

# Judges 7:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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The overwhelming scope of the enemy force is described: Midianites, Amalekites, and all the eastern peoples settled in the valley 'like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea shore for multitude.' The grasshopper comparison evokes Israel's fearful spies describing themselves before the Canaanites (Numbers 13:33)—ironic reversal as now the enemies appear as numerous as grasshoppers. The camel emphasis highlights the raiders' military advantage—mobility allowing rapid strikes and retreat. The 'sand by the sea shore' metaphor (cf. Genesis 22:17, 32:12) emphasizes the vast numbers facing Gideon's 300.

## Historical Context

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This passage provides the earliest clear biblical reference to large-scale military use of camels. Camels gave the Midianite coalition unprecedented raiding capability—traveling 100 miles in a day, carrying substantial loads, surviving on minimal water. This mobility explains their seven-year dominance despite Israel's larger population. Archaeological evidence confirms camel domestication was increasing during the early Iron Age (12th-11th centuries BCE), matching the judges period timeframe.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does the overwhelming enemy size emphasize the miraculous nature of the coming victory?
2. What 'multitudes' in your life seem as innumerable as grasshoppers or sand, requiring divine intervention?
3. How does the camel detail demonstrate that human military advantages mean nothing against God's purposes?

## Interlinear Text

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וּמִדְיָן	וְעַמֵּל קַי	וְכָל	בְּנֵי	קַי דָּם		
And the Midianites	and the Amalekites	H3605	and all the children	of the east		
H4080	H6002		H1121	H6924		
נָפְלָ ים	בְּעֵמֶק	כְּאַרְבֵּה הַ	לְרֹב:	וּלְגַמְלֵיהֶם		
lay	along in the valley	like grasshoppers	for multitude	and their camels		
H5307	H6010	H697	H7230	H1581		
אֵין	מִסְפָּר	כַּח וָל	שְׁפָתַי	הַיָּם	לְרֹב:	
H369	were without number	as the sand	H5921	side	by the sea	for multitude
	H4557	H2344	H8193	H3220	H7230	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Judges 6:5** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Judges 8:10** (Parallel theme): Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword.

**Joshua 11:4** (Parallel theme): And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

**Judges 6:3** (Parallel theme): 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;

**Psalms 3:1** (Parallel theme): LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

**Psalms 33:16** (Parallel theme): There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.