

Gideon's Three Hundred

God reduces Gideon's army from 32,000 to 300 so Israel will know the victory belongs to the Lord, not to their own strength.

Judges 7:1-25

CHARACTERS: Gideon, The 300 soldiers, God

THEMES: God's power in weakness, Trusting God's plan, Victory belongs to the Lord

GIDEON AND HIS men camped near the Midianites. The Lord said to Gideon, 'You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast, "My own strength has saved me." Announce that anyone who trembles with fear may turn back.'

Twenty-two thousand men left. Ten thousand remained.

'There are still too many,' the Lord said. 'Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out.'

At the water, God said, 'Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink.' Three hundred men lapped from cupped hands; all the rest got down on their knees.

'With the three hundred men I will save you,' the Lord said. 'Let all the others go.'

Three hundred against a vast army that lay in the valley, thick as locusts, with camels too numerous to count. Impossible odds—exactly where God wanted them.

That night, God told Gideon to go down to the enemy camp. Near the outskirts, Gideon heard a man telling a dream to his friend: 'A round loaf

of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent so hard that the tent overturned and collapsed.'

His friend responded, 'This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon. God has given the Midianites into his hands.'

Gideon worshipped God. He returned to the Israelite camp and shouted, 'Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands!' He divided the three hundred men into three companies, giving each man a trumpet and an empty jar with a torch inside.

'Watch me and do as I do,' he said. 'When we reach the edge of the camp, blow your trumpets and shout, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"'

At the beginning of the middle watch, Gideon and his hundred reached the camp. They blew their trumpets and smashed their jars. The three hundred trumpets sounded, and the Lord caused the enemy to turn on each other with their swords.

The Midianites fled. The victory belonged entirely to God.