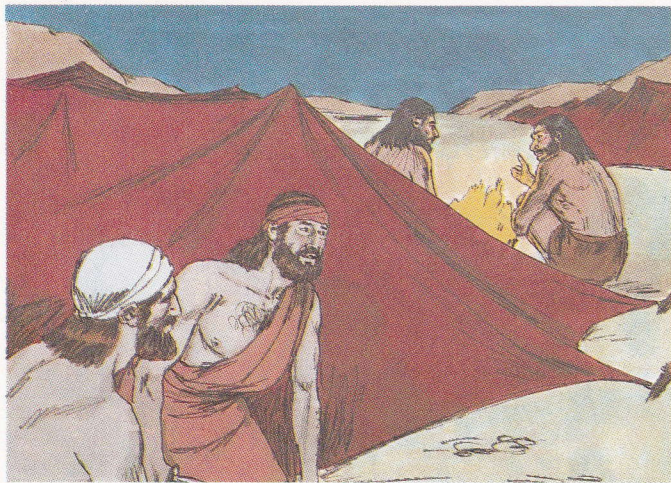
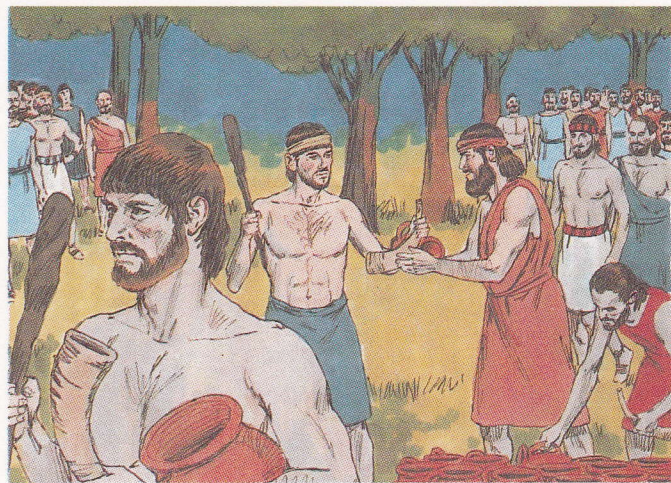


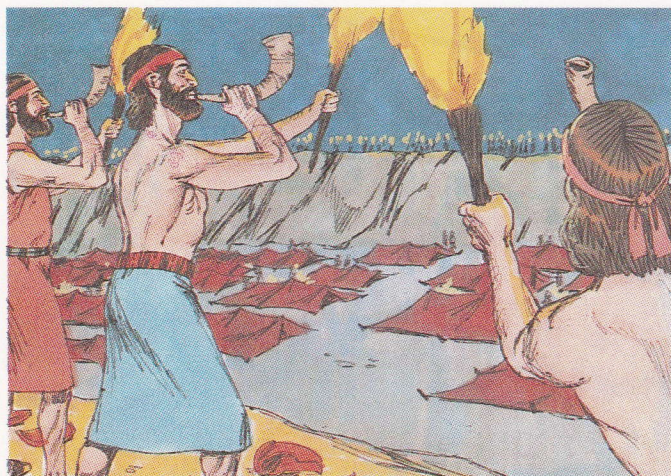
Gideon's Victory over Midian



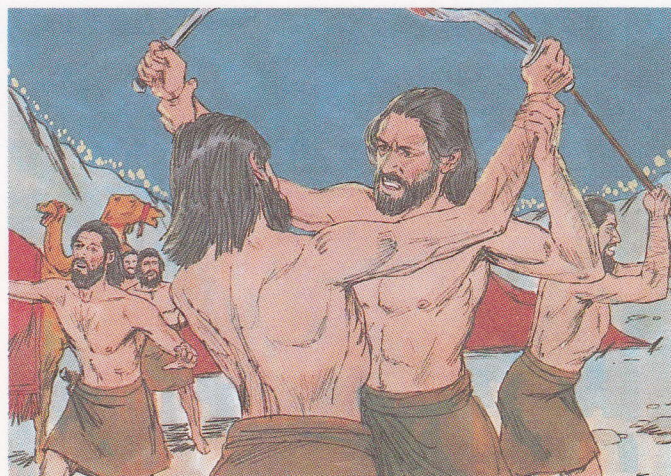
1 Hiding in the darkness, Gideon overheard an enemy soldier say that Israel would defeat the Midianite army. So Gideon returned to his camp and prepared for battle that very night.



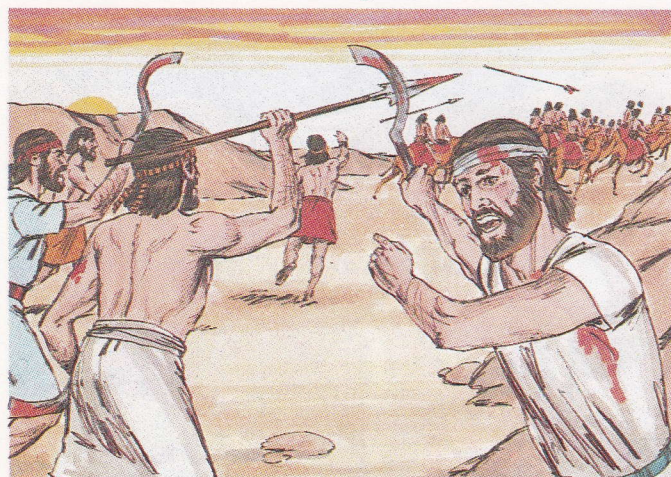
2 Gideon followed God's directions: he divided his men into three groups of 100 men each. Then he gave each man a trumpet and a jar with a torch in it. The three groups took positions around the enemy camp.



3 Just after the guard was changed for the midnight watch, the three groups of Israelite soldiers blew their trumpets and broke the jars they were holding. Their torches blazed in the night.



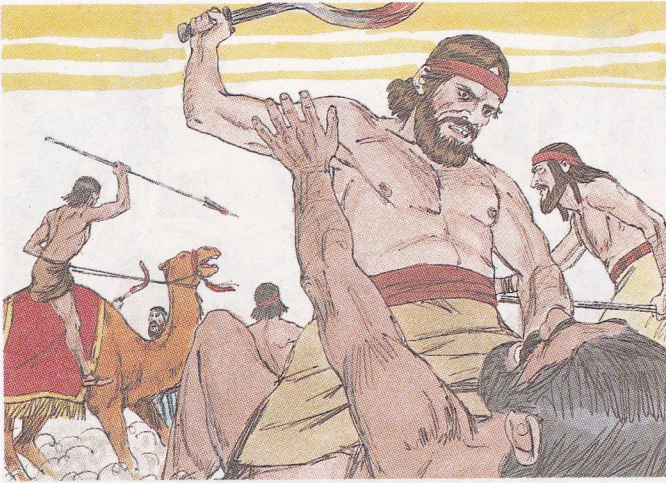
4 With their torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right, the Israelites shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" The Midianites panicked. They attacked each other and ran away.



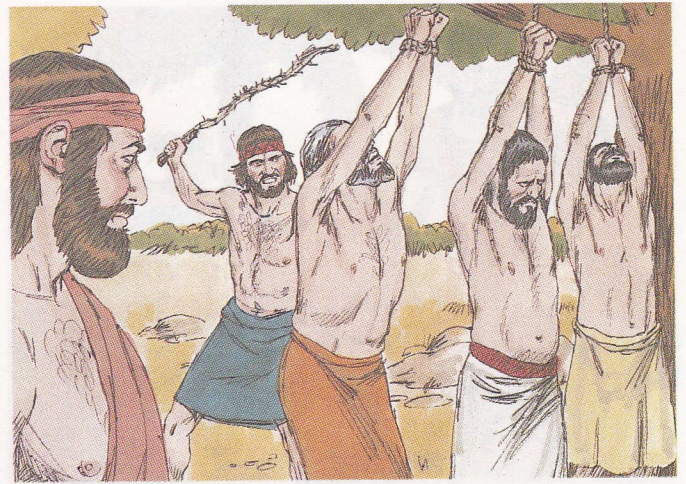
5 Gideon immediately sent messengers throughout the hill country. They called out other Israelites to help chase and destroy the fleeing Midianites.



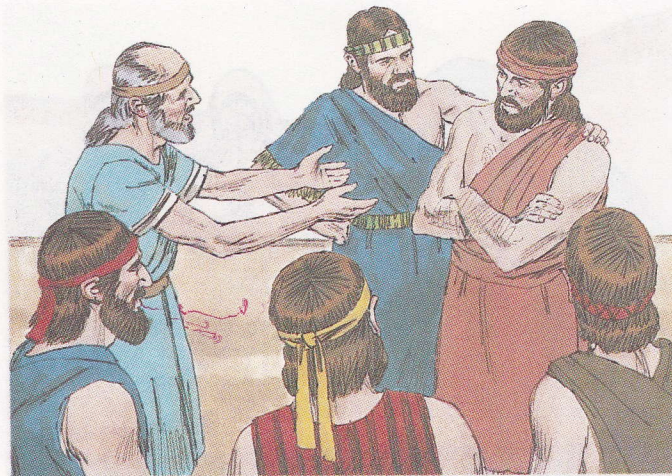
6 His men were now tired and hungry from fighting, so Gideon asked the people of Succoth and Peniel for food. But they refused, fearing that the Midianites might win and punish them for helping Israel.



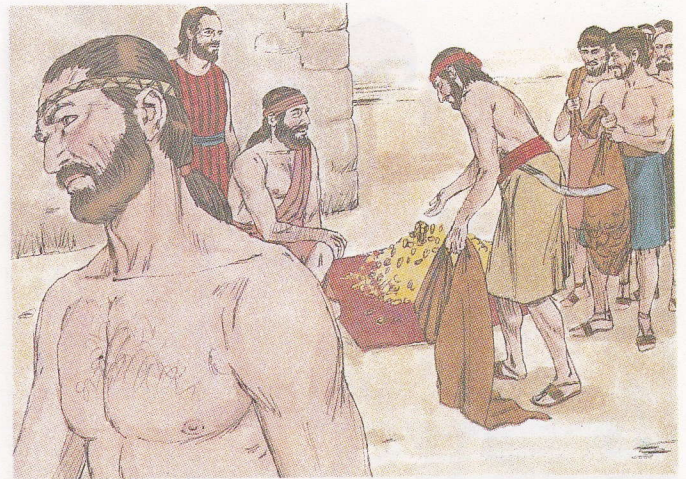
7 Already 120,000 Midianites had been killed. Now Gideon defeated the last 15,000 of the enemy in a surprise attack at Karkor. The kings Zebah and Zalmunna were taken captive and later executed.



8 Then Gideon returned to the towns that had refused to help the Israelites during the battle. Gideon ordered his men to punish the leaders of Succoth with thorns and briars and to kill the men of Penuel.



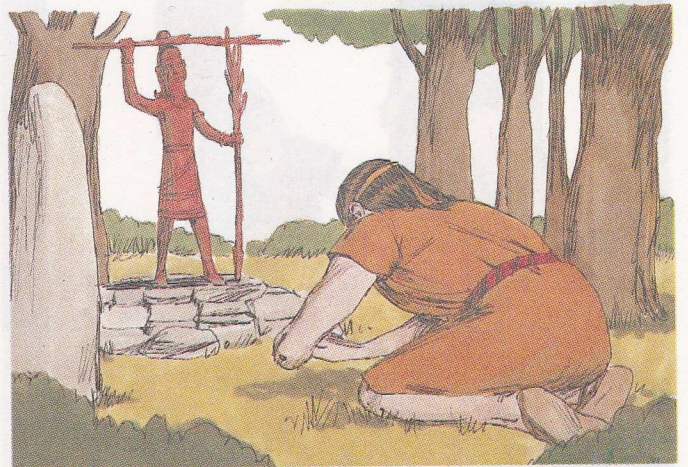
9 After this victory, the Israelites said to Gideon: "You have saved us from our enemies the Midianites. You be our ruler! And your sons can rule after you."



10 But Gideon refused, saying, "Only the Lord shall rule over you." But he did have a request: "Give me all the gold earrings you took from the Midianites." The people were glad to do so.



11 Gideon took the gold and made an object, which he placed in his hometown, Ophrah. The Israelites sinned against God by worshiping this object, and it proved to be a real problem for Gideon and his family.



12 After defeating the Midianites, Israel lived in peace for forty years. But after Gideon died, the Israelites became unfaithful to the Lord who had saved them. They forgot the Lord and worshiped Baal again.