

# Open Bible Stories - The Deliverers

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## Introduction

### Key Idea

The story of the deliverers teaches us about the seriousness of sin and God's grace to rescue his people when they call out to him in faith.

### Core Belief Verse

*"And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Acts 13:19-20"*

### God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery.

God sent judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

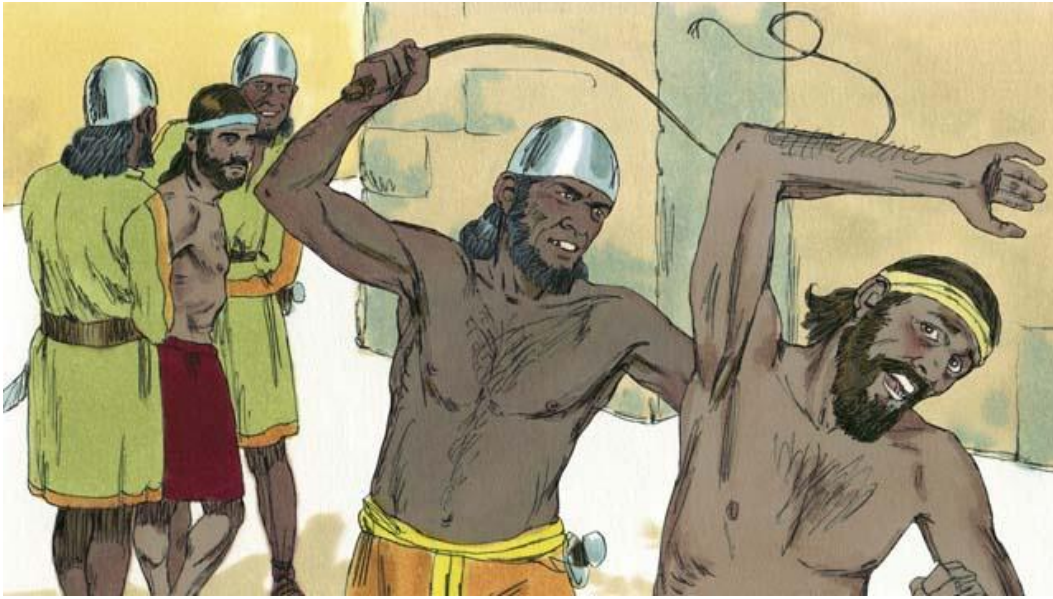
## The Story: The Deliverers

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16-01



After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God. They did not obey God's laws, and they did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites from the Promised Land. The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the true God. The Israelites had no king, so everyone did what they thought was right for themselves.



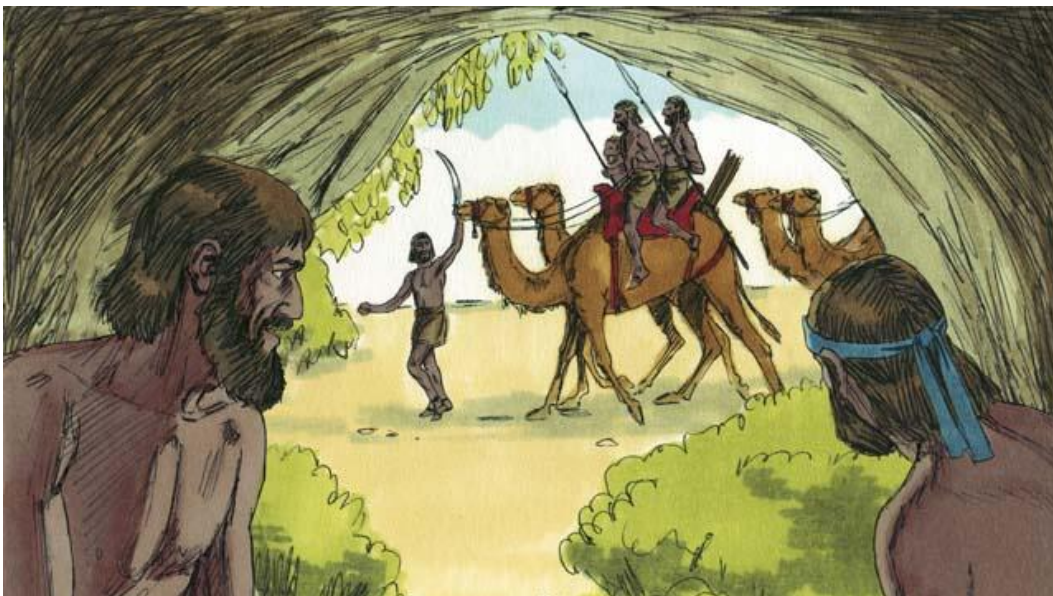
By disobeying God, the Israelites started a pattern that repeated many times. The pattern went like this: the Israelites would disobey God for several years, then he would punish them by allowing their enemies to defeat them. These enemies would steal things from the Israelites, destroy their property, and kill many of them. Then after Israel's enemies oppressed them for many years, the Israelites would repent of their sin and ask God to rescue them.

16-03



Each time the Israelites repented, God would rescue them. He did this by providing a deliverer---a person who would fight against their enemies and defeat them. Then there would be peace in the land and the deliverer would rule over them well. God sent many deliverers to rescue the people. God did this again after he allowed the Midianites, a nearby enemy people group, to defeat the Israelites.

16-04



The Midianites took all of the Israelites' crops for seven years. The Israelites were so scared, they hid in caves so the Midianites would not find them. Finally, they cried out to God to save them.

16-05



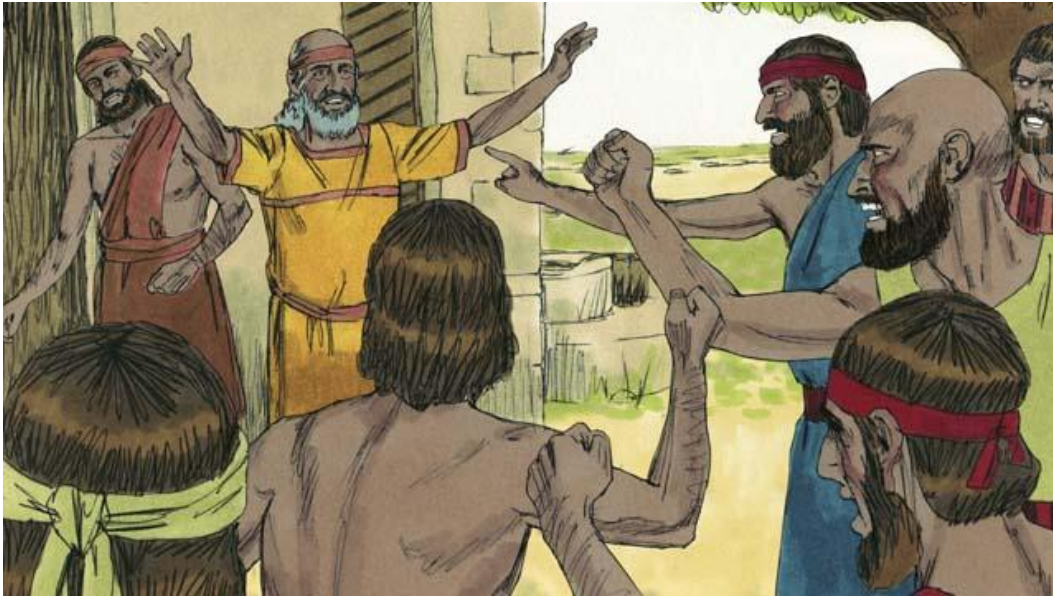
There was an Israelite man name Gideon. One day, he was threshing grain in a hidden place so the Midianites would not steal it. The angel of Yahweh came to Gideon and said, "God is with you, mighty warrior. Go and save Israel from the Midianites."

16-06



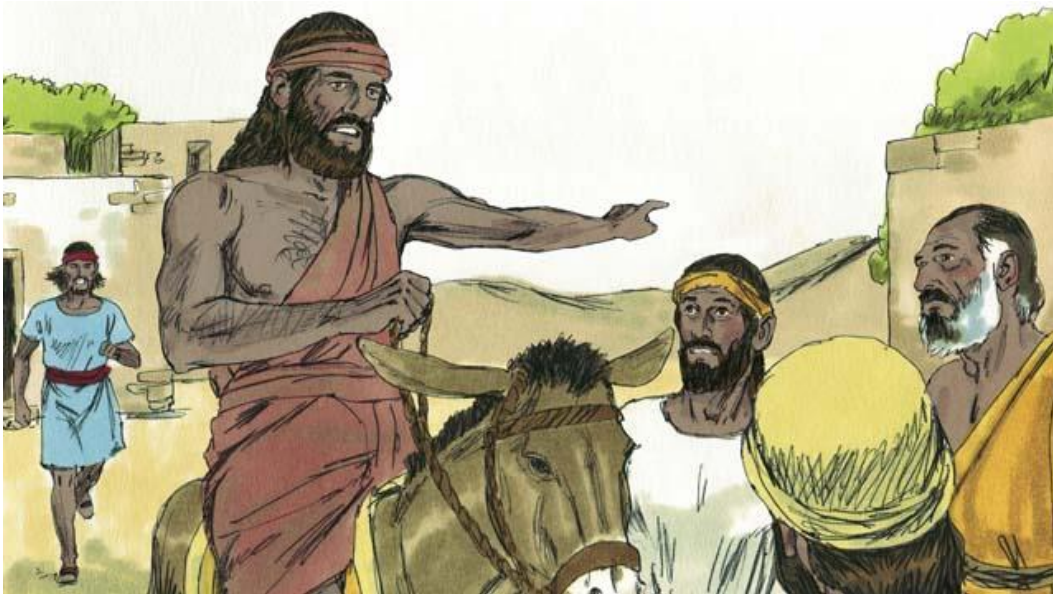
Gideon's father had an altar dedicated to an idol. The first thing God told Gideon to do was to tear down that altar. But Gideon was afraid of the people, so he waited until nighttime. Then he tore down the altar and smashed it to pieces. He built a new altar to God nearby and made a sacrifice to God on it.

16-07



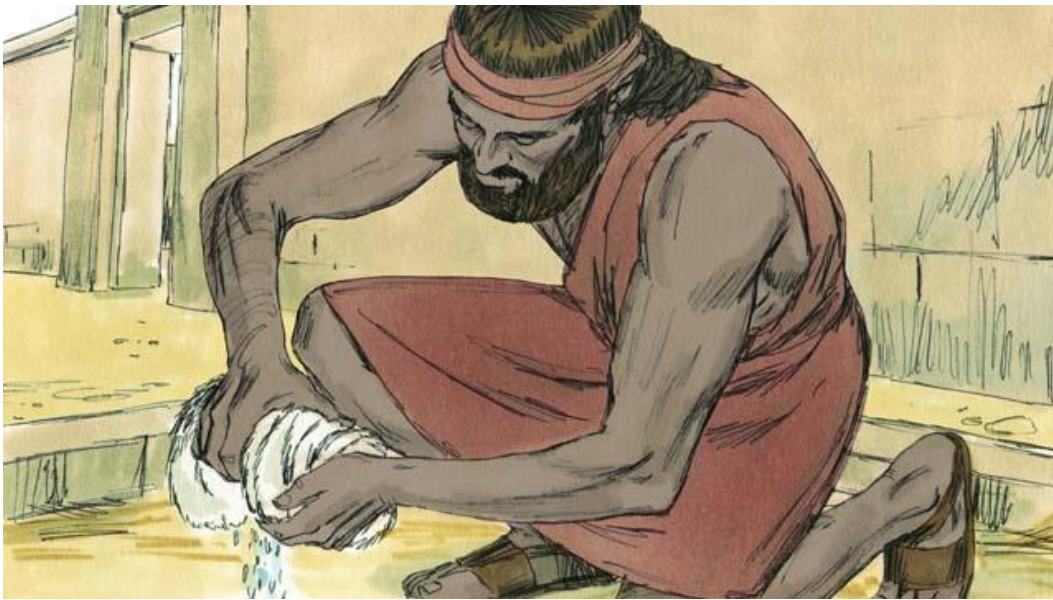
The next morning the people saw that someone had torn down and destroyed the altar, and they were very angry. They went to Gideon's house to kill him, but Gideon's father said, "Why are you trying to help your god? If he is a god, let him protect himself!" Because he said this, the people did not kill Gideon.

16-08



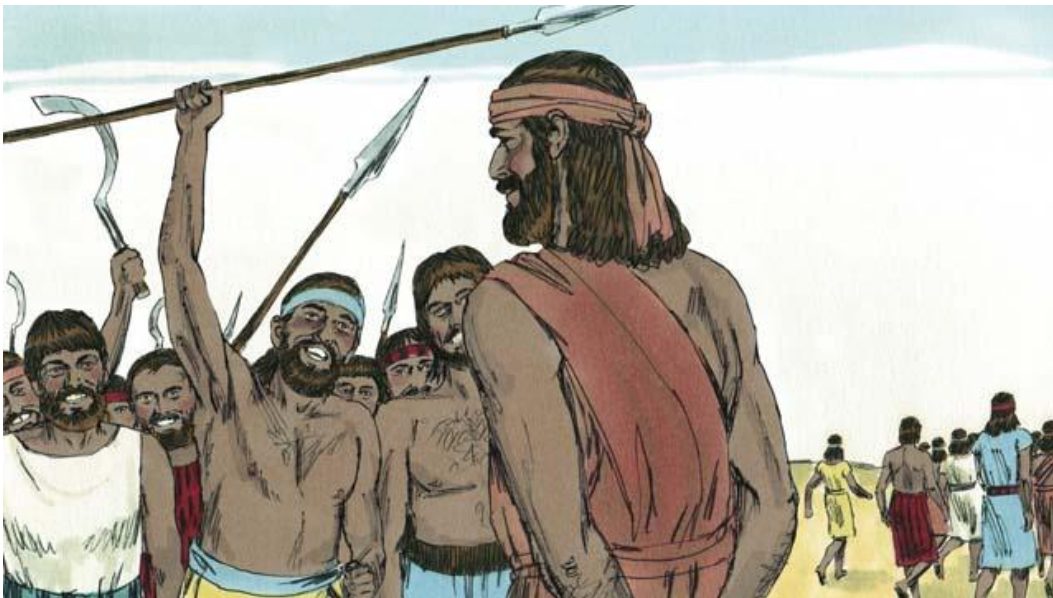
Then the Midianites came again to steal from the Israelites. There were so many of them that they could not be counted. Gideon called the Israelites together to fight them. Gideon asked God for two signs so he could be sure that God was really telling him to save Israel.

16-09



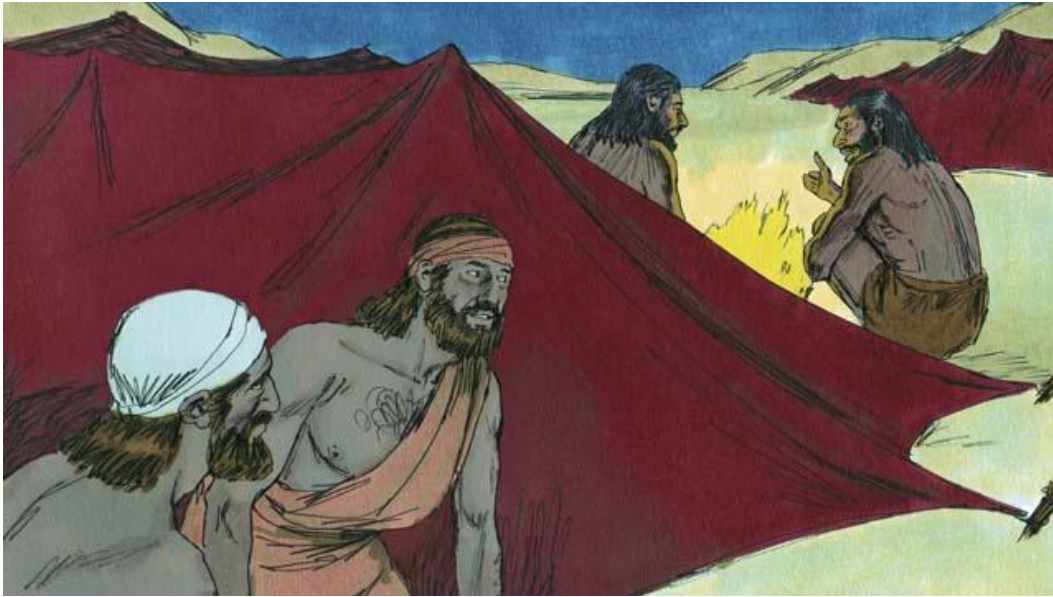
For the first sign, Gideon laid a sheep skin on the ground and asked God to let the morning dew fall only on the sheep skin and not on the ground. God did that. The next night, he asked that the ground be wet but the sheep skin dry. God did that, too. Because of these two signs, Gideon believed that God really wanted him to save Israel from the Midianites.

16-10



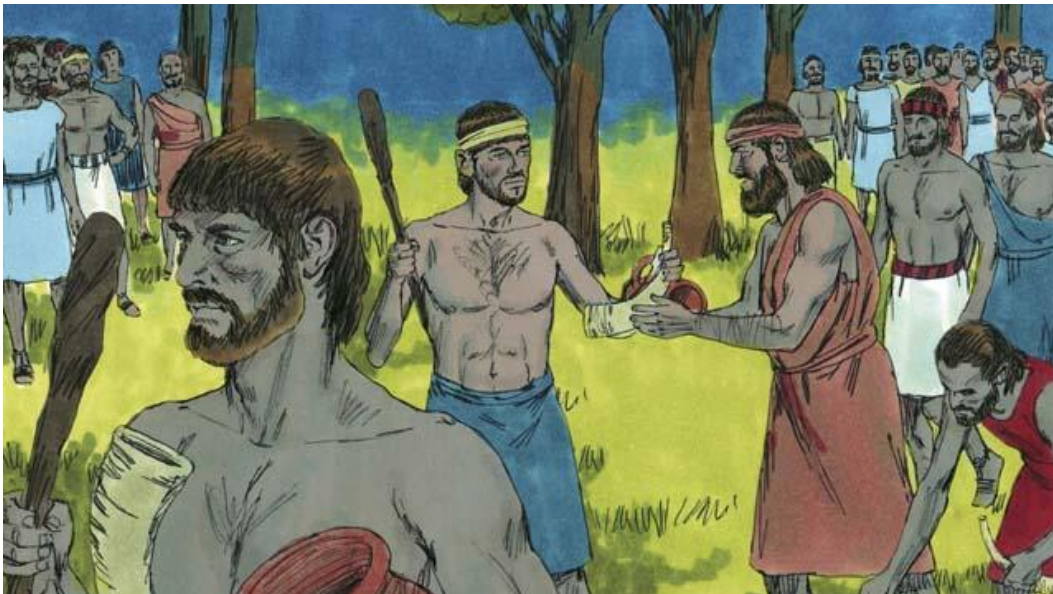
Then Gideon called for soldiers to come to him, and 32,000 men came. But God told him this was too many. So Gideon sent home 22,000 men, all who were afraid to fight. God told Gideon that he still had too many men. So Gideon sent all of them home except for 300 soldiers.

16-11



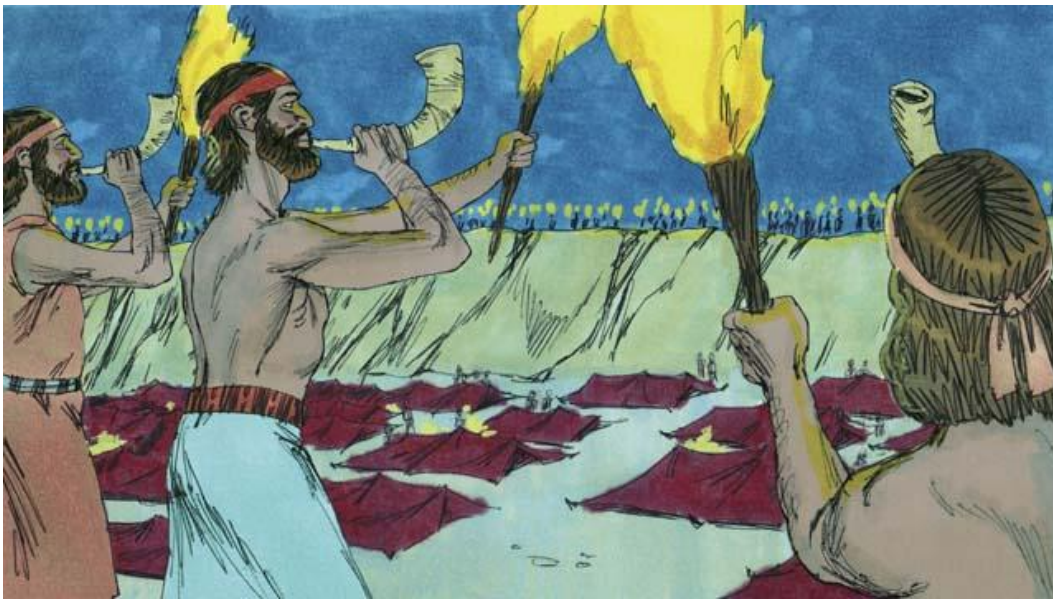
That night God told Gideon, "Go down to the Midianite camp and listen to them talk. When you hear what they say, you will no longer be afraid to attack them." So that night, Gideon went down to the camp and heard a Midianite soldier telling his friend about something he had dreamed. The man's friend said, "This dream means that Gideon's army will defeat us, the Midianite army!" When Gideon heard this, he worshiped God.

16-12



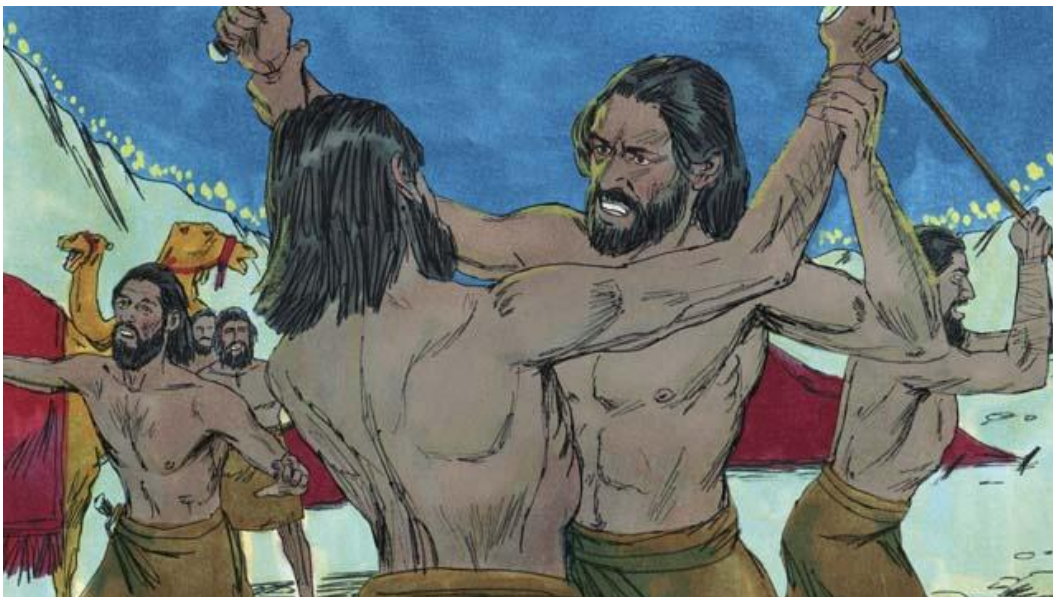
Then Gideon returned to his soldiers and gave each of them a horn, a clay pot, and a burning torch. They surrounded the camp where the Midianite soldiers were sleeping. Gideon's 300 soldiers had the torches in the pots so the Midianites could not see the light of the torches.

16-13



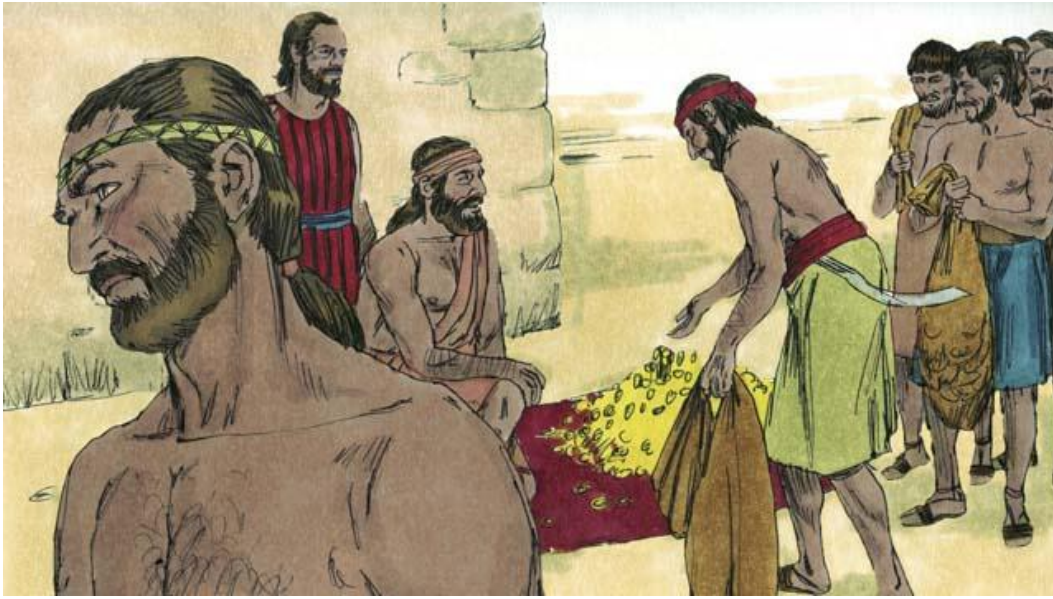
Then, all of Gideon's soldiers broke their pots at the same moment, suddenly revealing the fire of the torches. They blew their horns and shouted, "A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon!"

16-14



God confused the Midianites so that they started attacking and killing each other. Immediately, Gideon sent messengers to call many other Israelites to come from their homes and help chase the Midianites. They killed many of them and chased the rest of them out of the Israelites' land. God caused 120,000 Midianites to die that day. This is how God saved Israel.

16-15



The people wanted to make Gideon their king. Gideon did not allow them to do this, but he asked them for some of the gold rings that each of them had taken from the Midianites. The people gave Gideon a large amount of gold.

16-16



Then Gideon used the gold to make a special garment like the high priest used to wear. But the people started worshiping it as if it were an idol. So God punished Israel again because they worshiped idols. God allowed their enemies to defeat them. They finally asked God for help again, and God sent them another deliverer to rescue them.

16-17



This same thing happened many times: the Israelites would sin, God would punish them, they would repent, and God would send someone to rescue them. Over many years, God sent many deliverers who saved the Israelites from their enemies.

16-18



Finally, the people asked God for a king like all the other nations had. They wanted a king who was tall and strong, and who could lead them into battle. God did not like this request, but he gave them a king just as they had asked.

*A Bible story from: Judges 1-3; 6-8; 1 Samuel 1-10*

## Personal Transformation - Renewing Your Mind

- **Key Idea:** aligning our thoughts with the truth as a means of growth
- **Key Passage:** Romans 12:1-2
- **Main Session:** OBS 16 (The Deliverers)

### Sing a Song (3-5 minutes)

Choose a song that praises God for his victory over sin. Sing this song to celebrate the victory that Jesus has given believers.

### Recite the Core Belief Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

*And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Acts 13:19-20*

OR

*For everyone who is born from God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 1 John 5:4*

### Think About Your Culture (5 minutes)

It is difficult to be a follower of Jesus. Many pressures from the world try to cause us to live against Jesus' teachings. Think about how the values and beliefs of your culture try to cause you to live in a way that does not please God.

The world (culture) wants us to think and act like this...

But God wants us to us to think and act like...

### Read the Passage (5 minutes)

By God's power, Christians can experience victory over sin. When Christians experience this victory, they start to live their lives in a way that pleases God. Read the passage below to understand how God causes our lives to change in a way that pleases him.

*1 I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. This is your reasonable service. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Do this to know what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Romans 12:1-2*

**Explore the Idea** (10-15 minutes)

God commands Christians to stop living like unbelievers in the world. God wants believers to live in a way that pleases God. After reading the passage above, use the following questions to help your community discuss biblical teaching on personal life transformation.

1. What commands does God give in this passage? How does God instruct us to live?
2. How does this passage explain the way Christians experience transformation and change in their lives? How does the world/culture try to shape people into its own ways?
3. How have you experienced God's change in your own life? In what areas of your life does God want to give you victory?
4. Why is it important for your community to practice these principles of personal transformation?

**Share Your Story** (10 minutes)

Because of Jesus, God gives his people victory. Think about the ways God has caused you to overcome significant challenges and hardships. Share ways that you have experienced God's victory in your own life.

Because of Jesus, God has given (is giving me) me victory over...

**Pray to God** (5 minutes)

Pray for your community not to be conformed to the world. Ask that God would allow members of your community to experience real change and transformation in their personal lives.

## **Movement 1: Understand the Story**

*Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.*

### **Observation Questions**

16-01

How did the Israelites disobey God after Joshua died?

The Israelites did not obey God's laws, they did not drive out the Canaanites, and they worshiped the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the true God.

Did the Israelites have a king?

No. At this time, the Israelites had no king.

How did the Israelites behave without a king?

Because the Israelites had no king, everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

*16-02*

What was the pattern of the Israelites disobedience?

The Israelites developed a pattern that repeated many times: the Israelites disobeyed God, God punished the Israelites by allowing their enemies to defeat them, and the Israelites repented and asked God to rescue them.

How did God punish the Israelites for their disobedience?

God allowed their enemies to defeat them. These enemies would steal things from the Israelites, destroy their property, and kill their people.

How did Israel respond after many years of being oppressed?

After being oppressed for many years, the Israelites would repent and ask God to rescue them.

*16-03*

How did God respond when the Israelites cried out for help?

Each time the Israelite repented, God would rescue his people by sending them a deliverer.

How did the deliverer rescue Israel?

The deliverer would fight against Israel's enemies, defeat them, bring peace in the land, and rule over the Israelites.

How many deliverers did God send?

God sent many deliverers.

Who were the Midianites?

The Midianites were an enemy people who lived near the Israelites. God allowed the Midianites to defeat the Israelites.

16-04

How did the Midianites attack the Israelites?

The Midianites took all of the Israelites' crops for seven years.

How did the Israelites respond to the Midianite attacks?

The Israelites were scared of the Midianites and hid in caves. Eventually, the Israelites cried out to God to save them.

16-05

What was Gideon doing when the angel of Yahweh came to him?

Gideon was threshing grain secretly so the Midianites would not steal it.

Who came to Gideon?

The angel of Yahweh came to Gideon.

What did the angel say to Gideon?

The angel of Yahweh told Gideon that God was with him. God called him a mighty warrior. God told Gideon to save Israel from the Midianites.

16-06

What was the first thing God told Gideon to do?

The first thing God told Gideon to do was to tear down his father's altar which was dedicated to an idol.

How did Gideon respond to God's instruction?

Gideon was afraid of the people and waited until it was night.

What did Gideon do at nighttime?

At night, Gideon tore down the altar and smashed it in pieces. Then, he built a new altar to God and sacrificed on it.

16-07

How did the people respond in the morning?

In the morning the people were angry when they saw the altar destroyed. They went to Gideon's house to kill him.

What did Gideon's father tell the people?

Gideon's father asked the people why they were trying to help their god. He exclaimed that if the idol was a god he should be able to protect himself.

How did the people respond to Gideon's father?

The people did not kill Gideon because of what Gideon's father said.

*16-08*

How many were the Midianites when they came again to steal from the Israelites?

The Midianites were so many that they could not be counted.

What did Gideon do when the Midianites came to steal from the Israelites?

Gideon called the Israelites together to fight against the Midianites.

What did Gideon ask God?

Gideon asked God for two signs so that he could be certain God was really telling him to save Israel from the Midianites.

*16-09*

What two signs did God do to prove that he would save Israel through Gideon?

God made the morning dew fall only on the sheepskin and not the ground, and then the dew fell only on the ground and not the sheepskin.

What did Gideon think of these signs?

Because of these signs, Gideon believed God really wanted him to save the Israelites from the Midianites.

*16-10*

How did the size of Gideon's army change?

When he called for soldiers, 32,000 men came. Then he sent home 22,000 who were afraid to fight. Then he sent more home until he had 300 hundred men.

Why did Gideon send home all except 300 of the soldiers?

Gideon sent them home because God told him he had too many men.

*16-11*

What did God tell Gideon to do at night?

God told Gideon to go down to the Midianite camp and listen to them talk.

What additional sign did God give Gideon so he would not be afraid?

Gideon heard a Midianite soldier tell of his dream that Gideon's army would defeat the Midianite army.

What did Gideon do when he heard the Midianite soldier's dream?

Gideon worshiped God.

*16-12*

What did Gideon do when he returned to his soldiers?

When he returned to his soldiers, Gideon gave them each a horn, a clay pot, and a burning torch.

After this, what did the soldiers do?

Gideon's 300 soldiers surrounded the Midianite camp with their torches in the pots so the Midianites could not see the light of the torches.

*16-13*

How did Gideon and his men attack the Midianites?

They surrounded the Midianite camp, broke their pots to reveal their torches, and blew their horns and shouted, "A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon."

*16-14*

What did God do to help Gideon defeat the Midianites?

God confused the Midianites so they attacked and killed each other.

What did Gideon tell the Israelites?

Gideon told the Israelites to come from their homes and chase the Midianites.

What happened to the Midianites?

The Israelites killed many Midianites and chased the rest out of the land. God caused 120,000 Midianites to die.

*16-15*

After defeating the Midianites, what did the people want to do to Gideon?

The people wanted to make Gideon their king.

How did Gideon respond?

Gideon did not allow them to make him their king. Gideon asked for some gold rings taken from the Midianites.

How much gold did the people give Gideon?

The people gave a large amount of gold.

*16-16*

What did Gideon do with the gold?

Gideon used the gold to make a special garment like the high priest used to wear.

How did the people treat this special garment made of gold?

The people later began to worship it as an idol.

What did God do to the Israelites because of their worship of the idol?

God punished Israel and allowed their enemies to defeat them. Eventually, they asked God for help and he sent another deliverer to rescue them.

*16-17*

What did the Israelites do many times?

The Israelites would sin, God would punish them, they would repent, and God would send a deliverer to save them.

*16-18*

Why did the people ask God for a king?

All the other nations had kings, and the Israelites wanted someone to lead them into battle.

How did God answer their request?

God did not like their request, but he gave them a king, just as they had asked.

## **Movement 2: Theological Questions**

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### **What Does This Story Teach Us?**

1. What does it mean to be disobedient to God? How does the unfaithfulness of Gideon and Israel teach us about our own disobedience?
2. How does God bring about deliverance for his people? How does the story of Gideon teach us about God's work to rescue his people?
3. What does it mean to be called by God to serve him? How does the story of Gideon teach us about God calling people to serve him?
4. What are some of the things that cause God's people to disobey? How did Gideon and Israel fail to live up to God's standards?

## Movement 3: Live It Out

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### Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

*Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.*

1. How can you see a pattern of disobedience in your own life?
2. How might God be calling you to serve him? How might God want to use you for his purposes in the world?
3. From what do you need to be rescued? How have you experienced God's rescue and salvation in your own life?
4. Think about this week. Where does "The Deliverers" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of the deliverers teaches us about the seriousness of sin and God's grace to rescue his people when they call out to him in faith.

## Movement 4: Retell the Story

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*Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.*

1. Can someone retell "The Deliverers" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

### Church Ministry

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

**Ministry Preparation:** Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. What setting, audience, or approach would you use? Record your ideas below.

**Ministry Implementation:** Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching or lead a discussion. Record your ministry plan below.

**Ministry Reflection:** Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. What went well? What would you do differently? Reflect on your experience below.

## **Movement 5: Share It**

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*Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.*

1. Who is one specific person you will share "The Deliverers" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

### **Mission Engagement**

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

**Witness Preparation:** Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. What context, relationship, or opportunity will you use? Record your ideas below.

**Witness Implementation:** Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a natural conversation or teaching. Record your plan below.

**Witness Reflection:** Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. What did they respond to? What questions did they ask? Reflect on your experience below.