

Judges 7:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Providentially, Gideon arrives precisely when a Midianite soldier is telling his dream to a companion: '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.' The dream's imagery is rich with meaning—barley bread (the poorest grain, eaten by Israel's poor) represents Israel's apparent weakness. That this humble bread tumbles into the mighty camp and destroys a tent symbolizes unlikely victory. Dreams as divine revelation were common in the ancient Near East; God here uses a pagan's dream to encourage His servant.

Historical Context

Dream interpretation was significant in ancient Near Eastern cultures—Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Canaanite societies all practiced oneiromancy (divination through dreams). Kings employed professional dream interpreters. That a Midianite soldier's companion could immediately interpret the dream shows this was part of their cultural framework. Barley was considered inferior to wheat—it was drought-resistant and cheaper but of lower quality, hence associated with poverty.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God using a pagan's dream to encourage Gideon demonstrate His sovereignty over all circumstances?
2. What does the barley bread imagery teach about God using weak, despised things to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27)?
3. When has God provided unexpected encouragement precisely when you needed it most?

Interlinear Text

מִסְפֵּר אֲשֶׁר יָבָא
and came And when Gideon H2009 behold there was a man that told
H935 H1439 H376 H5608

וְהִנֵּה הָעִזָּה
unto his fellow a dream and said H2009 a dream Behold I dreamed H2009
H7453 H2472 H559 H2472 H2426 H4080

מִדְיָן בְּמִחְנֵן הַיְהֹוֶה
and lo a cake bread of barley and overturned into the host of Midian
H6742 H3899 H8184 H2015 H4264 H4080

יָבָא עַד
and came H5704 it that the tent and smote it that it fell and overturned
H935 H168 H5221 H5307 H2015

לֹמַע עַל
it that it fell it that the tent
H4605 H5307 H168

