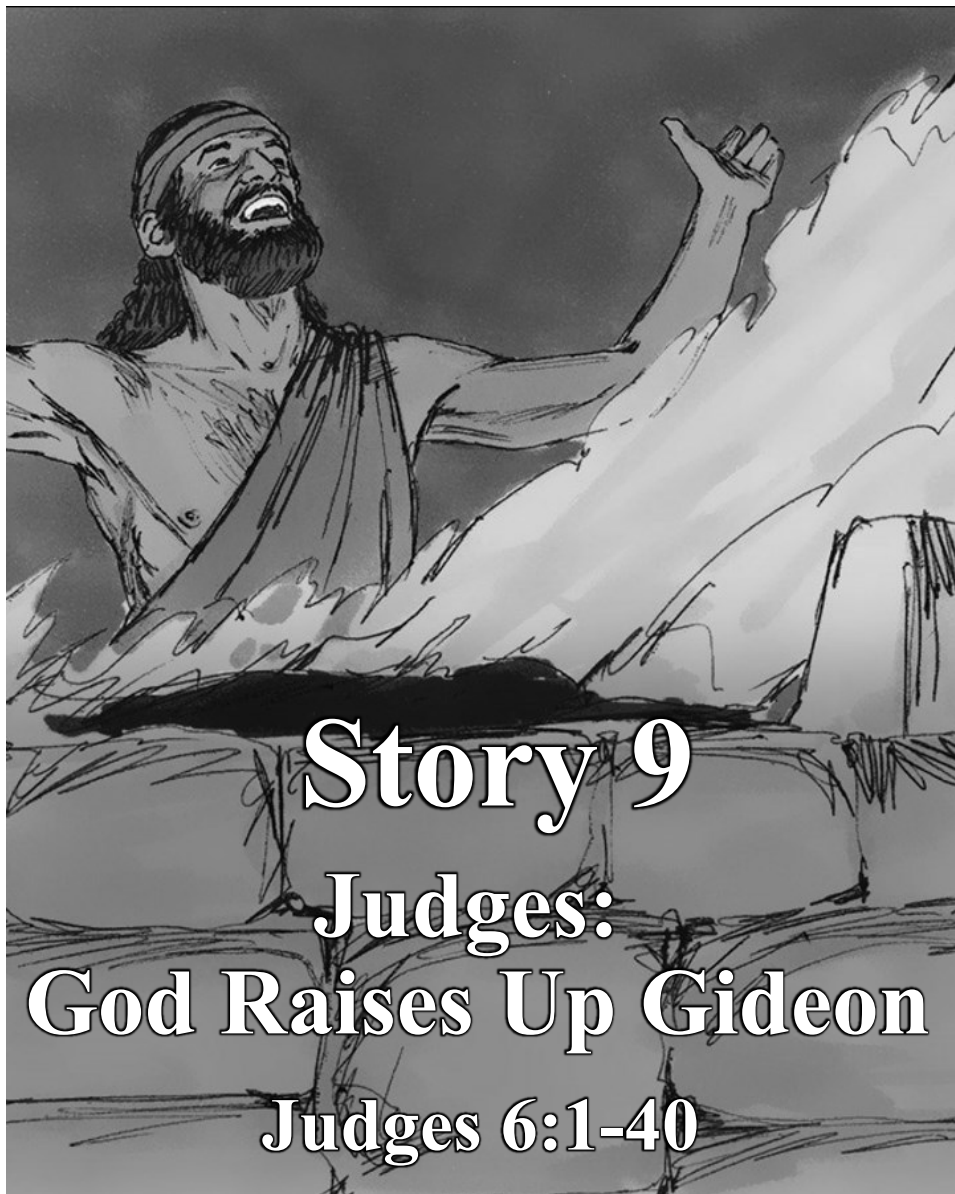


Story 9

Judges:
God Raises Up Gideon
Judges 6:1-40



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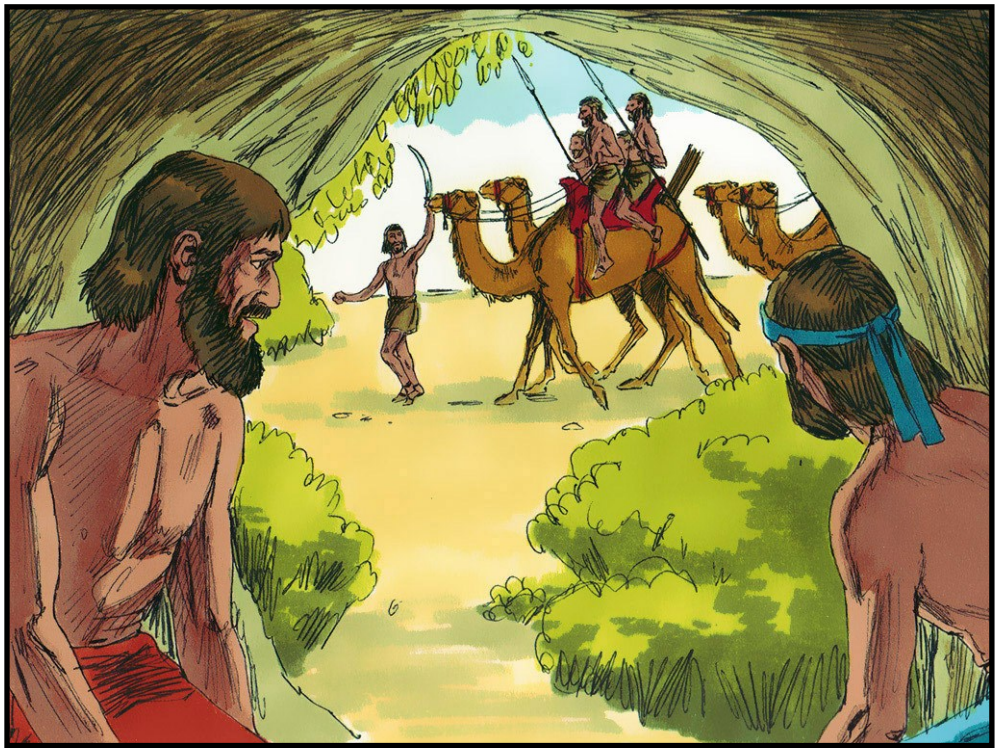


After Deborah's victory against King Jabin of the Canaanites, Israel had peace for 40 years.

Nevertheless, the Israelites once again turned their backs on God and did what was evil in His sight. The Israelites completely forgot how the LORD had saved them years ago. So God allowed a different nation to take them over. This time, it was the Midianites.



Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites, and Qedemites would attack them. They destroyed all the food in the land. Israel had nothing left to eat! Even their sheep, donkeys, and oxen were gone.

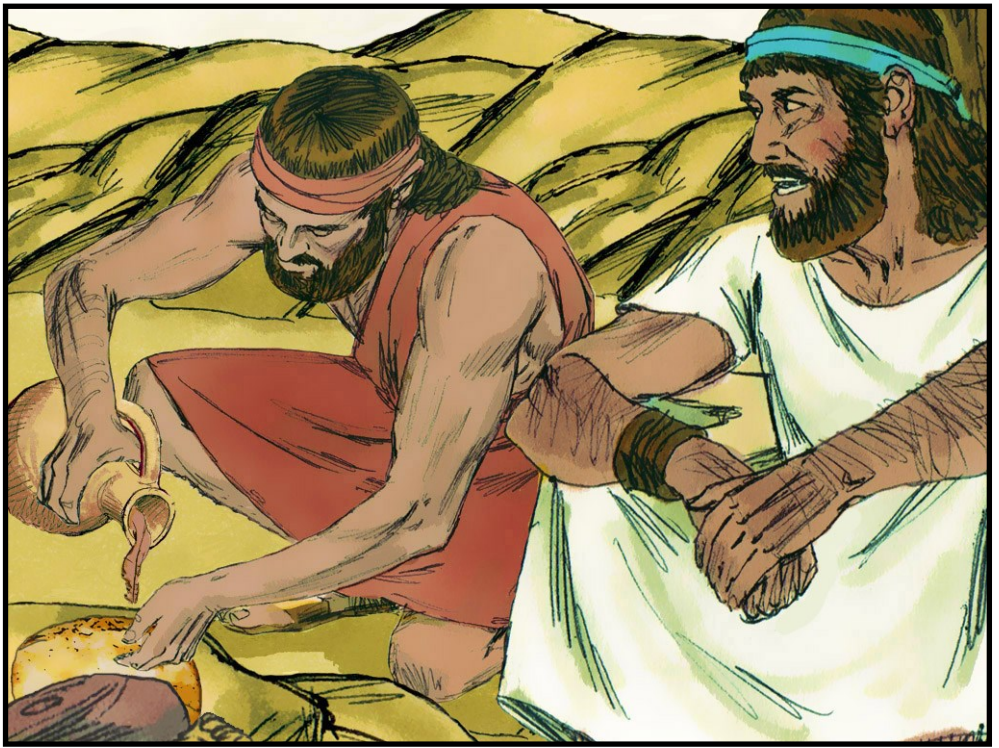


The Midianites came in like a swarm of locusts. They completely ruined the land. They moved about on camels, and they set up their tents and allowed their cattle to graze wherever they wanted. During that time, Israel became so poor that they cried out to God for help.



One day, a man named Gideon was secretly threshing his wheat in a winepress. He was from the town of Ophrah and he was hiding from the Midianites because he didn't want them to steal his food.

All of sudden, the LORD came and sat down under an oak tree nearby. He said to Gideon, "The LORD is with you, brave warrior."



Gideon answered, “If the LORD is with us, then why has all of this happened? Where are the amazing miracles that our fathers told us about when the LORD freed our people from Egypt?”

But the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have. You are the one that I’m sending to deliver Israel from the Midianites.”

“How?” said Gideon. “My clan and my family are the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh.”



The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down the whole army of Midian as if it were only one man.”

Gideon turned to Him and said, “If I have found favor with you, please give me a sign so that I’ll know that you are really the LORD.”

So after Gideon prepared some meat and bread, the LORD told Gideon to place it on a stone. When the LORD touched it with His staff, fire came up from the rock and completely consumed the food!



After this happened, the LORD vanished. When Gideon realized that he had been talking with the LORD, he said, “Oh no! LORD God, I have seen you face to face! I will surely die.”

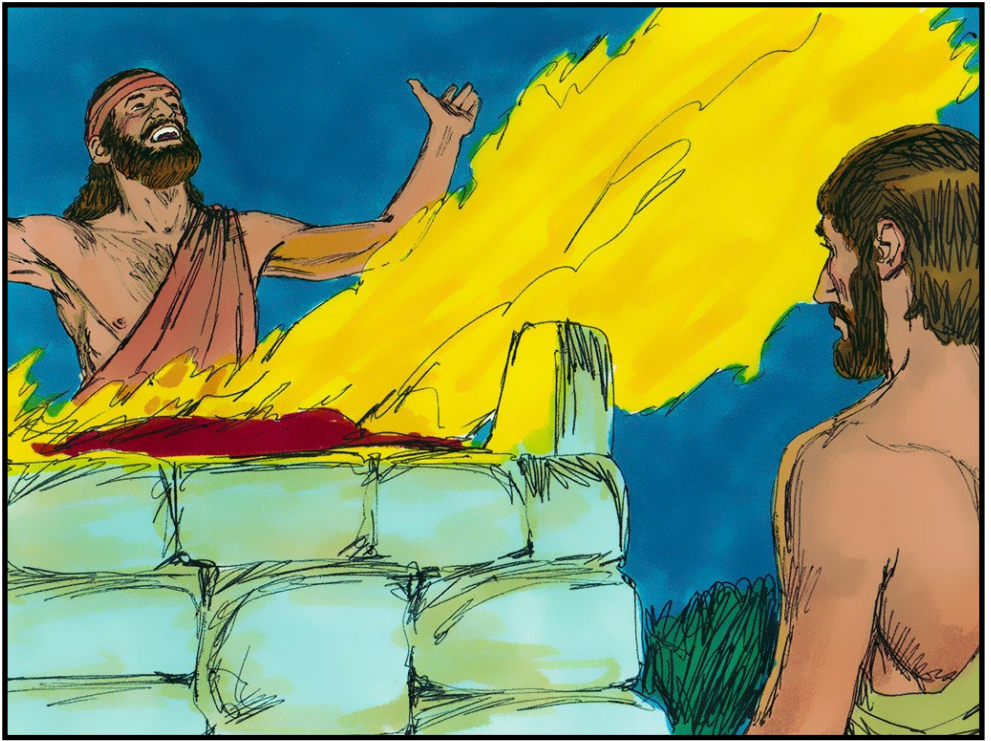
The voice of the LORD spoke to Gideon saying, “Be at peace. Don’t be afraid. Nothing will happen to you.”

So Gideon built an altar there and called it “The Lord is Peace.”

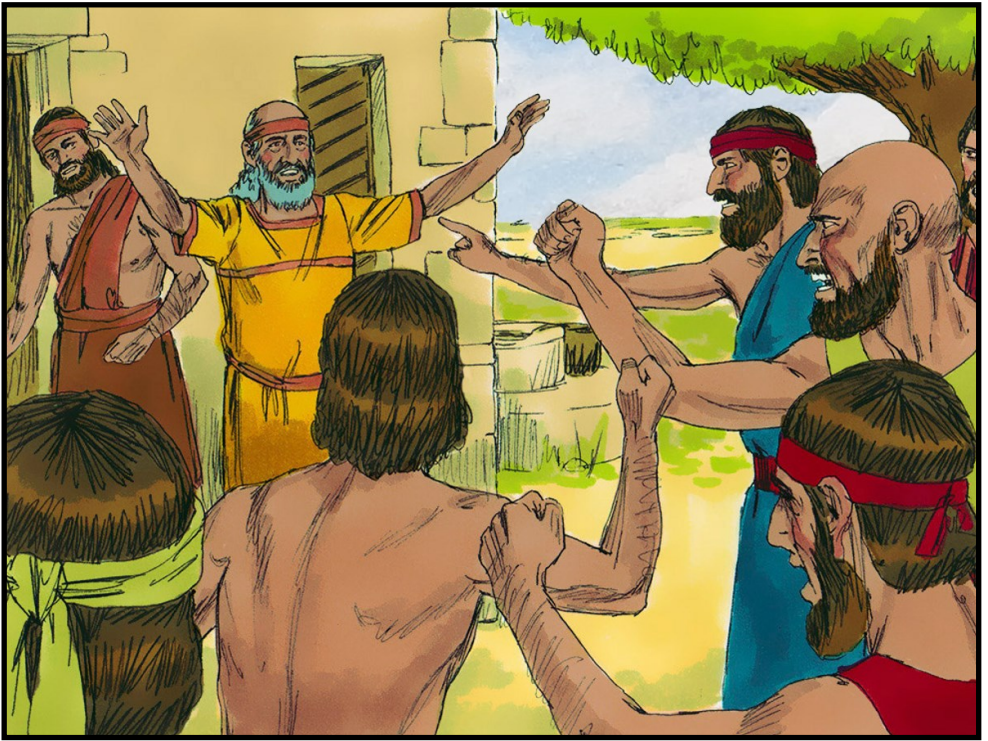


On that very night, the LORD said to Gideon, “Take your family’s bull and tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father. Also, there’s an Ashera pole right next to it. I want you to cut it down. These things are used to worship other gods.”

So Gideon took 10 of his servants and did exactly as the LORD asked him to do. They worked secretly at night because Gideon feared getting caught by his family and the people of the town.



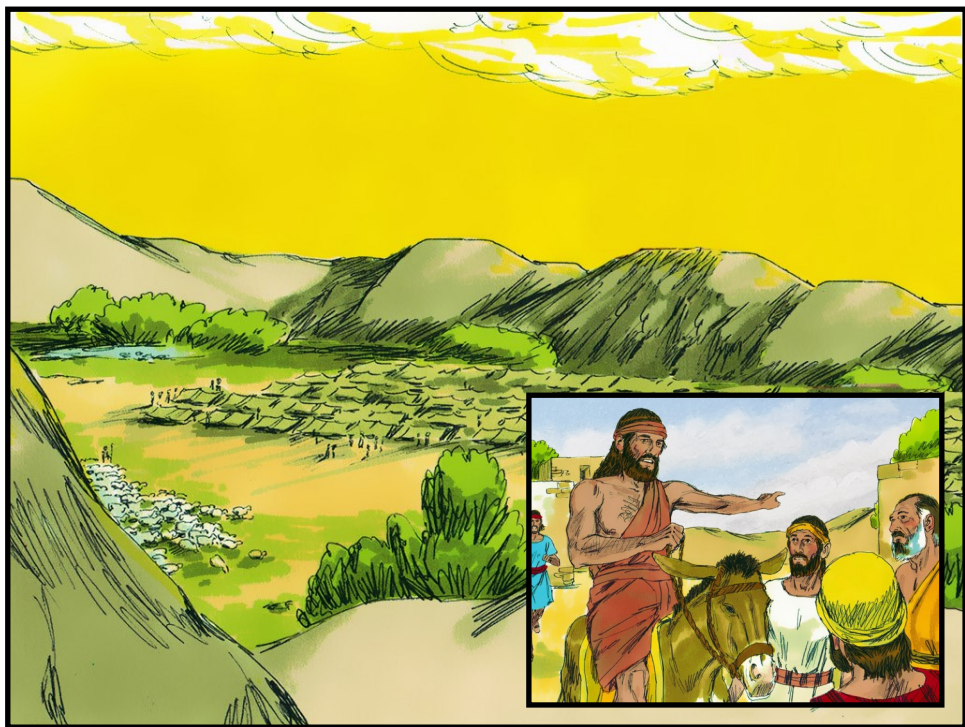
The LORD also told Gideon, “Take a second bull—one that’s seven years old—and offer it up to me. Use the wood from the Asherah pole that you just cut down.” So Gideon did just as the LORD commanded.



When the men of the town got up the next morning, they found that the altar of Baal and the Asherah pole next to it had both been destroyed.

They said to Gideon's father, Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die since he tore down Baal's altar.

However, Joash said, "If Baal is really a god, then he should be the one to come against my son." So Gideon was allowed to live.



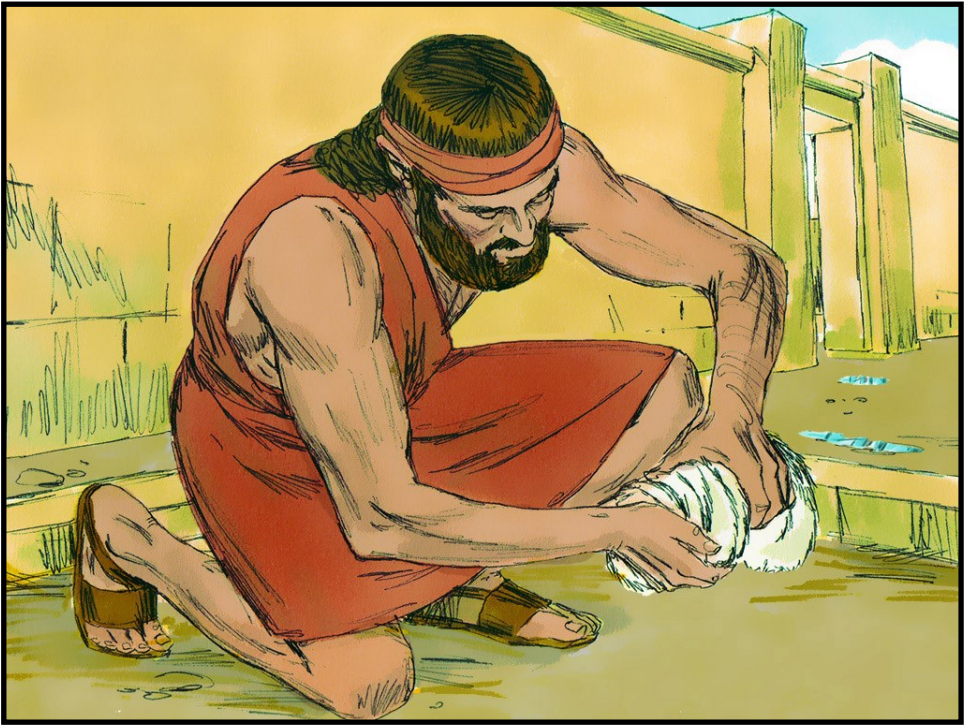
All of the Midianites, Amalekites, and Qedemites came together after crossing the Jordan River and camped in the Jezreel Valley.

But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon. He blew his ram's horn and sent out messengers to the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. Many men from these tribes came to meet with him.



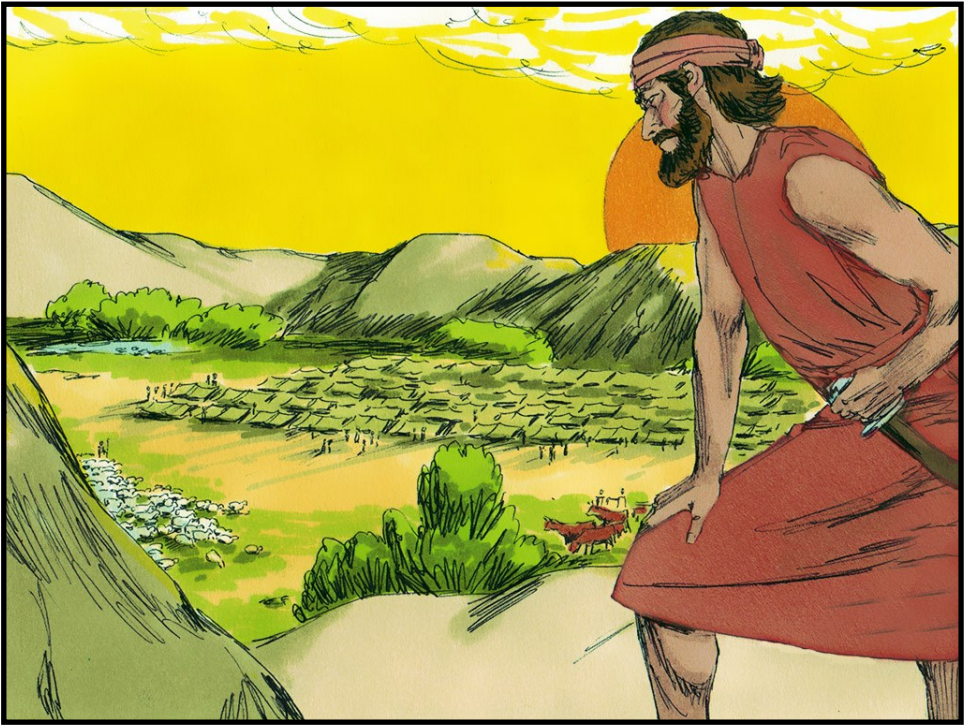
But even after Gideon had mustered up so much support, he still wanted to make sure God was with him. He said to the LORD, “If you’ve really chosen me to deliver Israel from the Midianites, please let me know.”

So he placed a wool fleece outside. He asked the LORD to let it be wet the following morning, but to have the ground around it be dry. When he awoke the next day, it was just as he had prayed.



Gideon, then, said to God, “Please don’t be angry with me. Let me do just one more test with the fleece. Tomorrow morning, let it be the other way around. Let the fleece be dry and the ground around it be wet.”

That night, again, God did just as Gideon asked. When Gideon awoke, the fleece was dry and the ground around it was wet.



Now Gideon was sure that the LORD had chosen him and his small army to deliver Israel from the 135,000 soldiers encamped in the valley of Jezreel.

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kids

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