

# Harod Spring

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- A fountain . . . spring . . . near which Gideon and his army encamped on the morning of the day when they encountered and routed the Midianites as recorded in Judges 7
- Harod is located south of the Hill of Moreh . . . south of Jezreel.
- **STORY OF GIDEON** . . . . . GID'EON (Hebrew: gid'on, "tree feller," i.e., "warrior"). The son of Joash the Abi-ezrite, of the tribe of Manasseh; resided at Ophrah in Gilead, beyond the Jordan.
- Condition of Israel. Another relapse into evil brought Israel under the oppression of the Midianites for seven years. With Midian were allied Amalek and "the sons of the east" (of Jordan). Their power pressed so severely upon the Israelites that they "made for themselves the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds." God had given them a land that flowed with milk and Honey, and now they were fleeing into caves in the hills in which to live. Sin does terrible things to people. The allies encamped in their territory, destroyed the crops "as far as Gaza," and left "no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey," so that Israel was greatly impoverished (Judges 6:1-6). But before helping them the Lord sent an unnamed prophet to reprove them for their disobedience and bring them to repentance.
- **CALL OF GIDEON.** In such a time of distress Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress to conceal it from the Midianites. While thus engaged the angel of the Lord appeared to him and addressed him in these words: "The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior." To this Gideon made the despondent reply, "If the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?" Then Jehovah (revealing Himself) said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" Doubtful of the means by which he might accomplish so great a work, he requested a sign from heaven. This was granted to him; for when he

presented his offering of a kid and unleavened cakes, the angel touched it, and it was consumed by fire. Recognizing Jehovah, he was filled with fear; but being comforted he built an altar and called it "The Lord is Peace" (Judges 6:11-24).

■ **DESTROYS AN ALTAR OF BAAL.** The first thing for Gideon to do was to purify his father's house from idolatry and sanctify himself by sacrificing a burnt offering. That night God commanded him to tear down the altar of Baal belonging to his father and cut down the grove near it. Then he was to build an altar to the Lord and offer on it a seven-year-old bull of his father's. Assisted by ten servants, Gideon obeyed the vision probably during the following night, through fear of those around. Gideon, being identified as the perpetrator of the act, was in danger of being stoned; but his father took the part of his son and told the people to allow Baal to plead for himself. From this circumstance Gideon received the name of Jerubbaal, i.e., "let Baal contend" (Judges 6:25-32).

■ **THE SIGN OF THE FLEECE.** When the Midianites and their allies once more invaded the land of Israel, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he gathered together an army from the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. Before going into battle he asked for a sign from God of the success of his undertaking. He asked that the dew should fall on a fleece spread upon the threshing floor, while the ground all around should be dry. In the morning the fleece was so wet that Gideon wrung out of it a bowl of water. The next night the wonder was reversed, the soil being wet and the fleece perfectly dry (Judg 6:36-40). **"The sign itself was to manifest the strength of divine assistance to his weakness of faith. Dew, in the Scriptures, is a symbol of the beneficent power of God, which quickens, revives, and invigorates the objects of nature when they have been parched by the burning heat of the sun's rays"**

■ **MIDIANITES DEFEATED.** Assured by this double sign, Gideon advanced against the enemy and encamped near the brook Harod, in the valley of Jezreel. The army of the Midianites and their allies numbered about 135,000 (Judg 8:10), whereas the Israelites mustered only 32,000. Nevertheless, "The Lord said to Gideon, 'The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, lest Israel become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.'" (7:2). Gideon, therefore, made the usual proclamation (Deut 20:8), that all the fainthearted might withdraw; and 22,000 availed themselves of this opportunity. Even this number the Lord regarded as too great, and

Gideon was commanded to test them in the matter of drinking. Those who knelt to drink were rejected, and only those were chosen who lapped the water with the tongue, "as a dog laps," i.e., to take the water from the brook with the hollow of their hand and lap it into the mouth with their tongues as a dog does. This test reduced the number from the remaining 10,000 to 300 men. So now 31,700 men had left, and only 300 stood with Gideon to fight the Midianites. **God's successful work does not depend upon numbers . . . but rather upon faith and obedience.** These 300 men were definitely walking by faith and not by sight. Israel's origin 32,000 were outnumbered over 4 to 1. Now the 300 are outnumbered 450 to 1 was just about right. Look at these odds.

**135,000 to 32,000 = 4.22 to 1 odds.**

**135,000 to 10,000 = 13.5 to 1 odds.**

**135,000 to 300 = 450 to 1 odds**

These took the provision from the people, and the war trumpets, so that every one of the 300 had a trumpet and (as the provisions were probably kept in vessels) a pitcher as well. That night Gideon overheard a man telling of a dream he had had, which was of a cake of barley bread overthrowing a tent. Regarding this dream as indicating divine cooperation, Gideon began the attack without delay. **He divided his 300 men into three companies and gave them all trumpets and empty pitchers, with torches in their hands.** The pitchers were to hide the burning torches during the advance and to increase the noise at the time of the attack by dashing them to pieces. **The noise and sudden lighting up of the burning torches would naturally deceive the enemy as to the numbers of Gideon's army.** His clever strategy was eminently successful, and the enemy, thrown into complete confusion, "fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath" (Judges 7:1-23).

- **THE EPHRAIMITES.** In order to cut off the enemy's retreat at the Jordan, Gideon sent notice to the Ephraimites to "take the waters before them, as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan." The Ephraimites responded, took possession of the waters mentioned, captured the two princes, Oreb and Zeeb, put them to death, and brought their heads to Gideon. This latter

act amounted to an acknowledgment of Gideon's leadership, but they were greatly annoyed because he had made war upon and defeated the enemy without first summoning them to the field. Serious consequences were avoided by the tact of Gideon in speaking in a lowly spirit of his doings in comparison with theirs (Judges 7:24-8:3). The "gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim" is the victory over the Midianites and the capture of the two princes-the "vintage of Abiezer," Gideon's victory with his 300 men.

- **DESTROYS SUCCOTH.** Passing over the Jordan in pursuit of the Midianites, he was refused assistance by the people of Succoth and Penuel. Upon his return he destroyed both places (Judges 8:4-17)
  
- **HEBREWS 11:32** – Gideon is mentioned in God's Hall of Fame in that great faith chapter of the Bible.