

UNLIKELY HEROES OF THE BIBLE

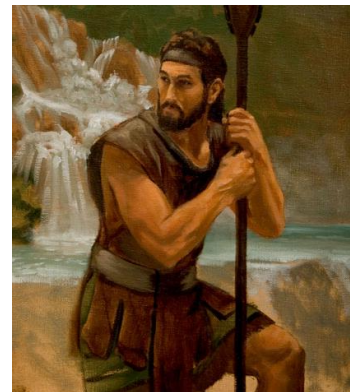
PART 1: GIDEON (JUDGES 6—8)

TRUE OR FALSE?

God only uses believers who possess the natural talents and skills needed to accomplish his will?

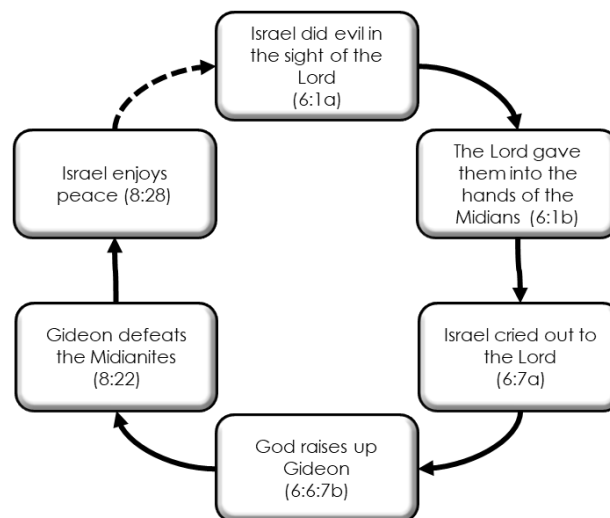
WHO WAS GIDEON?

- He was an ordinary person, the son of a poor farmer (Judg. 6:15).
- His father was an idol worshipper (6:25).
- He was devoted to God (Judg. 6:18-21; 7:15).
- He needed assurance that God was calling him (Judg. 6:17, 36-40).
- He was a prophet/judge (a prophet warns people, a judge delivers oppressed people).
- He remained faithful to God even when his army was reduced in size so that the Midianites outnumbered Gideon's army God 450:1.
- He is known as one of Israel's greatest judges.



BACKGROUND

Between the time of Joshua and King David Israel went through six cycles of apostasy as shown below. Each cycle begins with the phrase, "The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD." Each time the Lord raised up a judge to deliver Israel from its oppressor.

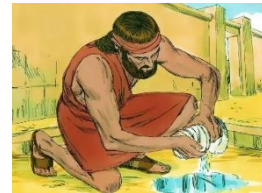


GIDEON AND THE MIDIANITES

- "Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites." (Judg. 6:1)
- The Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country" (Palestine) and plundered the land (Judg. 6:3).
- For seven years, "Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help" (Judg. 6:6).
- God answered their cries and raised up Gideon as a deliverer (Judg. 6:11-12).
- With only 300 men, Gideon defeated the army of 135,000 Midianites (Judg. 7--8).
- Of course, God was involved, and he was the one who granted the victory over the Midianites (Judg. 6:22).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Was there ever a time in your life you felt that God was asking you to do something that you felt was impossible? If so, what was it? How did you respond?
2. Does Gideon's example give Christians today a method for knowing God's will by fleece setting? Why, or why not?
3. Why did God reduce Gideon's army from 32,000 soldiers to only 300 to fight against the huge Midianite army? How might this relate to us today?



APPLICATION

- God often chooses _____, who are devoted to him, to do his work.
- Your _____ resources will not _____ God's power (Gideon's army was outnumbered 450:1).
- Your ability to be used by God does not depend on _____.
- Remember, when you are _____, God is _____!

"It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight." (Heb. 11:32-34 NLT)