

What Is the Secret of Victory?

International Bible Lessons

Judges 7:2-4, 13-15; 8:22-25

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“When Gideon arrived, there was a man telling a dream to his comrade; and he said, ‘I had a dream, and in it a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian, and came to the tent, and struck it so that it fell; it turned upside down, and the tent collapsed’” (Judges 7:13—NRSV).

“When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, ‘Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat” (Judges 7:13—ESV).

“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, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along” (Judges 7:13—KJV).

Sometimes God will begin to defeat His enemies and ours through their dreams. While they sleep, God can sow the seeds of fear and defeat into their hearts and minds through mysterious and disturbing images. If they tell someone about their nightmares, God can inspire those they consult to give them interpretations that will rob them of all hope. When Gideon slipped late at night into the Midianites' camp, he overheard a dream with an encouraging interpretation: “This is no other than the sword of Gideon . . . into his hand God has given Midian and all the army” (Judges 7:14). Knowing that God had predisposed the Midianites to fight in fright, Gideon instructed his warriors to blow their trumpets, break their jars, hold their torches high, and shout, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon” (Judges 7:20).

No matter how many enemies may come against us with all their might, no matter the overwhelming odds that make our cause look hopeless, God can win the victory through us. If we dwell in the heart of God through faith, we can trust God to do all things well for His and our ultimate benefit. He will show us how to fight with Him against His enemies and ours. Remember: because God fought with them and for them, Gideon and a mere 300 Israelite soldiers defeated thousands of Midianite warriors, who slew one another and fled in fright.

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Thinking Further

1. How often do you think about the fact that you depend on God for everything? When you do think about this fact, how do you respond? Why is it important for people to know about and consider this fact of existence?

2. What are some dangers or events that some people fear today? What are some ways people can overcome their fears? How can faith in God help someone overcome their fears?

3. Why do you think God wanted to choose which soldiers went into war? Why do you think God's unusual battle plan worked so effectively? Why is it important for us to seek to work with and worship with the people of the Lord's choice?

4. What role do dreams have in people's lives today? How might dreams mislead someone? How might God use dreams to lead someone? Today, why do some people put too much emphasis in dreams and their interpretation?

5. At what point did Gideon cease to be a good judge? How can the desire for great wealth sometimes mislead people? If you read ahead to learn about Gideon's fate and the fate of his sons, after a wonderful beginning why is the story of Gideon so tragic?