

Lesson 8: Grace

Today's Bible Story

In the days of the Judges, the Midianites were the enemies of God's people. They had stolen the Israelites' land and driven them into the hills. So God called Gideon to lead his people in war. Thirty-two thousand Israelites came to join Gideon's army.

The Lord said, "Gideon, your army is too big. I can't let you win with this many soldiers. The Israelites would think that they had won the battle by themselves, without me. So tell all those who are afraid that they can go home." Twenty-two thousand men returned home, leaving Gideon with only ten thousand soldiers.

The Lord said, "You still have too many soldiers. Take them down to the spring and I will divide them." God told Gideon to watch how each man took a drink of water. He told Gideon to set aside only the few men who lapped the water from their hands, saying, "I will rescue Israel. With just these three hundred men, I will defeat the Midianites."

Gideon divided his small army into three groups and gave each soldier a trumpet and a large clay jar with a burning torch inside. Gideon said, "Surround the enemy camp and wait for my signal. When I blow my trumpet, you blow yours as well, and shout, 'For the Lord and for Gideon!'"

Gideon and his soldiers blew their trumpets and smashed the clay jars that were hiding the torches. The sudden appearance of lights and noise frightened the Midianites into confusion. They began fighting their own men in the darkness, thinking they were the enemy. When the Israelites shouted, "For the Lord and for Gideon!" — the enemy soldiers ran away in fear.

God had won the victory for the Israelites.

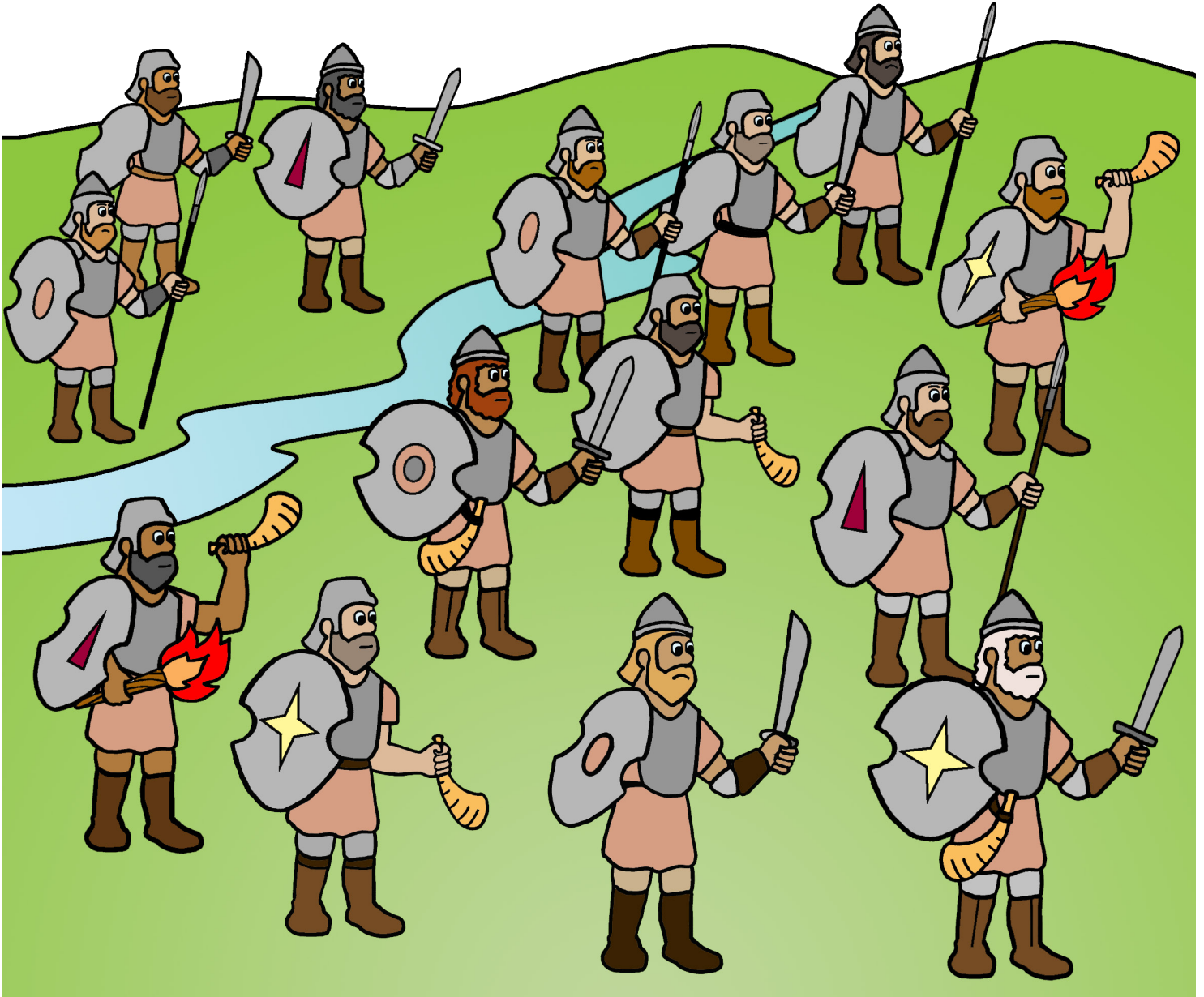


From Judges 7:1-23

Bible Rhyme

Gideon led a mighty army,
but God said that he had too many.
They would claim, when they had won,
the credit for what God had done.
So God had Gideon send home thousands,
but there was still a crowd around him.
So God subtracted 'til they numbered
one small group of just three hundred.
Around the camp of enemy forces, they
smashed the jars that held their torches.
With trumpets blown at God's command,
God drove the bad guys from the land.

God chose Gideon to lead the army of his people; but God wanted to prove that he himself was the one who would rescue the Israelites. By a process of elimination, God reduced Gideon's army from 32,000 men to just 300 men.



Go through the Israelite army above and follow these instructions, until you are left with just the few men God will use to defeat the Midianites:

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| 1. Cross out the soldiers that have no mark on their shield ... | How many are left? _____ |
| 2. Cross out the soldiers that are above the stream ... | How many are left? _____ |
| 3. Cross out the soldiers that have no trumpet ... | How many are left? _____ |
| 4. Cross out the soldiers don't have a star on their shield ... | How many are left? _____ |