

# Lessons From The Life Of Gideon

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There is one essential characteristic that we must have to be in the Kingdom of God. Christ mentioned it seven times in Revelation 2 and 3. We won't turn there, but to each of the seven churches, He would say, "To him that overcomes will I . . . ." and then go on from that. He mentioned it seven times, "To him that overcomes."

The Greek word for "overcoming" or "overcomes" is Strong's 3528, and it means to literally or figuratively to *subdue* or *conquer*, to *prevail* or to *get the victory*. So Christ said, to him that overcomes He will give the Kingdom of God, so the question then becomes, overcomes what? We won't turn there either, but in John 16:33, Christ said, "*I have overcome the world.*" "The world" translated in the Greek is the word "cosmos," and it means the *existing order* or the *existing arrangement*. Christ said, "I have overcome that," meaning Satan's world.

Also in John 18:36, Christ told Pilate, "*My kingdom is not of this cosmos.*" So Christ overcame the world, and His kingdom obviously has nothing to do with this world.

In 1 John, chapter 2, John says, "*Love not the world. Love not the cosmos, neither the things that are in the world. If we love the world, the love of God is not in us.*"

Remember, he went on to say that all that is in the world: the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

So these verses, quickly combined, tell us that we have to overcome all of these things. We have to overcome the world itself, Satan's influence in the world, the lust of the flesh and eyes, and the pride of life. All that entails is that we must put on the mind of God, put on the mind of Christ. Overcoming and putting off our human nature, overcome all our personal weaknesses, our personal temptations and obviously, we all as human beings struggle with different issues. We have different weaknesses.

The Bible is full of examples of godly men and women who overcame and attained the victory. Abraham overcame his tendency to lie when he lied about Sarah and said she was his sister. Moses overcame his anger issue. Remember, he killed the Egyptian and then out of anger he struck the rock and claimed the credit for himself and was not allowed into the promised land as a result. Samson overcame his lust for foreign women. Rahab, remember, was a prostitute by profession and she overcame that. All of these men and women overcame their personal temptations, their personal sins because all of them are spoken of in Hebrews, chapter 11. Let's go there now and read verses 39 and 40. All of these were mentioned in Hebrews. All had their weaknesses. All had their sins, and they overcame just like Jesus Christ.

***Hebrews 11:39. And these all ... (KJV)***

You can go back and read them for yourself.

*39b) ... having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: (KJV)*

As of this day, they have yet to receive it.

*40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they ... (KJV)*

All of these are mentioned in Hebrews 11.

*40b) ... without us should not be made perfect. (KJV)*

We will all attain that together. We know that the Bible is breathed by God Himself, and these examples in the Bible are recorded for our learning, and not only for our learning, but they are recorded for our encouragement.

Today we want to examine the life of another man that was mentioned in Hebrews 11. Let's go to verse 32.

**Hebrews 11:32.** *And what shall I more say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and [of] Barak and [of] Samson, and [of] Jephthae; [of] David also and Samuel, and [of] the prophets. (KJV)*

Here Gideon is mentioned in the same sentence, in the same breath as David and Samuel. Now think about that. Yet he struggled mightily with a huge flaw that he had. That huge flaw was a lack of faith that resulted in enormous fear on Gideon's part, as we are going to see.

There is no command in the Bible that says you shall not be fearful, that you shall not have fear. Yet it is a flaw that the Book of Revelation tells us that if we don't overcome, we will not be in the Kingdom of God.

Let's go to Revelation 21 and we're going to read verses 7 and 8. God's word is winding down in Revelation 21 and these last messages are very, very important. We're told that those who are fearful will not be in the Kingdom of God, and it mentions overcoming again.

**Revelation 21:7.** *He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God and he shall be my son.*

*8) But the fearful ... (KJV)*

Meaning those that do not overcome their fear ...

*8b) ...and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars ... (KJV)*

If those flaws and sins and faults are not overcome ...

*8 continued) ... shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (KJV)*

The Greek word for “fearful” is Strong’s 1169, and it’s the Greek word “deilos” and it can mean *timid* or by implication, *faithless*, in addition to be translated as *fearful*. The New King James translates it as *cowardly, somebody who is a coward*.

All of us have experienced fear at times, perhaps the threat of losing a job; in my case when I was first called, of going to jail, a military prison. We’ve had the fear of maybe losing a child or losing our own life through sickness. Sometimes pain can cause us to be afraid. Some in God’s Church are afraid of the future. They are afraid of facing the tribulation, or afraid of the time when you can’t buy or sell without the mark of the beast. The reality is, (we won’t go there) in 1 Corinthians, God has called the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are.

For the balance of this sermon we’re going to study the life of Gideon. He was mentioned by name in Hebrews 11 and there’s a reason for that. Normally we don’t think much about Gideon. You might think of the child’s Bible story of the wet fleece, or of some guy running down a hill blowing a trumpet and breaking a pot, but beyond that Gideon is kind of back there in the mist and we don’t think much about him. But his life is one of the best Biblical examples of the power of the holy spirit to overcome the paralysis of fear. We’re going to look into that today.

Christ is the Word of the Old Testament, and we’re going to see that Christ was intimately involved with Gideon. We will see that as we go. We’re going to see that Christ had to tell him, “I am with you.” He had to constantly reassure Gideon. At the end, Gideon overcame his fear. The lesson that he learned is no matter how hard the struggle, no matter what we struggle with, through the power of the holy spirit we too can overcome. Gideon is a tremendous example of that.

The title of the sermon is:

Lessons From The Life Of Gideon.

First we want to look at the background of the whole time of the Judges when Gideon was alive. The time of the Judges was a 330-year period between the death of Joshua and Saul being made the first king of Israel. The leading figures of that time, we in English called them judges. We know that after the death of Moses, Joshua crossed the Jordan River and he blitzed the promised land and took most of the major centers of population.

With that in mind, let’s go to Joshua, chapter 11. This is all part of the background leading up to the time of Gideon and the time of the judges. Joshua 11 and we’re going to read verses 15 and 16, and then to verse 23.

**Joshua 11:15.** *As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses.*

16) *So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;*

23) *So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Eternal said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war. (KJV)*

Now let's compare this in Joshua 11 with the first verse of Joshua 13. Notice what we are told here, we get more of the story.

**Joshua 13:1.** *Now Joshua was old [and] stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, You are old [and] stricken in years ... (KJV)*

The Lord said, "You're old, you're getting weak and you are getting close to death." But notice what God said.

1b) *... and there remains yet very much land to be possessed. (KJV)*

Oops. The fact is that Israel delayed in spreading out and possessing the land. They didn't do a complete job. They didn't drive out the inhabitants of the promised land. Let's go to Judges now; chapter 1. We're going to see as we get into the period of the judges that there are some problems. Judges 1:19; we're going to briefly go through to see what a poor job they did in driving out the inhabitants. Notice this.

**Judges 1:19.** *And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out [the inhabitants of] the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.*

21) *And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day. (KJV)*

They didn't drive them out.

27) *Neither did Manasseh drive out [the inhabitants of] Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. (KJV)*

They dwelt right alongside the Israelites.

29) *Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.*

30) *Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.*

31) *Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor the Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob:*

32) *But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.*

33) *Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath ... (KJV)*

You get the impression that they did not do a very good job. They did not follow God completely; they did not trust God. They compromised with what God told them to do.

Look at Judges 2 and we'll read the first three verses. This tells us why they were not driven out. Dave was talking in his sermonette, you want to know why, well here is why.

***Judges 2:1. And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal ... (KJV)***

Gilgal was the first city Israel encamped in after crossing the Jordan.

1b) *... to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.*

2) *And you shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; you shall throw down their altars: but you have not obeyed my voice: why have you done this?*

3) *Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you ... (KJV)*

God says, "I am not going to back you up. I'm not going to be behind you because you are not obeying My voice."

3b) *... but they shall be [as thorns] in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. (KJV)*

Why were they disobedient? What was going on in the interaction between Israel and the Canaanites that caused them to disobey? The fact is (if you look into the history, the culture of Israel) their day-to-day living culture and the culture of the Canaanites were very similar. However, there was one huge difference. Israel worshipped one God, Jehovah, and the Canaanites worshipped multiple gods. So the similarities in this culture made it easy for them to intermarry and mix together. Israel worshipped false gods. Why did they do that? Well, in those days the belief was when the Canaanites worshipped multiple gods, that the power of each god was localized. They would build an altar to their god on a high hill, and the belief was that everything you could see from that particular hill, that god had control and authority and influence over. So the god had power only in that local soil and that local area. Israel thought it was unwise to ignore the "power" of the gods of Canaan. They completely lacked faith and so they

didn't tear down the altars, they didn't tear down the high places because they were afraid that somehow that local god would cause them trouble.

With that in mind, let's turn to Judges 2:10.

***Judges 2:10. And also all that generation ... (KJV)***

The ones that crossed over into the promised land.

*10b) ... were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Eternal, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. (KJV)*

That generation did not see the parting of the Red Sea. That generation did not see the miracles in Egypt.

*11) And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Eternal, and served Baalim. (KJV)*

Baalim was a Phoenician deity.

*12) And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that [were] round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.*

*13) And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*

*14) And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, (notice this) and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them ... (KJV)*

He didn't give them any help. He didn't defend them.

*14b) ... and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.*

*15) Whenever they went out, the hand of the Eternal was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. (KJV)*

We have to remember that God did not call ancient Israel to put His spirit in them. That was not His purpose at that time. Remember in Deuteronomy 5:29, God said, "Oh, if they only had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always." They didn't have God's holy spirit. They adapted the Canaanite environment; they adapted to the multiple gods of the Canaanites.

This time of the judges is also called the tribal period. What that means is there was little unity in the country. There was little common action among the various tribes and the clans of those tribes, and there was no judge at all who had an effect over all twelve

tribes except Samuel. Why was that? The familiar scripture of Judges 21:25, "They all did what was right in their own eyes." There was no unity during the tribal period. The result of all of that, of the Canaanite influence and not driving them out, the fact that everybody was doing what was right in their own eyes, resulted in a cycle of Israel disobeying God and then God allowing them to be oppressed by the Canaanites. Then after they had a belly full of that, they would cry out to God and they would repent and ask God to save them. God would raise up a judge, a savior so to speak, to deliver and rescue them. They went through this cycle. Then when that judge died, they fell into disobedience and began the cycle all over again. The bottom line during the cycle during the tribal period of disobedience and then being oppressed and then repenting and then having a new judge, those cycles continued over this period of time. The result was that the Canaanites had time to regroup and to strengthen, because there was no unified action against them.

So that brings us now to the story of Gideon. Let's go to Judges, chapter 6. If you have a marker in your Bible, you might want to put it there because we will go through the story, but will digress from time to time.

The context of Judges, chapter 6 is that this is after Deborah and Barak's victory which brought Israel forty years of peace. That was in Judges, chapter 4. We won't go over that, but after that period of time, after the forty years, Israel again did evil in God's eyes. Once again He delivered them over to their enemies. This time it was the Midianites. For seven years the Midianites would raid Israel during the harvest season. They would swoop down on Israel, confiscating all of the produce of the fields. As a result, many of the Israelites took to the hills and many of them began to live in caves. The bottom line was that during this time Israel was living in fear. They were worried about getting through the winter without food because of the raids of the Midianites. Now we come to Judges 6:7.

**Judges 6:7.** *And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Eternal because of the Midianites,  
8) That the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them ... (KJV)*

God is starting to warn them now.

*8b) ... Thus says the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt ... (KJV)*

Remember, this generation did not witness that.

*8 continued) ... and brought you forth out of the house of bondage:  
9) And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land;  
10) And I said unto you, I [am] the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell ... (KJV)*

Yet at this time all Israel was in fear. God said, “Don’t do that. Don’t be afraid.”

10b) ... *but you have not obeyed my voice.*

11) *And there came an angel of the Lord, ... (KJV)*

The prophet came first and now this angel came. The Hebrew word for “angel” is *messenger*. An angel of the Lord; we’ll get to verse 21 in a minute, but he came as a human being, a traveling man and he had a staff in his hand. That’s how he appeared.

11b) ... *and sat under an oak which [was] in Ophrah, that [pertained] unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress ... (KJV)*

This was not the wine harvest. It’s interesting; they’re threshing wheat beside a winepress.

11 continued) ... *to hide [it] from the Midianites. (KJV)*

This was done to hide the fact that they were threshing wheat. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown’s Commentary says this about verse 11: “This incident tells emphatically the tale of public distress. The small quantity of grain he was threshing indicated by using a flail instead of the customary treading of cattle, the unusual place near a winepress under a tree and on the bare ground and not a wooden floor in order to prevent noise. All these circumstances reveal the extreme dread in which the people were living. Gideon was trying to hide the fact that he was threshing a small amount of grain.”

12) *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord [is] with you, you mighty man of valor. (KJV)*

Here’s a guy hiding under a tree, trying to hide the fact that he is threshing a little bit of wheat in absolute fear and looking over his shoulder, and this angel says, “You mighty man of valor.” He said this to a man who was hiding and was afraid.

It’s interesting that the Hebrew word for “Gideon” means *feller*. Feller means a *warrior*. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines the word “feller” as *one who hews or knocks down*, like you fell a tree. Well in this case, a feller was a warrior because he killed, he knocked down other soldiers. So that’s Gideon’s very name and yet he is cringing under the tree, trying to keep quiet the fact that he is threshing grain.

13) *And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord ... (KJV)*

Now pay attention to this. The Hebrew word for “Lord” here is “adon”. In English it’s spelled a-d-o-w-n. It can mean *master*, or Jamieson, Fausset and Brown says, it can mean *sir*, like you’re showing respect to someone.

13b) ... *if the Lord be with us ... (KJV)*



That's a different word and we'll get into that in a minute.

*13 continued) ... why then is all this befallen us? And where [be] all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. (KJV)*

It is obvious Gideon doesn't understand why. He is not looking at himself or the sins of Israel to see why God is doing this. He's just whining about the fact that they have to hide and the Midianites come and take their harvest. Notice this.

*14) And the Lord looked upon him ... (KJV)*

Now this word for "Lord" is *Jehovah, the self-existent one*. The Lord was looking right at him.

*14b) ... and said, Go in this your might, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent you? (KJV)*

Notice Gideon's reply.

*15) And he said unto him, Oh my Lord ... (KJV)*

Now this is different than the word "adon" that we read in verse 13. This Hebrew word is "Adonai" and it is always translated as a proper name for God only. All of a sudden Gideon changes the name and all of a sudden he sees what is going on here.

*15b) ... wherewith shall I save Israel? ... (KJV)*

You see Gideon's eyes here are opened. It's like the two disciples, after Christ was crucified, and they're on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). They were walking down the road and talking amongst themselves and this man comes along with them. He asks, "What's going on? What are you talking about?" They said, "Where have you been?" Then they started talking about Christ and Christ's life and His crucifixion and all of that. They ask Him to come into this little town and dine and spend the night, and when He was with them, all of a sudden it says, "Their eyes were opened." They realized that Christ was among them. They didn't know it for the time they were walking.

A similar thing happens here. All of a sudden Gideon's eyes opened and he said, "Oh my Lord! Jehovah!" In the latter part of verse 15, notice what he says when God tells him what He wants him to do.

*15 continued) ... behold, my family [is] poor in Manasseh, and I [am] the least in my father's house. (KJV)*

Gideon, yes, was from Manasseh, but he was of one of the smallest clans of Manasseh. He said, "I'm least in my father's house." That implies that he was the smallest, the youngest or the least important of all his family. He's saying, "Who am I?"

*16) And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with you, and you shall smite the Midianites as one man.*

*17) And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in your sight (Gideon is saying) then show me a sign ... (KJV)*

This is understandable if he is the smallest, the weakest and of a small clan, and all of a sudden this event is happening. He is saying, "Could you give me a sign? Could you let me know this is for real?" And he says, "Give me a sign for the reason you are talking with me." Then in verse 18, he asks God to do something.

*18) Depart not hence, I pray you, until I come unto you and bring forth my present (offering) and set [it] before you. And he said, I will tarry until you come again.*

*19) And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought [it] out unto him under the oak, and presented [it].*

*20) And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes and lay [them] upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. (KJV)*

Notice what happens.

*21) Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that [was] in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock ... (KJV)*

A miracle right in front of Gideon.

*21b) ... and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.*

*22) And when Gideon perceived that he [was] an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! For because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.*

*23) And the Lord said unto him, Peace unto you; fear not; you shall not die. (KJV)*

He is obviously referring to Exodus 33:20, when Moses was on the mountain and God said to him, "You cannot see My face. No man shall see My face unless he die." The thing to remember, though, is in Exodus 33:18, the context was Moses said, "Can I see You in your glory?" What God of the Old Testament (Christ) was saying, "If you see Me in My full glory, you cannot survive that." If we saw Christ or God today in their full glory, human flesh cannot handle that. We would die. So remember what God says,

“I’ll let you see my backside in some degree of glory,” (turning the wick down a little, so to speak).

What I believe is happening here is that Gideon is talking directly to Jesus Christ and Christ presented himself as a traveler, a human being. Remember, Christ allowed Adam and Eve to see Him. Christ wrestled with Jacob in Genesis 32, and it’s interesting in the account of Abraham, he was told to offer Isaac. They went to the mountain and he tied Isaac and had the wood there and the knife coming back. It’s said, “The angel of the Lord said to him, ‘Now I know.’” That was in Genesis 22. I believe that was Jesus Christ.

The other thing here is that Gideon sacrificed to this angel of the Lord. You find nowhere in the Bible where an angel allows a human being to sacrifice or worship the angel. Every time you see that happen, the angel says, “Get up. Don’t worship me. Look to God.” But this time, this angel allowed the sacrifice to be made to Him. It leaves me to believe that this was Jesus Christ. I draw the conclusion that Gideon is speaking to Jesus Christ face to face.

Now let’s go to verse 24.

*24) Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it [is] yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

*25) And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him ... (KJV)*

Again, this was directly to him. We don’t know if he just heard words or if Christ just appeared to him. We don’t know.

*25b) ... Take your father’s young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old ... (KJV)*

This is interesting because it exactly equals the seven years of the Midianite oppression.

*25 continued) ... and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the grove (this phallic symbol) that [is] by it:*

*26) And build an altar unto the Lord your God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove that you shall cut down.*

*27) Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Eternal had said unto him: and [so] it was (notice this) because he feared his father’s household, and the men of the city, that he could not do [it] by day, that he did [it] by night. (KJV)*

He was afraid. This is similar to Barak and Deborah in chapter 4 when Barak told Deborah, “If you go fight, I’ll go with you.” Barak wouldn’t do it unless Deborah went, because he was afraid. That was just part of the culture. They lived in a state of fear.

*28) And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down and the grove was cut down that [was] by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar [that] was built. (KJV)*

This last bullock that was killed and offered, it probably symbolized the end of the oppression. The bull is gone; the bull is dead.

*29) And they said one to another, Who has done this thing? (KJV)*

It was done on a high place, on a hill, so it was obvious to everyone in the surrounding area that the grove was cut down and the altar was trashed. It was obvious.

*29b) ... And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.*

*30) Then the men of the city said to Joash, Bring out your son that he may die: because he has cast down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the grove that [was] by it. (KJV)*

A hundred or two hundred years earlier, all Israel obeyed God. During the time of Joshua, all Israel obeyed God, but this shows you how far Israel had sunk when they threatened to kill a man because he cut down an altar to Baal and cut down a grove.

*33) Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel. (KJV)*

They came to fight Israel, and take the harvest, take the food and oppress Israel.

*34) But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon ... (KJV)*

The margin in the King James says, “*The Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon.*”

*34b) ... and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer ... (KJV)*

He was the head of one of the families. “Abiezer” means *father of help*, and we are going to see that he is an aid or a crutch to Gideon. Just like Moses’ brother was a crutch to Moses.

*34 continued) ... was gathered after him.*

*35) And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers to Asher, and to Zebulum, and to Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.*

*36) And Gideon said to God, If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said,*

*37) Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the floor; [and] if dew be on the fleece only, and [it be] dry upon all the earth [beside], then shall I know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said. (KJV)*

He was weak. He needed a sign. He was afraid.

*38) And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. (KJV)*

You'd think that would be enough, that he would be satisfied, but he was so afraid, he needed another sign. I don't know if I would have the guts to do this, but he did.

*39) And Gideon said unto God, Let not your anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once; let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.*

*40) And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground. (KJV)*

This was a bigger miracle because wool absorbs water, yet the wool was completely dry as opposed to the day before.

Here's the thing to think about; despite the fact that Christ was speaking directly to Gideon, despite the miracle of the staff that consumed his offering, despite the fact that God came to him, and despite the fleece being wet and then the fleece being dry, he was still afraid. Notice here how patient God was with him. God could have just chewed him out after the first incident with the fleece, but Christ just followed on to try to encourage and uplift him and get him ready for what God would require of him. He was very patient and very encouraging.

Now let's go to chapter 7, verse 1.

***Judges 7:1.*** *Then Jerubbaal, who [is] Gideon, and all the people that [were] with him, rose up early and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh in the valley. (KJV)*

If you look at various histories, the Midianite army was about 135,000 soldiers.

*2) And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that [are] with you [are] too many for me to give the Midianites ... (KJV)*

Gideon had 32,000 going up against 135,000, and Christ is saying to him, "No, your army is too big." They were already outnumbered four to one. You can imagine what is going through Gideon's mind. He says, "I need all the help I can get and you say my army is too big?"

*2b) ... into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, My own hand has save me. (KJV)*

Keep your finger here and let's go to Deuteronomy 8, verses 11 through 17. We'll come back here in a minute. This amplifies what Christ is saying to Gideon right now. Christ is saying to Gideon, "I want it to be less men, not more men, because I don't want you to brag that you did it by yourself." Notice the admonition and something that we need to be aware of this very day.

***Deuteronomy 8:11.*** *Beware that you forget not the Eternal your God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command you this day:*

*12) Lest [when] you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses, and dwell [therein]:*

*13) And [when] your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; (KJV)*

Good times; that's what we have today, good times relatively speaking. We have our complaints, but we live like kings. He says, "Beware when you get to the point when everything is going well and your belly is full and you have nice homes to live in, heating, air conditioning, running water and all of this. He says beware.

*14) Then your heart be lifted up and you forget the Eternal your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;*

*15) Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, [wherein were] fiery serpents and scorpions, and drought, where [there was] no water; who brought you forth water out of the rock of flint;*

*16) Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers knew not, that he might humble you, and that he might prove you, to do you good at your latter end; (KJV)*

At the end of the day, whatever God does for us is for good. We might have struggles. We might have trials. But at the end, if we follow God, the latter end is good. In verse 17, he says, "This is the danger."

*17) And you say in your heart, My power and the might of [my] hand has gotten me this wealth. (KJV)*

If that isn't a Laodicean attitude, I don't know what is. "I don't need anything. Look at what I've got. My hand has given me that." Just like the world today. This is why Christ said, "Your army is too big. You've got too many men." Let's go back to verse 3 of Judges, chapter 7.

***Judges 7:3.*** *Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever [is] fearful and afraid ... (KJV)*

Now He's asking this guy who is afraid and fearful to go and say, "Okay, any of you out there that are fearful and afraid:"

*3b) ... let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. (KJV)*

"You can go home. You don't have to fight." He's asking Gideon to say this to the people when Gideon himself is still afraid.

*3 continued) ... And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. (KJV)*

This is the very thing Gideon struggled with and twenty-two thousand of his fellow Israelites left. My guess is that he probably wished he was leaving with them, but it didn't happen.

*4) And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people [are] yet [too] many ... (KJV)*

Now can you imagine what is going through Gideon's mind? We're now ten thousand versus one hundred thirty-five thousand. It's thirteen to one. I'm sure Gideon didn't say it, but "Have you lost your mind?" That's probably what he was thinking.

*4b) ... bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for you there: and it shall be, [that] of whom I say unto you, This shall go with you, the same shall go with you; and of whomsoever I say unto you, This shall not go with you, the same shall not go.*

*5) So he brought down the people unto the water (ten thousand of them) and the Lord said to Gideon, Every one that laps of the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, him shall you set by himself; likewise every one that bows down upon his knees to drink (in other words puts his whole face into the water and starts drinking deeply).*

*6) And the number of them that lapped, [putting] their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men ... (KJV)*

Those that put their hand to their mouth; they would scoop the water out, bring their hand to their mouth and keep their head up.

*6b) ... but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. (KJV)*

You wonder what is going through Gideon's mind. There's 9,700 here and 300 over here and you bet Gideon is hoping that God is going to pick the 9,700 and not the 300.

*7) And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand: and let all the [other] people go every man to his place. (KJV)*

It's amazing and yet God said, "You want to trust me? Okay, we're going to do this with three hundred. You either trust me or you don't trust me."

The Nelson Study Bible says this of this incident: "Some commentators have suggested that the men who did not get down on their knees were maintaining a high degree of military readiness by drinking out of their hands," meaning having their head up and looking around. I've heard that preached many times over the years. I preached it myself. It goes on: "The reference to the way a dog laps might even be derogatory since dogs were despised creatures in the ancient world as they were considered worthless and scavengers. If so, God's role in the victory becomes even more apparent since the three hundred men who were left were the ones who did not even have the common sense to drink in the normal fashion."

Here these guys are getting water. They do what most would do, they stick their head in the water and drink deep, but these other guys didn't. Maybe they had a screw loose or something, but God says He's going to use them. I'm sure Gideon's knees are trembling at this point or he's shaking his head.

*8) So the people took food in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all [the rest of] Israel every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men ... (KJV)*

Now he has less than one per cent than what he started with.

*8b) ... and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.  
9) And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said unto him ... (KJV)*

Christ is talking directly to him.

*9b) ... Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into your hand. (KJV)*

Now here he's got three hundred guys on the top of the hill, this army is down below and He says, "Get up and go after them."

*10) But if you fear to go down ... (KJV)*

He knew what was in Gideon's mind. He was still afraid.

*10b) ... go with Phurah your servant down to the host: (KJV)*

You can have someone go with you to help you out here.

*11) And you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down unto the host. (KJV)*



He said, "I want you and your friend to go down, and I'm going to cause something to come to pass that will encourage you."

Now Christ had already performed three signs. You would think that would be enough. But notice he wasn't angry. He didn't berate Gideon or get upset with him. He understands that we are dust. He understands when we need encouragement. He said, "I want you to go down because I'm going to encourage you by something you're going to hear." The latter part of verse 11:

*11b) ... Then he went down with Phurah his servant ... (KJV)*

Which tells you that he was afraid; He had to have his servant beside him.

*11 continued) ... unto the outside of the armed men that [were] in the host.  
12) 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 for multitude. (KJV)*

Here he and this guy are going down, and God is saying, "I'm going to deliver them into your hands." There are just two of them going down. Now he had to have some faith to go down close to the camp. He had to trust that God was going to do something.

*13) 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 (which was the symbol of the Midianite camp) and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along (meaning it collapsed). (KJV)*

This was obviously symbolic of Gideon, because remember, what was Gideon doing when Christ first appeared to him? He was threshing grain. So Christ again encourages Gideon by hearing what that man had to say.

*14) And his fellow answered and said, This [is] nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: [for] into his hand has God delivered Median, and all the host. (KJV)*

The servant got the message.

*15) And it was [so], when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped ... (KJV)*

He finally overcame his fear. After three miracles and then this, he finally got the message that, with God's help, I can do this.

*15b) ... and returned into the host of Israel, and said, (notice who he gives credit to) Arise; for the Lord has delivered into your hand the host of Median.*

16) *And he divided the three hundred men [into] three companies (one hundred each), and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.*

17) *And he said unto them, Look at me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be [that], as I do, so shall you do.*

18) *When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that [are] with me (the hundred that were with him), then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.*

19) *So Gideon, and the hundred men that [were] with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch ... (KJV)*

This was about 10 to 11 p.m. So his men went on one side of the camp, the other two hundreds went on the other side of the camp so, in effect, they surrounded the camp of the Midianites.

19b) *... and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and broke the pitchers that [were] in their hands.*

20) *And the three companies blew the trumpets, and broke the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow [withal] and they cried, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.*

21) *And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.*

22) *And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord (God) set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled ... (KJV)*

God caused complete and utter panic in the Midianite army. Normally only a commander of a body of men would carry a torch and a horn. The fact is if they heard three hundred trumpets and saw three hundred torches, the implication is that this is an enormous army, because only the commanders would do that. There's got to be a bazillion people behind these guys. So the only conclusion the Medianites could draw is that they are surrounded by an army much greater than they are.

When you think about it, they are in a valley and three hundred pitchers are breaking simultaneously. The sound would carry off the valley walls and the pottery when it breaks, you can image them thinking that it's the clanking of armor, like men marching as the pottery broke. The valley walls would amplify the sound of the trumpets, the sounds of the voices and the breaking of the pottery.

So you see all of this terrified the Midianites to the point that they just imagined that this huge army was bearing down on them. As a result, it was every man for himself. They fled probably without their armor, without their battle gear. Then they became easier prey for Gideon's three hundred men, because most of them were unarmed. In the confusion God also caused the Midianites, the Amalekites and the Mesopotamians to turn on each other, not knowing who was friend and who was foe. They slaughtered themselves in the panic and desperation and confusion. Notice this in verse 25.

*25) And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan. (KJV)*

Keep your finger here and let's turn to an end-time prophecy; we are going to see that this is repeated in the future. Let's go to Isaiah, chapter 10. This is an end-time prophecy about the beast. We're going to read verses 24 through 26.

***Isaiah 10:24.*** *Therefore thus says the Lord God of Hosts, O my people that dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite you with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against you, after the manner of Egypt.*

*25) For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and my anger in their destruction.*

*26) And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb ... (KJV)*

It's going to happen again.

*26b) ... and [as] his rod [was] upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. (KJV)*

The armies of the beast are going to be defeated in a similar way as with Gideon and with Moses and the Egyptians.

Let's go back to Judges 8 and let's begin in verse 4.

***Judges 8:4.*** *And Gideon came to Jordan, [and] passed over, he, and the three hundred men that [were] with him, faint, yet pursuing [them]. (KJV)*

You can imagine they had a night of chasing Midianites, and they were faint. They were hungry, thirsty, they were tired, and yet they pursued them. The distance here from where this event happened was forty miles. They had been pursuing those guys for forty miles. They were hungry and tired and thirsty. He said to the men of Succoth (these were Israelites):

*5) And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they [be] faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.*

*6) And the princes of Succoth said, [Are] the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread unto your army? (KJV)*

You see, when they killed someone they would chop off their hands. That was how they determined a body count. So the men of Succoth were saying, "Okay, show me their hands. If these kings are still out here and they have armies, I'm not sure I want to

give you food lest they come back upon us.” They were unwilling to help their fellow Israelites.

In verse 7, Gideon is starting to be stronger. He is starting to take charge and be more commanding because he knows God is behind him.

*7) And Gideon said, Therefore when the Lord has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand ... (KJV)*

“No, I don’t have their hands yet, but when God does it ...”

*7b) ... then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. (KJV)*

It’s interesting, the Hebrew word for “tear” can also be translated as *thresh*. That was exactly what he was doing when God called him. He said, “I’m going to thresh you and beat you with briers.” Here he is full of confidence. He doesn’t sound cowardly at all.

*8) And he went up thence to Penuel, and spoke unto them likewise ... (KJV)*

They wanted food and water.

*8b) ... and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered [him].*

*9) And he spoke also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower. (KJV)*

Clarke’s Commentary says this: “Probably they had not only denied him, but insultingly pointed to a tower in which their chief defense lay and intimated to him that he might do his worst for they could defend themselves because of this tower.” They’re not afraid of Gideon. According to the culture of the day, Gideon had every right to ask his fellow Israelites for help. They were his fellow countrymen. The actions of those of Succoth and Penuel showed disloyalty and cowardice on their part and Gideon here was strong. Verse 12; I’ll read it out of the New King James.

*12) When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he (Gideon) pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.*

*15) Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom you did upbraid me, saying, [are] the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread unto your men [that are] weary?*

*16) And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. (NKJV)*

It means he taught them a lesson. He beat them bloody with the briers and scarred them. Think of this conduct compared to the way Gideon was when we first started.

17) *And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.*  
22) *Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule over us, both you and your son and your son's son also ... (KJV)*

They wanted to make him a king.

22b) *... for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian. (KJV)*

Notice what Gideon said.

23) *And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you. (KJV)*

The victory that God gave Gideon was so stupendous that the Israelites wanted to make him king. But he refused saying, "God is our King; only Him should we serve." He made sure that he impressed that upon the men of Israel.

Frankly I wish that the leaders of the greater Church of God today would do the same. Look to God.

What an accomplishment. What lessons can we learn? We will list these very briefly.

**First Lesson: God is patient with us and God encourages us when we need it.**

Look at how gently and patiently He dealt with Gideon. Gideon asked Him twice about the fleece. Now there's no ruling with a rod of iron here. Look at the number of times Christ encouraged him: fire from the staff, the fleece twice, the dream that the Midianite had. He encouraged him all the way and He was patient all the way through.

**Second Lesson: Through the power of the holy spirit, Gideon overcame his fear.**

What a lesson for us today. Gideon went from being a scared boy threshing grain while trying to hide, needing constant reassurance to defeating the 135,000-person army with 300 people and bringing Israel forty years of peace. He overcame his carnal human nature. He overcame his fear and he grew in faith.

**Third Lesson: After being exalted, he remained humble.**

He could have strutted around when they wanted to make him king. He could have had them make him king and he could have gloried in all the adulations, but he did not. After overcoming, he did not become puffed up. He refused to be elevated. He recognized God as their rightful ruler, and he set us an example that we should always look to God and not look to men.

Again I say with the greater Church of God, that is a lesson we all have to learn.

In conclusion, let's go to Hebrews 11: 35, back where we started. Talking about all of those listed in Hebrews 11 who overcame and who are awaiting the resurrection.

**Hebrews 11:35.** *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; (Why?) that they might obtain a better resurrection: (KJV)*

Gideon was one of those.

Did all of those listed in Hebrews 11 overcome with their own strength and their own power? Look at the example of Jesus Christ. Remember, Jesus Christ was the One talking with Gideon. He was the one directly dealing with him. We read earlier in John 16, Christ said, "I overcame the world." But did Christ overcome the world by His own strength? Let's see in John 5:19. Even Christ, did He do it out of His own strength?

In John 5, the context is about a man who was lame for 38 years. Christ had just healed him. What power and what authority that He could just come up to a man who had been lame for that length of time and have the man rise up and walk. I'll read it out of the New King James.

**John 5:19.** *Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." (NKJV)*

He didn't take credit for Himself. He reflected it on the Father. Look at verse 30.

**30)** *"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, (Why?) because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. (NKJV)*

Think of that. What humility. He said, "Everything I have is from the Father." The same power that was in Christ, that allowed Christ to overcome what He did is the same power that was in Gideon and allowed Gideon to do what he did. It's the same power in all of those mentioned in Hebrews 11, who are awaiting the resurrection.

The lesson for us is that's the same power available to each one of us. We can do nothing of ourselves, but through the power of God's holy spirit we can do anything that God wants us to do. It comes from the Father through Jesus Christ and it resides in each of us.

Let's close with a final scripture, 2 Timothy 1:6. We have this power. We have this spirit, the same that was in Gideon and the very spirit that is of God and Christ. Paul is telling Timothy something here that is very important, that as we get close to the end, we need to emphasize more and more.

**2 Timothy 1:6.** *Wherefore I put you in remembrance ... (KJV)*

He's reminding us as well as Timothy.

*6b) ... that you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands.*

*7) For God has not given us the spirit of fear ... (KJV)*

You see, this spirit cast out the fear that Gideon had.

*7b) ... but of power, and of love and of a sound mind. (KJV)*

The New Living Translation says: *This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. (NLT)*

Fan into flames, that is a perfect picture of what we need to be doing today. We need to fan into flames God's holy spirit that is in us through us talking to Him every day through prayer, and Him talking to us every day through Bible study, striving to keep our minds on things above and not things below, and to fan into flames God's holy spirit which then means it will burn hotter and hotter in each one of us.

Like Gideon and the rest of those in Hebrews chapter 11, we too can be counted on as those who overcame. We overcame our human nature, overcame the world and overcame Satan. We will be given then the greatest gift any human being can be given, eternal life as brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and the children of God Almighty.