

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

וַיָּבֹא א	גִּדְעוֹן וְ	וְהִנֵּה	אִישׁ	מְסַפֵּר	
and came	And when Gideon	H2009	behold there was a man	that told	
H935	H1439		H376	H5608	
לְרֵעֵהוּ	חֵלֹם וְ	וַיֹּאמֶר	וְהִנֵּה	חֵלֹם וְ	חֵלֹם מִמֶּנִּי
unto his fellow	a dream	and said	H2009	a dream	Behold I dreamed
H7453	H2472	H559		H2472	H2492
וְ	חֵם	שְׂעִירִים	וַהֲפֹכָהּ	בְּמַחֲנֶה	מִדְיָן
and lo a cake	bread	of barley	and overturned	into the host	of Midian
H6742	H3899	H8184	H2015	H4264	H4080
וַיָּבֹא א	עַד	הָאֵהָל:	וַיִּכּוּ	וַיִּפֹּל	וַהֲפֹכָהּ
and came	H5704	it that the tent	and smote	it that it fell	and overturned
H935		H168	H5221	H5307	H2015
לְמַעַן	וַיִּפֹּל	הָאֵהָל:			
H4605	it that it fell	it that the tent			
	H5307	H168			

