrior he would become by faith. At this point in time in JUDGES 6:12 Gideon didn't view himself as a champion, nor was he yet convinced that "The LORD is with thee." By verse 22 Gideon is convinced that indeed "The LORD is with thee," and proclaims: *"...Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face."* Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself will also help Gideon in this **midnight** Bible story deliver the children of Israel from the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, and prove to Gideon that he was a mighty man of valour, a champion warrior.

The LORD gave us of this church age the Apostle Paul to teach us how we too could become "gibbor's," champions of faith, full overcomers! The Apostle Paul in essence taught us that the LORD is with thee too, thou mighty champion of faith. It was Paul who wrote in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* It was Paul who wrote "the LORD is with thee" using the words of HEBREWS 13:5 & 6 & 8 to say: *...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. ...8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* In other words Jesus Christ our LORD and Saviour, who visited Gideon "face-to-face" is still the same today as He was in the days of Gideon, and will remain our same LORD and Saviour for ever! It was also the Apostle Paul who wrote us potential champions of faith this encouragement from the LORD: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me...* PHILIPPIANS 4:13. It was our Apostle Paul, and champion of faith himself, who wrote us in PHILIPPIANS 3:14 to *...press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* It was Paul who wrote about sugkleronomos joint-heirs, or co-inheritors as of a wife with her husband in ROMANS 8:17 *...and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* (Sugkleronomos is number 4789 in The Strong's Greek Concordance.) It was our Apostle Paul who wrote about the champions of faith in HEBREWS 11 where he mentioned Gideon as an Old Testament hero of faith in verse 32. It was our champion of faith, the Apostle Paul who wrote those words we recently studied about in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 explaining exactly how we too could be champions of faith: *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* We need to view ourselves as champions of faith, potential full overcomers, who run this race for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus with diligence, and clearly focused upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. That is how we too can become "gibbor's," champions of faith,

full overcomers, the Lamb's wife, who hath made herself ready by yielding to the overcoming wonder working power of the Holy Ghost! When we get to JUDGES 6:34 we will find that *...the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon*. Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? {ACTS 19:2.} It takes the wonder working power of the Holy Ghost in our lives to make us full overcomers.

Before we proceed further in our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon, and see how he became this gibbor champion of faith, it would be most beneficial for us to do a quick review of what was taking place with the children of Israel in the days of Gideon, and why the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Midianites to be greatly impoverished by them. Let's start this discussion by reviewing some important facts that took place in the days of Moses as he led the children of Israel in the wilderness. Keep in mind as we go through this, that in the days of Gideon the children of Israel were still under the law of Moses. Also know that we are not under the law of Moses. JOHN 1:17 tells us: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*. The Apostle Paul further explains in ROMANS 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. We read in EXODUS 20 the ten commandments, which is the law given unto Moses for the children of Israel to follow way before the day when Jesus Christ abolished the law on the cross of Calvary. We will focus on the first two commandments God gave Moses, which is found in EXODUS 20:1-6, for these instructions were not being followed in the days of Gideon. EXODUS 20:1 *And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 *And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.* Now jump ahead to EXODUS 34:11, where we read the following: *Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: 13 But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: 14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: 15 *Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice.* Note here in EXODUS 34:13 & 14 that these altars were places of worship, and that God expected them to worship Him at these altars, not other gods!!! Just before Moses died he made a speech unto the children of Israel, which is the whole of DEUTERONOMY. Starting in DEUTERONOMY 7:1 we read: *When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know****

therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; 10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Let's also review one more portion of scripture before we get back to the days of Gideon. DEUTERONOMY 16:20 *That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.* 21 Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22 Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God hateth. The children of Israel hadn't followed these instructions, these commandments of the LORD, thus we read in JUDGES 6:1 *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.*

With this information now in mind the next verses of JUDGES 6 makes more sense. JUDGES 6:25 *And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: 26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.* Recall in the previous verses Gideon had built an altar unto the LORD called Jehovah-shalom upon "this rock," which represent Christ, which was the very same Rock from which fire consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes of Gideon's present unto the LORD in JUDGES 6:21. Now Gideon is instructed throw down Baal's altar, cut down Baal's grove, and to build ...*build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.*

Israel had a propensity throughout their history to worship Baal rather than the LORD God of Israel. They wanted to be just like the world. The Apostle John wrote in 1 JOHN 2:15 & 16 -- *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.* The Apostle Paul also expounded much on this very subject and he wrote the following in 2 CORINTHIANS 6. 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* Believers are not to be just like the world. The children of Israel were God's chosen people, and they were not to be just like the world, thus when they went off worshipping idols instead of the LORD their God they were found to do evil in the sight of the LORD. The end result in the days of Gideon was that they were greatly impoverished by the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east.

About two hundred and sixty years after the days of Gideon, Elijah the prophet came on the scene, and we read in 1 KINGS 18 the same thing was happening again, that is Israel once again worshipped Baal instead of the LORD God of Israel. We read this account in 1 KINGS 18. 1 KINGS 18:17 *And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? 18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. 19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. 20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. 21*

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. You can read the rest of that story in 1 KINGS on your own time, but the end result was that the prophets of Baal were slain, and the hearts of the children of Israel were turned back toward the LORD God of Israel, and they said in 1 KINGS 18:39 ...The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. This is the very same thing that the LORD was trying to get Israel to see again in JUDGES 6 & 7, that ...The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

Recall from JUDGES 6:1-7 that the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east came into the land of Israel as grasshoppers in number, encamped against Israel, forced the children of Israel to flee the fertile valleys, and live in the mountains in caves and strongholds. Meanwhile the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east camped in the valleys with their cattle, and camels without number with the intent to destroy the land of Israel. They left no sustenance for Israel according to JUDGES 6:4; nothing for their sheep, no oxen, nor mules, in other words Israel was left with nothing to work with, and nothing to worship with. Thus when we read in JUDGES 6:25 *And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: 26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down...* realize that Gideon didn't have that many animals to work with, or to worship with. Back in verse 11 when Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, he was doing so without the aid of animals, which normally would have been used to make this task much easier. Bottom line Gideon didn't have that many animals to work with, or to worship with, but the LORD knew his father had a seven year old bullock, which would be a PERFECT animal to worship with. That seven year old bullock would have been born about the time the Midianitish oppression began, and would be offered as a burnt-offering unto the LORD as He began to end this Midianitish oppression! But in order to worship God the altar of Baal had to be thrown down, and the grove planted by it cut down. It was because of these altars of Baal that Israel was impoverished in the first place. The evil that the children of Israel did in the sight of the LORD began by their worshipping Baal instead of God. It is also interesting to note that the phrase "throw down" is only found seven times in scripture. Again seven is the number pointing to SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION.

Recall from our earlier discussion that when the LORD first appeared unto Gideon, He said: *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* We mentioned that the HEBREW word translated "mighty" here is gibbor, which literally means champion! The LORD saw Gideon as the champion warrior he would become by faith. Now here in JUDGES 6:25 & 26 the LORD gives Gideon these specific instructions: *Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: 26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.* It was the LORD that commanded Gideon to "throw down" the altar of Baal. It was the LORD who instructed Gideon to cut down the grove that was by Baal's altar. Recall what we read earlier in DEUTERONOMY 16:21 & 22 -- *Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22 Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God hateth.* 1 JOHN 4:19 states: *We love him, because he first loved us.* Jesus put us first on the cross of Calvary where He died for our sins. He wants us to love Him back. He wants us to put Him first in everything, and in all things. He doesn't want any interference in our worshipping Him. The instructions God gave the children of Israel concerning groves of trees, or other images would be interference in their worshipping God. This takes us back to EXODUS 20 where God first gave the ten commandments unto Moses, which start out: EXODUS 20:1 *And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not*

make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. The bottom line is the LORD wants our one hundred percent attention to be upon Him; no interference. COLOSSIANS 3:17 gives us these instructions: *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* Paul adds this in COLOSSIANS 3:23 & 24 -- *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.* This speaks to being one hundred percent devoted unto the LORD Jesus Christ in all things, and in everything. After all He is the Author and Finisher of our faith that we studied about in HEBREWS 12:2. The LORD knows we have everyday lives, but our whole life is to be a life of service to God. Not a life filled with works, but rather a life filled with heart felt appreciation for all that He has done for us! So we do all we do in the name of the Lord Jesus, who is the Alpha and Omega, and the beginning and the ending, the Almighty, as well as the Author and Finisher of our faith! Of course Gideon didn't have all of these scriptures from the word of God to further encourage him, but Gideon did have the Word of God telling him to be the champion warrior he would become by faith, and the first step was to heartily complete the task that the LORD had given him to do, which was to ...*Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.* In order to complete this task Gideon would have to go against his earthly father, and follow the instructions of his heavenly Father. The LORD had told Gideon in JUDGES 6:12 *The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour...* the LORD is with you Gideon, thou art a champion, a man of valour, a man of faith. The LORD had also told Gideon in JUDGES 6:14 to ...*Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* Furthermore the LORD had encouraged Gideon in JUDGES 6:16 *Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* After some further encouragements from the LORD Gideon was then given these instructions that we just read: ...*Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.* Study these instructions and you will find five tasks that Gideon was given to do here. Five is the number pointing to GRACE, and EPHESIANS 2:5 tells us: ...*by grace ye are saved.* EPHESIANS 2:8 reads: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*

One more point to take note of before moving on. From ancient times groves have been associated with worship. One historian notes that trees were the first temples. The heathen would worship the trees, and carve images in them, and worship the images. This is why God had Moses state in DEUTERONOMY 16:21 & 22 *Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22 Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God hateth.* The old Saint Anthony's Hospital in Denver had such a grove in front of it. Some of you may have noticed it. Brother Burge went home to be with Jesus at this particular hospital, and Sue and I walked by this grove to get to our car. There was a statue in the front of this grove, and many others off to each side. I suppose it was there to give some people who don't know better the feeling of comfort. We are told in 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3 *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.* Additionally we have been given in this church age the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, who intercedes in our behalf as is noted in ROMANS 8. ROMANS 8:26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what*

we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. We are to worship God, not statues or images. Gideon was ordered to cut down the grove that was associated with idol worship.

Let's continue reading here in JUDGES 6 where we will next read our first **midnight** story concerning Gideon. JUDGES 6:27 *Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by **night**.* Note that those in Gideon's father's household were idol worshippers. Obviously Gideon's father allowed this, and had even built an altar of Baal that was on his land, thus in his possession. Sister Bodie here wrote: "No one can be used in delivering others without a judging of everything not in harmony with God in ones own home. Not a blow could Gideon strike at Midian while the altar to Baal stood in his father's house. It was these altars that were the cause of the captivity." {End of quoting Sister Bodie.} Note that Gideon feared his father's household, not his father. His father's household, and the men of the city were avid, and devout idol worshippers. No doubt they had been eyeing Gideon's father's bullock of seven years old for their own idol worship. Gideon had ten men of his own servants, men he could confide in, and men who would follow Gideon's instruction, and perhaps they were among those in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. These ten men Gideon knew would cheerfully help Gideon in this **midnight** task. And here once again we find the number ten in this **midnight** Bible story of Gideon, the number having to do with RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY, meaning we have a responsibility to believe God, and in His ability, and in turn God's responsibility is to do even the impossible! Our responsibility is to believe God, and His responsibility is to perform what He said He would do according to His infinite ability to do all things! Gideon took ten responsible men with him to complete the many tasks given him to do in this **midnight** Bible story, which were: ...*Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down...* JUDGES 6:25 & 26. This would be a full **night's** work.

Note one more thing here in verse 27, and that being this task Gideon was about to embark upon was done at **night** because Gideon **feared** those of his father's household, and the men of the city. The HEBREW word translated "**feared**" here is number 03372 in the Strong's Hebrew Concordance (yare' {yaw-ray'}), meaning: to **fear** from an apprehension of danger. This is the third time we read of **fear** or **feared** in our story of Gideon, and all three times thus far it is this same Hebrew word yare' {yaw-ray'} that is used. The LORD used His prophet to tell the children of Israel in JUDGES 6:10 ...*I am the LORD your God; **fear** not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.* The LORD Himself told Gideon in JUDGES 6:23 ...*Peace be unto thee; **fear** not: thou shalt not die.* Gideon was not **afraid** of the gods of the Amorites, Gideon was not **afraid** of dying, but because he was apprehensive of facing the men of his father's household, and the men of the city by day, he felt safer by proceeding with this task by **night** when his chance of discovery would be lessened, and his assurance of success would be the greatest. Gideon here was being proved as a man of faith, not a man who was **fearful** and **afraid** to follow the word of the LORD. Later in this **midnight** Bible story we will read how those "**fearful** and **afraid**" were sent back home, thus they couldn't become part of Gideon's mighty men, that is men of faith who God used to deliver Israel from those idol worshipping Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east. {Study JUDGES 7:3.}

So at a **midnight** hour Gideon throws down the altar of Baal, and replaces it with the altar of the LORD built upon "this rock," which figures Jesus the Rock of our salvation. PROVERBS 9:10 tells us: *The **fear** of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.* The HEBREW word translated "**fear**" in PROVERBS 9:10 is different from the

Hebrew words we discussed above. Here fear is yir'ah {yir-aw'} number 03374 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance meaning: a respectful, and reverent **fear** of God. This is the attitude of **fear** of the LORD that Gideon had that enabled him to throw down the altar of Baal. Stated another way, Gideon's **fear** of the LORD, that is his reverent respect of God, and following His will far out weighed his **fear** of his father's household. PSALMS 118:8 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*

JUDGES 6:28 *And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. 29 And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. 30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. 31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. 32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.*

In this mass of people found assembled in these verses, one is not there, Gideon. Gideon wasn't a part of these idol worshippers, and had no business attending their assembly. Also note in these verses that there is no mention of the LORD! The LORD, and the will of the LORD, was the farthest thing from the men in this crowds mind. Their focus was upon their idol. In JUDGES 6:27, 28, and 31 we find mentioned three times "the men of the city," and this phrase is found thirteen times in scripture. Thirteen is the number pointing to REBELLION. This rebellious bunch seems to have been in the habit of starting their worldly day worshipping Baal, thus we read in verse 28 *...when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built.* In verse 29 they enquired as to who had done this thing, and they quickly concluded that it was Gideon. How did they reach such a quick conclusion that it was Gideon? The scripture doesn't specifically say, but Gideon apparently already had some testimony unto them in the fact that he did not enter in with them to idolatrous worship. In other words they knew Gideon to be no friend of Baal thus Gideon became the obvious suspect. After reaching the conclusion that Gideon had destroyed the altar of Baal, thrown it down, and that he had also destroyed Baal's groves, we read in verse 30 *Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it.* Notice again that "the men of the city" did not once mention the LORD God, whom Gideon worshipped. They never once considered that their worshipping Baal was evil in the sight of the LORD, thus the reason of their great impoverishment.

Let's now focus upon Gideon's father Joash for a few moments. Recall that Joash means: Jehovah has helped. In JUDGES 6:11 he was introduced as "Joash the Abi-ezrite" and Abiezrite means: the father of the helped. Abiezer was a family in the tribe of Manasseh, and probably a rather small family at that. Gideon said in JUDGES 6:15 *...behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.* Joash was the head of this small family, thus he would be the lord, or owner of the town of Ophrah. Because of this it is thought that Joash was the chief magistrate of Ophrah, which explains why the men of the city came to Joash in JUDGES 6:28-31. You will find Joash, Gideon's father, mentioned in eight verses in JUDGES 6 through 8. One of the meanings of the number eight is NEW BEGINNING, and that is exactly what we are finding in the **midnight** Bible story of Gideon, that is a NEW BEGINNING for the children of Israel. Gideon is referenced as "the son of Joash" five times in this **midnight** Bible story showing that all in Manasseh knew who Joash was. The only words of Joash that are recorded in scripture are found in JUDGES 6:31 & 32. JUDGES 6:31 says this: *And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.* Let's think about this for a minute.

We know at this time that the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and this evil was that they worshipped Baal. How many worshipped Baal we are not told, but not all of the children worshipped Baal. Those who did not worship Baal didn't oppose those who did, and up until this point in time Joash was one who allowed Baal worship on his land. So here in verse 31 when Joash speaks to "all that stood against him," how many of the men of the city of Ophrah were opposing him? We are not given the answer here in scripture. Were all of the Abiezrites, his family, against Joash here in verse 31? Probably not. The men of the city had requested that Gideon be brought forth so that "he may die." Joash answered them: *"Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar."* Joash was asking them to consider who they were, which were the children of Israel, and why would Israelites plead for Baal? Are you going to save him? Why doesn't Baal, if he were a god, plead for himself? If Baal is a god, he knows who has done this deed, thus he should be able to avenge himself on the one who has cast down his altar. Joash, their chief magistrate then added these terrifying words: *...he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning.* We are not told if Gideon had informed his father Joash of his experience with the angel of the LORD in the preceding days, but by his actions Gideon had expressed where he stood, and Joash was now convinced of the necessity of a reformation in order to be delivered from the impoverishment of the Midianites, so he took a stand with Gideon. Joash makes one last statement recorded in JUDGES 6:32 *Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.* Joash called his son Gideon, Jerubbaal, which means: "let Baal plead." J.B. Jackson's Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names notes that Jerubbaal means: "Baal will be contended (with)," or "Baal will be taught." In JUDGES 7:1 we read again that "Jerubbaal, who is Gideon," leaving no doubt that Jerubbaal is another name for Gideon. Thirteen times in JUDGES we find the mention of Jerubbaal, and thirteen is the number pointing to REBELLION. God used Gideon to judge the REBELLION shown by the children Israel in their idol worship of Baal.

Here is a quick recap of where we are in this **midnight** Bible story of Gideon. Gideon is the fifth of the judges of Israel, who is now being introduced to the children of Israel. The Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east had plundered the children of Israel, and God allowed this to happen because the children of Israel had committed whoredom unto God by worshipping Baal. After seven years of this, the children of Israel at last cried unto the LORD, and the LORD sent them a prophet, who laid out a seven part indictment unto them that ended with these words found in JUDGES 6:10 *...but ye have not obeyed my voice.* The angel of the LORD then appeared unto Gideon, and told Gideon that he was a mighty man of valour, a champion warrior, and a hero of faith. Gideon didn't see himself like this, yet, but the LORD saw Gideon as the man he would become by faith. Gideon listened unto the angel of the LORD, who indeed was the LORD Himself, and became convinced that he did indeed see "an angel of the lord face to face." Gideon then built an altar unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom; Jehovah is peace. The LORD then instructed Gideon to throw down the altar of Baal that was his father's, the town magistrate, where the children of Israel felt comfortable worshipping Baal. Gideon took ten men of his own servants, and at a **midnight** hour destroyed Baal's altar, and Baal's grove, and built an altar unto the LORD God at the ordered place using the wood from the cut down grove of Baal to offer a burnt-sacrifice unto the One True God. This action got the attention of all those in the immediate surroundings, for the next morning they found their altar to Baal destroyed. God had used Gideon to get their attention. Both PSALMS 111:10, and PROVERBS 9:10 start out the same way: *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.* The LORD in JUDGES 6:14 had told Gideon to *...Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?* The LORD added this assurance saying unto Gideon in JUDGES 6:16 *Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* The altar of Baal had to be thrown down before any further progress could be made in delivering Israel from the impoverishing hand of the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east. Sister Bodie in her study on JUDGES inserts the following: "What is an altar

of Baal to us? What does that figure?" She answers: "Any other dependency than the Lord; any other prop upon which we lean is an idol; and we burn incense, and worship at this shrine, according to God's verdict. It matters not whether these are persons or things, if they are more real and substantial to us than God, they are idols, and we are Baal-worshippers. Whenever we look to money, influence, numbers, family or friends for help in the time of trouble, sorrow or poverty instead of God, we have another idol. The psalmist said, *"My help cometh from the LORD;"* and he refused to worship Baal. And no one can be a true deliverer of the people of God until he has cast down every idol, and depends absolutely upon God. This is the reason there are so few Gideon's." {End of quoting Sister Bodie.} This assessment by Sister Bodie may seem a little harsh, or perhaps a little cold, but also remember what our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ said unto the church of Ephesus in REVELATION 2:4 *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* Something prevents the high class Ephesian Saints from having God's best. Something other than the Lord took over first place in their lives. They put something as a greater priority, and a greater value than winning Christ a bridegroom. And we can add in the same tone as Sister Bodie that this is the reason there is only going to be a small rib portion rib portion of believers from this church age will qualify as this spiritually mature woman who has made herself ready as the Lamb's wife! When we put the Lord first in our life in all things, and in every thing, then are we on the correct course to having God's best. Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Paul later also noted in PHILIPPIANS that he wasn't there yet as he writes the following words in chapter 3 of PHILIPPIANS: 12 *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* 13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,* 14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* We know Paul continued to put the Lord first in his life, and when his race was over he knew it, and wrote in 2 TIMOTHY 4:6 *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* 7 *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:* 8 *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* From the day he got saved on the road to Damascus, until the day the Lord took him home, Paul put Christ Jesus the Lord first in his life, and GALATIANS 2:20 was the theme of his life: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Back to our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon, Gideon became a hero of faith by putting God first, and following the instructions of the LORD by faith. Throwing down the altar of Baal put Gideon on the course of success, and began to change everything for the good of Israel in this **midnight** Bible story. There is one more thing that isn't readily apparent at this point in our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon, and this goes back to the whole point of studying these **midnight** Bible stories in the first place. We are studying these **midnight** Bible stories because the darkest of times brings forth the hero's of faith. The **midnight** Bible stories gets right to the point of what it takes to be a full overcomer. New Testament full overcomers, who followed Paul as he followed Christ, will be the Bride of Christ. The Bride of Christ will be a worthy of faith; a New Testament hero of faith, who allowed the Holy Ghost to guide and direct their lives into that deepest relationship with Christ. Those in the Bride of Christ will be led through many **midnight** times in their lives, and will come out the other side full overcomers, and they do so by faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God according to HEBREWS 11:6, which goes on to say: *for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Hero's of faith, Old Testament or New Testament know the facts of ROMANS 10:17, which comes up again and again in our **midnight** Bible stories study, and ROMANS 10:17 says: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Gideon heard the LORD say unto him: *Take thy father's young bullock,*

even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down... JUDGES 6:25 & 26. Gideon did this at a **midnight** hour in JUDGES 6:27, and because of Gideon's following the LORD's instructions he became famous, and he became known right away. Gideon's becoming famous because of his throwing down Baal's altar then must be noted even though it may not yet seem readily apparent at this point in our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon. Gideon was given a name change by his father Joash where he is also called Jerubbaal starting in JUDGES 6:32, which name is used in reference to Gideon thirteen times in JUDGES, and again thirteen is the number pointing to REBELLION. God used Gideon to judge the REBELLION shown by the children Israel in their idol worship of Baal. Recall that Jerubbaal means: "let Baal plead," "Baal will be contended (with)," or "Baal will be taught." So note in your thinking that Gideon, who is now also called Jerubbaal, now was brought to the forefront, and became famous at this point in time for throwing down the altar of Baal.

JUDGES 6:33 *Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.* It was the time of harvest, which is why Gideon threshed wheat by hand in JUDGES 6:11. The Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were once again joined in a confederacy against Israel, and essentially plundered the fertile valley of Jezreel. Jezreel means: God sows. It was here God was sowing a victory for Gideon, and the children of Israel over the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east. The phrase "gathered together" here means that Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east joined forces, and they were doing so now in a more hostile fashion since Gideon had destroyed the altar of Baal. The very presence of the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east joining forces must have been very intimidating, and overwhelming to the children of Israel. Obviously it was a dark **midnight** time for the children of Israel, and according to JUDGES 6:1 it had been this way for seven years under the hand of Midian. JUDGES 6:5 tells us that the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east had entered into the land of Israel to destroy it! JUDGES 6:6 states that Israel was in fact greatly impoverished because of them. This was a very grim situation that Israel now faced. They needed to hear, and believe the words that would be spoken centuries later in 2 CHRONICLES 20:15 *...Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.*

There are forty-four "**but God**" statements in scripture. Here is a few of them. We will start with one of the best ones found in ROMANS 5:8 ***But God** commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* ACTS 13:30 ***But God** raised him from the dead.* EPHESIANS 2:4 ***But God**, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 ***But** as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 **But God** hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* The Psalmist wrote in PSALMS 73:26 *My flesh and my heart faileth: **but God** is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* In PSALMS 75:6 & 7 we read: *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. 7 **But God** is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* And one more from PROVERBS 21:12 *The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: **but God** overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.* None of us would be here, **but God** had a better plan for us. We face many **midnight** impossible situations, **but God** takes us through them all. Remember the scripture that started us down this line of thinking was 2 CHRONICLES 20:15, and it ended with these words*

...for the battle is not yours, **but God's**. The "**but God**" statements we referenced in this section are turning points.

We read a little different "**but God**" statement in JUDGES 6:34, which is a turning point in our **midnight** Bible story of Gideon. JUDGES 6:34 *But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him.* Recall a few verses back in JUDGES 6:15 Gideon had told the LORD: ...*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.* Gideon knew he couldn't save Israel by himself, and the LORD didn't expect him to either. When the LORD first appeared unto Gideon in JUDGES 6:11 & 12 as an angel of the LORD, the first words He spoke to Gideon were: *The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* It took a little while for these words to properly register in Gideon's heart: *The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* What the LORD was telling Gideon was that the LORD is with you Gideon, and you are a champion of unlimited resources! The unlimited resources Gideon had were only available to him by faith, and by believing ... *The LORD is with thee.* Again the LORD told Gideon in JUDGES 6:16 ...*Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* Between JUDGES 6:16 and JUDGES 6:34 Gideon had learned that the LORD was indeed with him, and that he could put his faith in the LORD. Now we read that ...*the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon,...* . The phrase "the Spirit of the LORD" references the Holy Spirit, and is found in twenty-six Old Testament scripture. Twenty-six is the number associated with THE GOSPEL, or the GOOD NEWS of THE GOSPEL. ISAIAH 59:19 in part reads: ...*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.* The LORD indeed was with Gideon, and would help Gideon smite the Midianites as one man, but it would take the power of the Holy Spirit to enable Gideon to do this. The Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon inspiring him, and enabling him to blow a trumpet. Recall from our HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 study that we noted how the Old Testament worthies of faith were not given the gift of the Holy Ghost like the New Testament full overcomers have been given. We know from 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 that ...*All scripture is given by inspiration of God,...* and the agency of the triune Godhead that inspired all scripture is the Holy Spirit. 2 PETER 1:21 explains: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* The Holy Ghost dwelt with the Old Testament worthies of faith too, but the Holy Ghost wasn't give to dwell in believers until the day of Pentecost, and then, He the Holy Ghost was given only to the believers who would receive Him as a distinct separate gift sent from God, whose sign and evidence was speaking in other tongues as noted in ACTS 2:4, ACTS 10:46, and ACTS 19:6. We also see, as in our text here in JUDGES 6:34, that at certain times the Spirit of the LORD came upon some in Old Testament times, as was the case here for Gideon: *But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon;...* .

JUDGES 6:34 *But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him.* Proof that Gideon was becoming famous is found in this verse. Gideon had told the LORD back in JUDGES 6:15 that ...*I am the least in my father's house.* Not now, for Abi-ezer, a family in the tribe of Manasseh, was now gathered unto Gideon. It was the blast of Gideon's **trumpet** that drew them unto him. This was one of the purposes of a **trumpet** in the history of Israel, which was to call to assembly. We find the first mention of a trumpet in EXODUS 19.

EXODUS 19:1 *In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all*

*these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. 10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. 12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the **trumpet** soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. 14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives. 16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the **trumpet** exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the **trumpet** sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.*

Here in EXODUS 19 the **trumpet** was the voice of God, and was used to call the children of Israel into assembly. In EXODUS 20 the law was given, and this was the purpose of the assembly, so that all of Israel would hear the law of Moses. Now let's read from NUMBERS 10 further instructions concerning **trumpets**. And these are instructions given to Moses for the children of Israel to remember, and follow. NUMBERS 10:1 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Make thee two **trumpets** of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. 3 And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 4 And if they blow but with one **trumpet**, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. 5 When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. 6 When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. 7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. 8 And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the **trumpets**; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. 9 And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the **trumpets**; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. 10 Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the **trumpets** over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.*

So we see the function of a **trumpet**, or **trumpets** in the history of the children of Israel was three fold: (1) one purpose was for calling to assembly; (2) another purpose was to blow an alarm for journeying, or for war; (3) the third purpose was using the **trumpet** as a form of worship. There are three different Hebrew words that translate into **trumpet**, or **trumpets**. In NUMBERS 10 we found the silver **trumpets**, and these are called khats-o-tser-aw' number 02689 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance. In EXODUS 19:13 the Hebrew word translated **trumpet** is yo-bale' number 03104 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance, which is more commonly translated "ram's horn." The third Hebrew word translated **trumpet** is sho-far' number 07782 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance, and it too references the ram's horn, and also the cornet. The sho-far' ram's horn is what Gideon blew calling his family to assembly. JUDGES 6:34 *But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a **trumpet**; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him.*

Let's bring this down to us. The **trumpets** speak of telling the truth. Jesus said in JOHN 14:6 *...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 4:21 that *...the truth is in Jesus.* Paul also wrote a little about **trumpets** so that we would be listening for the **trump** of God. 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13 *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.* The **trumpet** of God will call us to assembly, will call us to meet the Lord in the air, are you listening for this shout, this voice of the archangel, and this **trump** God?

JUDGES 6:35 *And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. 36 And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, 37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. 38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. 39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.*

We see in these verse that Gideon was becoming well known in Israel, and had collected quite an assembly, and they were looking unto Gideon for leadership. JUDGES 7:3 tells us that the number that was gathered after Gideon was 32,000, an over whelming number of men for Gideon to deal with without full assurance of faith in the LORD! The Spirit of the LORD had come upon Gideon in verse 34 to empower him for this leadership roll he had been given by the LORD. Recall also that we learned in JUDGES 6:15 Gideon was the least in his father's house. So we must take note that Gideon, at this present time, had to be somewhat uncomfortable in this leadership roll he had be give by the LORD. Gideon didn't question that the LORD was able to deliver Israel, but Gideon questioned himself as really being God's instrument for this purpose. Gideon didn't doubt the word of the LORD either, but he need further assurance that *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour, ...and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man...* as the LORD had previously told him in JUDGES 6:12 & 16. When Gideon says in verse 39 "let me prove," it was a test to prove to himself that it was indeed the good pleasure of God's will for Gideon to save Israel by his hand.

Here's a thought to ponder as we study Gideon being faced with the responsibility the LORD had given him of being a mighty man of valour. Gideon didn't quite yet see himself in this leadership roll that the LORD had given him. The LORD prepares us, as potential full overcomers of faith, to face the things, and events in our life He has foreordained on our racecourse! We are to live by faith, and that is why the Apostle Paul wrote: *...the just shall live by faith...*, and he repeated this statement three times: ROMANS 1:17, GALATIANS 3:11 and HEBREWS 10:38. Overcoming faith doesn't come all at once, but as we have so often repeated *...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...* ROMANS 10:17. The world we live in is quite different than the world Abraham lived in, or that David lived in, or that Gideon lived in, or that Paul lived in, or that George Washington Carver lived in, or that Brother Copley lived in, though we all live in the same world. My dad, who went home to be with the LORD in 1983, wouldn't totally understand the world we live in today, for back then we didn't have cell phones, personal computers, remote controls, GPS, Google, Apple, face book, the internet, and the list goes on, and on. But Jesus Christ is the same

yesterday, today, and for ever according to HEBREWS 13:8, and even though the world we live in today may be a whole lot different than it was back when, the LORD prepares us, as potential full overcomers of faith, to face the things, and events in our life He has foreordained on our racecourse in the present evil world we live in! Full overcoming faith doesn't happen all at once, it requires patience! Our Apostle Paul wrote in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2: *...let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...* . Again in PHILIPPIANS 1:29 Paul wrote: *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* Stated another way, the LORD created the world we live in, so He knows what it is like, and what obstacles, and enemies we will face, but we are also to remember the words of 2 CHRONICLES 20:15 *...for the battle is not yours, but God's.* We are to also follow the Godly wisdom found in PROVERBS 3:5 & 6 -- *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* That word "trust" is the Old Testament equivalent of "faith." Simply stated we are to put our faith, our hope, and our trust in the One who has gone before, and prepared the path that we are to follow by faith. PSALMS 37:23 states: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.* So we see that there are steps ordered by the LORD; little steps of faith, one step at a time, that takes us that place where we become full overcomers. It is our responsibility to believe God, and trust in the leading of the Holy Ghost to *...Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ...* HEBREWS 13:21. PSALMS 103:14 tells us: *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.* In other words we are fragile, and God knows just how fragile we are. And *...if God be for us, who can be against us?* {ROMANS 8:31.} The LORD wants us to succeed, and to be full overcomers. What did the lord tell Joshua back in JOSHUA 1:9 *Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* The Holy Ghost also inspired our Apostle Paul to write in EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* These are the secrets of the mighty men of valour, champions of faith.

Now back to Gideon one of our Old Testament worthies of faith spoken of in HEBREWS 11. JUDGES 6:36 through 40 shows that Gideon wasn't quite there yet, but he was now walking with the LORD, and made two giant steps of faith in these verses. Two is the number of SUFFICIENT WITNESS, or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, and that is just what Gideon was requesting, that is SUFFICIENT WITNESS from the LORD that he was God's instrument for saving Israel. Gideon made two requests in JUDGES 6:36-40, a wet fleece, and a dry fleece. JUDGES 6:36 *And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, 37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. 38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. 39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.* Note that God answered Gideon two requests no further questions asked, simply "it was so." We read these words of Jesus in LUKE 11:9 *...Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* Again Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 4:6 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* Gideon didn't know these scriptures because they weren't yet written, but Gideon did make his requests known unto God, and God answered Gideon's petitions. Gideon now had the proof he need to proceed in this leadership roll he had been given by the LORD. Gideon also had the sufficient witness he requested that he would indeed *...save Israel from the hand of the Midianites...* as the LORD told him back in JUDGES 6:14. Please note that Gideon hadn't yet saved Israel from the hand of the Midianites, but he now knew by faith that he would!

Before we proceed into chapter 7 of JUDGES, let take a moment to reflect on what we have learned about Gideon so far in this **midnight** Bible story. We could say that Gideon was a bit of a loner for it seems he has no close friends. He comes from a poor family, and he said himself in JUDGES 6:15 that he was the least in his fathers house. Gideon wasn't afraid to work, and when we first met him he was threshing wheat by hand, and no one was there helping him. Gideon was also a worshipper, and had made two altars for worshiping the LORD in JUDGES 6. Gideon listened to the voice of the LORD, and had followed the instructions of the LORD in tearing down the altar of Baal. This action had brought Gideon some fame, but more in the negative sense in that the men of the city wanted to kill him for tearing down Baal's altar. Gideon didn't seek popularity or fame, yet the LORD chose this humble man to reveal Himself unto, and highlight Gideon as one of the Old Testament hero's of faith. The LORD, who knows the end from the beginning, introduced Himself to Gideon with these words in JUDGES 6:12 *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour,...* and went on to tell Gideon in verse 16 *...and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* Gideon's first assignment by the LORD was tearing Baal's altar down, and replacing it with an altar unto the LORD. Because of his actions Gideon's father changed Gideon's name to Jerubbaal, which again means: "let Baal plead," "Baal will be contended (with)," or "Baal will be taught." But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, which is the Holy Spirit, and enabled Gideon to blow a trumpet with such volume that all of Abi-ezer was gathered after Gideon. They listened to Gideon as he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and the end result was 32,000 men were gathered unto this loner Gideon! Gideon was certainly out of his loner comfort zone at this point in time, so Gideon asked God for two signs that he indeed was going to be used of God to save Israel, and smite the Midianites as one man. God graciously answered Gideon's requests, which bring us to chapter 7.

As we begin looking into JUDGES 7 let's pause for a moment, and consider what it takes to be a full overcoming worthy of faith. The Old Testament worthies of faith achieved such an eternal status not because of their good looks, or their place in society, or their physical abilities, or their financial condition, or their lot in life, or their popularity, or their lack there of, but because they believed God, and were noted to have lived by faith! And not all of the Old Testament worthies of faith were listed by name in HEBREWS 11 either. If HEBREWS 11 were to contain all of the names of the hero's of faith from Old Testament times, HEBREWS 11 would be as thick as a large book! Paul even notes this in HEBREWS 11 by stating that time would fail him to tell of the entire Old Testament hero's of faith. But they all did have one thing in common, and that is they lived by faith, and believed God, and believed that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. We of this yet present church age are blessed to know that there will be a relatively small group of Saints from this church age, who will likewise be known as New Testament worthies of faith, and it will be this group of Saints, who followed Paul as he followed Christ, that will be in the Bride of Christ! And Paul did mention Gideon by name in HEBREWS 11:32 as one whose life was left for us in Old Testament scripture to study of how it was he became a worthy of faith! JUDGES 6, 7, and 8 tell this story. The **midnight** Bible story found in JUDGES 7 put Gideon in HEBREWS 11.

JUDGES 7:1 *Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.* The well of Harod means the well of "trembling." It pictures the condition of the majority of those who answered the call of Gideon, who were fearful and afraid. JUDGES 7:2 *And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. 3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.*

Why was it that Gideon had attracted thirty-two thousand men in the first place? In JUDGES 6 we learned that the children of Israel had been greatly impoverished by the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east for seven years! And in JUDGES 6:6 at long last they cried

unto the LORD. And the LORD sent them a prophet, who presented them a seven point spiritually complete indictment explaining why they were in this exceeding impoverished condition, and the prophets' last words of the LORD were *...but ye have not obeyed my voice...* JUDGES 6:10. They didn't have ears to hear the word of the LORD, so the LORD made an appearance unto Gideon, and Gideon did hear the words of the LORD. And by the end of that day Gideon followed the instructions of the LORD. Gideon had an ear to hear what the LORD said, and a willingness to do what the LORD instructed him to do. Within the week the Spirit of the LORD had come upon Gideon, and he became the mouthpiece of the LORD, who called to assembly this thirty-two thousand-man rag tag group from the children of Israel. By the time of JUDGES 7:3 these thirty-two thousand men would listen to Gideon, so that he could *...proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead.* These thirty-two thousand men were too many according to the word of the LORD, so those who were fearful and afraid were sent home. It was the word of the LORD who spoke to Gideon, and the Spirit of the LORD enabled Gideon to pass on the LORD's instructions. By the end of verse 3 two thirds of Gideon's army left, but Gideon wasn't concerned for the LORD had already told him in verse 2 saying: *...The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.* We see here that God isn't interested in numbers, for one with God is a majority. Remember what the LORD told Gideon in JUDGES 6:16? *...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*

JUDGES 7:4 *And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.* We have shown already that Gideon didn't really know how to deal with this many men, but the LORD did, and all Gideon had to do was following the instructions, and leading of the LORD. This is what made Gideon a mighty man of valour, a champion of faith! Old Testament worthy of faith Gideon followed the word of the LORD, as do all full overcomers. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of the LORD; by the word of God... ROMANS 10:17. Note that **the LORD said unto Gideon** in JUDGES 7:2, 4, 5 and 7, and that is how Gideon was able to lead these men the LORD had sent unto him! It was the LORD who separated those who would follow Gideon from those who wouldn't. What did the LORD use to separate those who would follow Gideon from those who wouldn't? Water. Water in scripture often pictures the word of God. The Word of God according to REVELATION 19:13 is Jesus. In the last part of JEREMIAH 17:13 we read: *...the LORD, the fountain of living waters.* JEREMIAH 2:13 tells us that the LORD is *...the fountain of living waters,* and JOHN 7:38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* This church we attend is called Living Waters Tabernacle for the very same reason, which is to proclaim in all its fulness the Word of God! Here in JUDGES 7:4 we find the phrase "I say unto thee" twice. When the LORD says "I say unto thee" it is the The Word of God who is speaking. This phrase "I say unto thee" is found in nineteen verses of scripture. Nineteen is the number of FAITH. This phrase "I say unto thee" is found in nineteen verses in the Bible, and in JUDGES 7:4 it is found twice making a total of twenty times we read these words in scripture: "I say unto thee." Twenty is the number of REDEMPTION, and ROMANS 3:24 tells us that we are *...justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...* who again is The Word of God. COLOSSIANS 1:14 goes on to state: *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.* The theme of The Word of God comes up over and over again in all our studies because The Word of God is Jesus; the word of the LORD is Jesus; the word of His salvation is Jesus; the word of the Lord Jesus is Jesus; the word of truth is Jesus; the word of life is Jesus! Jesus is the Word. He was in the beginning with God JOHN 1:2 tells us, and the Word was God JOHN 1:1.

The reason the LORD instructed Gideon to bring the remaining ten thousand men down to the water was to "try them." The word "try" here in Hebrew is tsaraph {tsaw-raf}, number 06884 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance, which here means to test, and prove true. This same Hebrew

word is a whole Bible study in itself. Look how tsaraph {tsaw-raf} is used in scripture. 2 SAMUEL 22:31 *As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.* PSALMS 17:3 *Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.* PSALMS 18:30 *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.* PSALMS 26:2 *Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.* PSALMS 105:19 *Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.* By now we should see that the Word of the LORD is used to test, and prove true those that will live by faith, and trust God. But wait, there is more to this word tsaraph {tsaw-raf}, for it also speaks of refining, which is the process by which gold and silver are made pure. PSALMS 12:6 *The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.* PSALMS 66:10 *For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.* PSALMS 119:140 *Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.* PROVERBS 30:5 *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.* Thirty plus times we find this word tsaraph {tsaw-raf} (number 06884 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance) in scripture, so you can look these up on your own. The last two times where tsaraph {tsaw-raf} is used in scripture is in MALACHI 3, which will put an exclamation point on this thought of to "try them." MALACHI 3:2 *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:* 3 *And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.* I imagine most of you are familiar with the story of the silver refiner, but if not, here it is:

The Story of the Silver Refiner

"There was a group of women in a Bible study on the book of MALACHI. As they were studying chapter 3, they came across verse 3, which says: "*he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.*" This verse puzzled the women, and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study."

"That week this woman called up a silver smith, and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest in silver beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver."

"As she watched the silver smith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot -- then she thought again about the verse, that he sits a refiner and purifier of silver. She asked the silver smith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he has to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed."

"The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silver smith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy -- when I see my image in it."

JUDGES 7:4 *And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.* Note it was the LORD who proved with a test those whom He would choose to go with Gideon unto the battle. Note also that this was the second test the LORD had prepared to as a sufficient testimony unto Gideon to prove who would be the ones to follow Gideon into this conflict with the Midianites. The test that the LORD had prepared is explained in

JUDGES 7:5 & 6. JUDGES 7:5 *So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.* The results of who passed this test of the LORD is found in JUDGES 7:7 *And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.*

Three hundred men passed the LORD's test. Three hundred out of thirty-two thousand! Less than one percent. This further proves that God isn't interested in numbers. The LORD was interested in those that would follow Him, and Gideon was His mouthpiece at this time. The LORD has now told Gideon the following: *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour... ...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man... ...By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand.* Gideon's three hundred men are mentioned as "three hundred men" five times in this **midnight** Bible story. This shows us once again by GRACE are ye saved, for with this three hundred God will save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. We will learn a lot from Gideon's three hundred men as we progress with this study.

A quick mention needs to be made at this point of our study that the number three hundred is the number that points to a WARRIOR, or WARRIORS, and this too defines Gideon's three hundred. Enoch was a WARRIOR of faith found mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11:5, and his testimony was that he pleased God. Without faith it is impossible to please God HEBREWS 11:6 tells us. Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became fruitful and begat Methuselah GENESIS 5:22 tells us. After three hundred years of walking with the LORD Enoch was translated! WARRIOR Enoch was one of the earliest Old Testament full overcomers, and he let the LORD fight his battles for three hundred years! Gideon's WARRIOR'S will let the LORD fight their **midnight** battle too!

JUDGES 7:8 *So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.* Our King James version here lacks some clarity, so let's look at an expounded translation of this verse. JUDGES 7:8 *So Gideon took provisions, and trumpets, and pitchers from the people, for the three hundred men that the LORD chose, and sent all the rest of the Israelites back to their own dwelling places keeping only the three hundred men prepared to give battle: and the camp of the Midianites lay below in the valley. In between verse 8, and verse 9 Gideon got acquainted a little bit with the three hundred men to LORD had chose while awaiting divine orders from the LORD.*

JUDGES 7:9 *And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.* The LORD has now told Gideon the following: *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour... ...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man... ...By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand... ...Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.*

Before we read verses 10 and 11 recall all the questions Gideon asked the LORD back in JUDGES 6:13-17 where Gideon asked for a sign, and miracles. The LORD had already given Gideon at least three signs that He indeed was with Gideon, and directing Gideon, but the LORD also knew Gideon's heart, and that he needed another boost. Recall the verse we read above in PSALMS 103:14 *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.* God knew just how fragile Gideon was, and that another sign was in order at this present **midnight** hour to further encourage Gideon. So we read what else the LORD told Gideon at this time in JUDGES 7:10 & 11 -- *But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: 11 And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host.* Think about this for a moment as if you were Gideon. You now have a three hundred-man army, and you are facing an

innumerable multitude. Do you think you would have a little apprehension? No doubt we all would like a little further encouragement here from the LORD. Gideon was no different, and the LORD knew Gideon would follow His instructions, so He encouraged Gideon to go spy upon the Midianite camp with his servant Phurah. Their mission was simple, to hear what they say. These two, Gideon and Phurah, would then have sufficient witness of what the Midianites were talking about, and the LORD knew that *...afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host*. Strengthened here means to be encouraged. The thought here is the same as is found in EPHESIANS 6:10 where Paul writes to us: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. It's the very same encouragement the LORD gave unto Joshua several times, and one place we have read this before is in JOSHUA 1:9 *Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest*. This is the same encouragement our Apostle Paul gave us in the words we have read before in HEBREWS 13:5 & 6 & 8 *...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. ...8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*.

This **midnight** Bible story continues at a **midnight** hour when Gideon and Phurah under the cover of darkness sneak down to the edge of the Midianite camp. JUDGES 7:11 *...Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. 12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. 13 And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along*. Barley-bread was deemed the poorest food, a provision of slaves. This insignificance loaf of despised provision was the simplest kind of food, and a picture of the simplest portion of The Word of God that was quite capable of overturning the tents of strife occupied by the people of contention and strife, the Midianites. Guess how many times you find the word "barley" in scripture? Thirty-seven the number for THE WORD OF GOD! It was by five barley loaves, and two small fishes that Jesus, the Word of God Himself, fed the multitude in JOHN 6:1-14. It was by Gideon's following the word of the LORD that the Midianites would be defeated. In JUDGES 7:14 we find the interpretation of this Midianitesh dream. JUDGES 7:14 *And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host*. God had given both the dream, and the interpretation of the dream to these two Midianites, and allowed Gideon and Phurah to hear what they said, which was the encouragement Gideon was told he would be given of God! There is no other way to explain this than to say God ordained this event for Gideon! These Midianites couldn't have picked Gideon out of a line-up of two people. They didn't even know who Gideon was. They wouldn't have known who Joash was either, but The LORD knew who Gideon was, and the LORD knew what was ahead that **midnight** for Gideon.

And ponder this for a moment: did Gideon have a sword? We haven't read of a literal "sword" in association with Gideon so far have we? And probably every man in that day had a sword, or dagger of some sort, but it wasn't by a sword that Gideon would conquer the Midianites. And wait till you see the weapons Gideon, and his three hundred men were instructed to use by the LORD. And since we are doing some thinking here about the "sword of Gideon," what was it? The sword of Gideon we will find is the sword of the LORD. The sword of the LORD is indeed the word of God. It was by the word of God that Gideon conquered the Midianites, who were without number on this particular **midnight**. The sword of the LORD is a whole Bible study in itself, but let's look at a couple of verses. One scripture that should be most familiar to you is HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. In REVELATION 1:16 we read this description of Jesus, who is The Word

of God: *And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.* One more portion of Old Testament scripture then we will move on: PSALMS 149:1 *Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.* 2 *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.* 3 *Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.* 4 *For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.* 5 *Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.* 6 *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;* 7 *To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;* 8 *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;* 9 *To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.*

JUDGES 7:15 *And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.* There are several points to take note of in this verse. First Gideon had followed the instructions, and encouragement of the LORD to go down to the edge of the Midianites camp to hear what they were talking about. Gideon was a good listener having first listened unto the voice of the LORD. Now the LORD caused Gideon and his servant to hear the Midianites talking about how God had delivered Midian into Gideon's hand. Gideon now was confident he would be victorious just as God told him he would be. Second, when Gideon heard the interpretation of the dream, he worshipped. Gideon was a worshipper, and that is how he showed his thankfulness for what the LORD was doing in his life. Gideon had built an altar unto the LORD in JUDGES 6:24 to offer praise and worship, and express thankfulness for what the LORD had shown him up to that point in his life. After tearing down Baal's altar, Gideon again built another altar unto the LORD, and worshipped there at that same place as the LORD had instructed him back in JUDGES 6:25-28. Gideon was a worshipper, and that is one reason the LORD had chosen him to deliver Israel from the hand of the Midianites at this point in time. Because Gideon listened to the voice of the LORD, and because Gideon was a thankful worshipper, who realized the work the LORD was doing in his life, the LORD made him a leader. Once again the LORD had already told Gideon: *...The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour... ...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man... ...By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand... ...Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.* The Spirit of the LORD had come upon Gideon, and enabled him to gather these three hundred God chosen men. This brings us to the third point of note expressed in JUDGES 7:15, and that is the LORD had given Gideon the confidence that he would indeed be victorious over the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, and that the LORD would show him exactly how to lead the three hundred men at this dark **midnight** hour! These qualities of an overcomer that Gideon possessed were that he was a good listener, a thankful worshipper, and a confident man of faith who believed the word of the LORD, and that the LORD would indeed deliver the Midianites into his hand! The Apostle Paul expressed these same overcoming qualities to us in PHILIPPIANS 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* A fourth point that we must not pass over lightly here is that Gideon now knew exactly what he was supposed to do as he returned to the three hundred men and said unto them: *Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.* Obviously the LORD had given Gideon the instructions he, and the three hundred men were to follow.

JUDGES 7:16 *And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.* Gideon divided the three hundred into three companies of one hundred each. One hundred is the number of COMPLETION. Each of the three hundred men had a **trumpet**, an **empty pitcher**, and a **lamp** or a torch. This is unusual armor to say the least, but God had superb plan for there use here at this **midnight** hour. Gideon then gave the following instructions to the three hundred men: 17 *And he*

said unto them, *Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do.* 18 *When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.* Recall from our earlier discussion about **trumpets** that one use was for blowing an alarm for war. Imagine how loud the blast of three hundred **trumpets** at once would be at **midnight**! Talk about a wake-up call! Again remember also that that **trumpets** speak of telling the truth. And Gideon's three hundred men were to also loudly shout "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon." This was the proclamation that it was LORD of Gideon who was doing the fighting here. There were a couple of other instructions given by Gideon that the Holy Spirit didn't reveal to us until verses 19 & 20.

JUDGES 7:19 *So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; (note it was in the middle of the **night**, **midnight**, the darkest hours in the **night**) and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands.* 20 *And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.* In these verses we learn the purpose of the **pitchers**, and the **lamps**. These **pitchers** were empty earthen vessels in which was placed lit torches, which are called **lamps** in our text. These **empty pitchers** were concealing a blazing treasure of light waiting the moment when they could shine forth. That happened the moment they broke the **pitchers**. These **empty pitchers** would also have made a tremendous noise when broken. We will talk more about this shortly. 2 SAMUEL 22:29 tells us: *For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness.* Furthermore PSALMS 119:105 states: *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* Their **lamps** were to be held in their weaker left hand, and the **trumpets** in their stronger right hand, so how did they hold their swords? The only sword we read of them having was the one that came out of their mouth: The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon... The Word of God in other words. Again Jesus is The Word of God REVELATION 19:13 tells us, the very same Word of God who told Gideon in JUDGES 6:16 *...Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.* In other words Gideon you will defeat the Midianites with the sword of the LORD. And the Midianites were defeated that **midnight** by "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon."

Now imagine you are in the valley of the Midianite camp at this **midnight** hour, and were awoken by the blast of a single **trumpet**, then three hundred **trumpets** all blowing at once! The noise of these **trumpets** echo off of the mountains surrounding you, amplifying the volume, and intensity of their alarm. Have you ever heard three hundred **trumpets** all at once? The noise would be almost deafening. You would wake up dazed and confused to a tremendous adrenaline rush. Combine that with the noise of three hundred breaking **pitchers**. Your heart would race, and you would wonder what was that? What is happening? Next you look on the hillsides surrounding you, and see three hundred blazing torches. Here is what would be also going through your mind on that night. You would know that only captains of thousands would have **trumpets**, and **lamps** for war. Quickly your mind would think you are surrounded by three hundred plus thousand troops, who are now attacking you! Next you clearly hear the shouts of "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon." This is the sound of war. You would be correct in assuming that odds are not in your favor of surviving until morning. Men, women, children, cattle and camels stampede in all directions terror stricken at this dark **midnight** hour. Some are trampled to death.

Next JUDGES 7:21 explains what was taking place from two perspectives. First concerning Gideon's three hundred: *And they stood every man in his place round about the camp:...* . Earlier in this study we referenced the words of 2 CHRONICLES 20:15 *...for the battle is not yours, but God's.* Two verses later we read this in 2 CHRONICLES 20:17 *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.* Obviously that was at a later time in Israel's history at another battle, but the principle was the same here for

Gideon's three hundred for all they had to do at this point in time was too stand ...*every man in his place round about the camp...* and witness the salvation of the LORD for themselves. The Apostle Paul tells of the warriors resources in EPHESIANS 6:10-18, and EPHESIANS 6:13 & 14 tells us: *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;...* . Simply put we can stand on the word of truth, the word of God; the sword of the LORD! The second perspective found in JUDGES 7:21 is that of the dazed, and confused Midianites: *...and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.* With all this noise about them, the blaring **trumpets**, the crashing of the empty **pitchers**, and the shouting of the sword of the LORD, and of Gideon, which noise the LORD amplified in the ears of the Midianites, the Midianites assumed that the Israelites were in their very midst, and *...ran, and cried, and fled.*

JUDGES 7:22 tells what happened next. JUDGES 7:22 *And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath.* Panicked and confused at this dark **midnight** hour in the Midianite camp, the LORD set Midianite against Midianite, and in their confusion they slew one another not being able to discern friend from foe. The remaining Midianites fled east to the Jordan River valley. JUDGES 7:23-25 tells how the men of Israel from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh were also called into action, and they pursued after the Midianites at the request of Gideon. The Midianites had split up into two main groups, and Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh pursued after one part of them, and JUDGES 8:4 tells how Gideon and his three hundred pursued after the rest. JUDGES 8:4 *And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.* Recall that the LORD told Gideon back in JUDGES 7:7 *...By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you...* and they continued pursuing the Midianites beyond Jordan. They were true warriors of the LORD! And they pursued the Midianites until victory was won. In JUDGES 8:22 & 23 we read: *Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. 23 And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.* According to JUDGES 8:28 *Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.* So we find the end result of this incredible **midnight** Bible story that Gideon was judge over Israel forty years. JUDGES 8:32 tells us: *And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

Before we move on from the **midnight** Bible story of Gideon I think it would be of great benefit to us to review seven points of SPIRITUAL PERFECTION found in Gideon's WARRIORS. These are seven qualities that will be found in all full overcomers. First we find in JUDGES 7:3 that these three hundred men were not fearful, nor afraid. Paul wrote in 2 TIMOTHY 1:7 *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* When it comes time for battle the WARRIOR of the Lord doesn't count with the strength of the flesh, but rather relies upon the power of the LORD. Old Testament full overcomer David wrote in PSALMS 23:4 *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* Do you think David ever had any **midnight** experiences, or were all his tests and trials only during the day? "The valley of the shadow of death" hints of **midnight** type trials. All full overcomers will have **midnight** experiences, will face dark hours, dark times, and David was no exception. David wrote in PSALMS 63:6 *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.*

The second overcoming quality found in Gideon's three hundred men was that they were WARRIOR'S, that is they possessed the qualities found in a WARRIOR. Webster's Dictionary defines a WARRIOR as a man taking part, or experienced in conflict, especially war; in other words a soldier. God chose them for this conflict. A good soldier follows orders from a superior. The LORD made Gideon the General of these three hundred men, and Gideon got his instructions from

the LORD, and God picked Gideon's three hundred. Gideon's three hundred men were chosen because they were paying attention while they lapped the water with their hand. The majority bowed on their knees to drink the water back in JUDGES 7:6. Their interests were selfish, forgetting that they were in the presence of an enemy, they let their guard down, and focused upon satisfying themselves. Gideon's three hundred men knew there was going to be a battle, for they were in the presence of their enemies, thus we see that they were ALERT, and WATCHFUL, and AWARE of the time and place they were in. Jewish tradition declares that the practice of kneeling to drink the water back in JUDGES 7:6 was characteristic of the service of Baal, thus the three hundred who did not bow showed their defiance to Baal by not bowing, which also shows their willing service unto the LORD. In other words they were fit to wield the sword of the LORD. Gideon's WARRIORS figure men of faith, not consumed with their own lust, but rather were looking to the LORD for help. As full overcomers we too are to be: *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;...* (HEBREWS 12:2); *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ...* (TITUS 2:13); looking, like Abraham *...for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God....* (HEBREWS 11:10).

Thirdly let's note these WARRIORS equipment found in JUDGES 7:16. Each of Gideon's 300 had **trumpet**, an empty **pitcher**, and a **lamp**. This seems like inappropriate, and insufficient equipment for a WARRIOR doesn't it? As a WARRIOR it would take some real faith in God to be equipped like this wouldn't it? Each one of these pieces of equipment represents something more. A **trumpet** speaks of telling the truth. A WARRIOR of the Lord knows the truth. EPHESIANS 4:21 informs us *...the truth is in Jesus*. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 encourages us to: *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*. The Berean Saints *...were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so....* ACTS 17:11 tells us. Each of Gideon's 300 WARRIORS also had a **pitcher**. A **pitcher** is an earthen vessel, and in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7 Paul wrote: *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*. Stated another way, a WARRIOR trusts in the Lord, not in himself. Gideon's WARRIORS each also had a **lamp**. The **lamp** figures the word of God. PSALMS 119:105 *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*. The verse before 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7, which we just read, says this: 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. MATTHEW 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*. Many have come to the LORD at a very dark **midnight** hour because someone let their lamp shine as they told about the love of Jesus, and His saving power.

The fourth overcoming quality to be seen in Gideon's 300 is that they weren't afraid to proclaim the word of the Lord. In JUDGES 7:20 they shouted: *...The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon*. This was their battle cry. PSALMS 149:5 & 6 reads: *Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand*. HEBREWS 4:12 states: *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. EPHESIANS 6:17 records some of the WARRIORS equipment: *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*. Brother Hill wrote in his tract "The Warfare of the Believer:" "When we wield the sword of the Spirit we are wielding God's thoughts, His plan and His purpose. There is nothing that will stop God's plan! ...When circumstances mock, whip out the sword of promise. When we appear to be in the minority and the enemy swarms around us like a hive of bees, we can carry the sword of promise. ...The sword says "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (DEUTERONOMY 31:6) When the enemy taunts us because of our weakness, our want of culture, our lack of rank, we can whip out the sword and say, "Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we

shall see him as he is.” (1 JOHN 3:1) This is the sword of the Spirit -- the word of divine truth.”
{End of quoting Brother Hill}

Fifth, and this point also could have been mentioned first, Gideon’s WARRIORS followed instructions, and believed the Lord was their DELIVERER. We see this in the last part of JUDGES 7:15 when they followed Gideon’s instructions: *...Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.* The last part of PSALMS 2:12 reads: *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* On you own look up the Old Testament word “trust,” and see that it is same word we often see in the New Testament as “faith,” or “believe.” PSALMS 84:12 states: *O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.* And JEREMIAH 17:7 informs us: *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.* Gideon’s 300 WARRIORS then were men of faith; men who trusted and believed the Lord was their DELIVERANCE or SALVATION during this dark **midnight** hour. Gideon’s 300 were obedient followers of Gideon, who followed his instructions, like the Apostle Paul encouraged each one of us to do: 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* The true followers of Paul will end up ruling and reigning with Christ their Bridegroom!

Our sixth overcoming quality found in Gideon’s WARRIORS was that in the time of battle they stood their ground, and the Lord fought the battle for them. JUDGES 7:21 & 22 -- *And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. 22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man’s sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath.* EPHESIANS 6:13 & 14 tells us: *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;...* Back in JUDGES 7, why did the Midianites flee? They fled Gideon’s 300 because at this **midnight** hour they thought a great army was upon them, for in that period of time only captains of thousands had **trumpets** and **lamps**. The Midianites looked up and saw 300 lights, heard 300 **trumpets**, and assumed that at least 300,000 men of war were fast upon them. In reality it was just Gideon, and his 300 faithful WARRIORS, plus God.

The seventh point concerning Gideon’s WARRIORS is to note that the battle wasn’t over against Midian all at once. We find Gideon’s faithful 300 “faint, yet pursuing” in JUDGES 8:4. Gideon’s 300 had a goal in mind, and that is why they were still pursuing, though faint. A true WARRIOR of the Lord has a goal in mind, and that goal is to win something, to have God’s best, to be in the Bride of Christ, and though maybe faint in the **midnight** trials, this WARRIOR is yet pursuing. PHILIPPIANS 3:13 & 14 gives Paul’s thoughts on this subject: *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

So to recap Gideon’s faithful 300, note they were chosen by God from among those who were not afraid, nor fearful; one’s who were alert, aware, awake, and watchful. All of these are qualities that all full overcomers must possess. Further they were equipped of the LORD, and found to be obedient and faithful followers of God’s chosen vessel Gideon, who himself was guided by the Holy Spirit. They possessed no other special qualities. The world would look on Gideon’s faithful 300 as nobodies. We find Gideon’s faithful 300 mentioned in passing in HEBREWS 11:33 & 34 among those who *...through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, ... escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.* Gideon’s faithful 300 are an example left for us of what a WARRIOR of the LORD looks like. They look like an overcomer, and remind us of those noted in HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 that we spent so much time studying about. Those of HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 are the we, and us who lay aside every weight, and the unbelief that surrounds us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, all the time keeping our hearts eye fixed upon the prize, who is Jesus the Author and Finisher of all our faith. Jesus Christ had His bride in mind, His joy, as He went to the cross,

despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Gideon's faithful 300 were a minority in the house of Israel. The bride of Christ too will be a minority that comes forth out of the sleeping body of Christ, His church!