

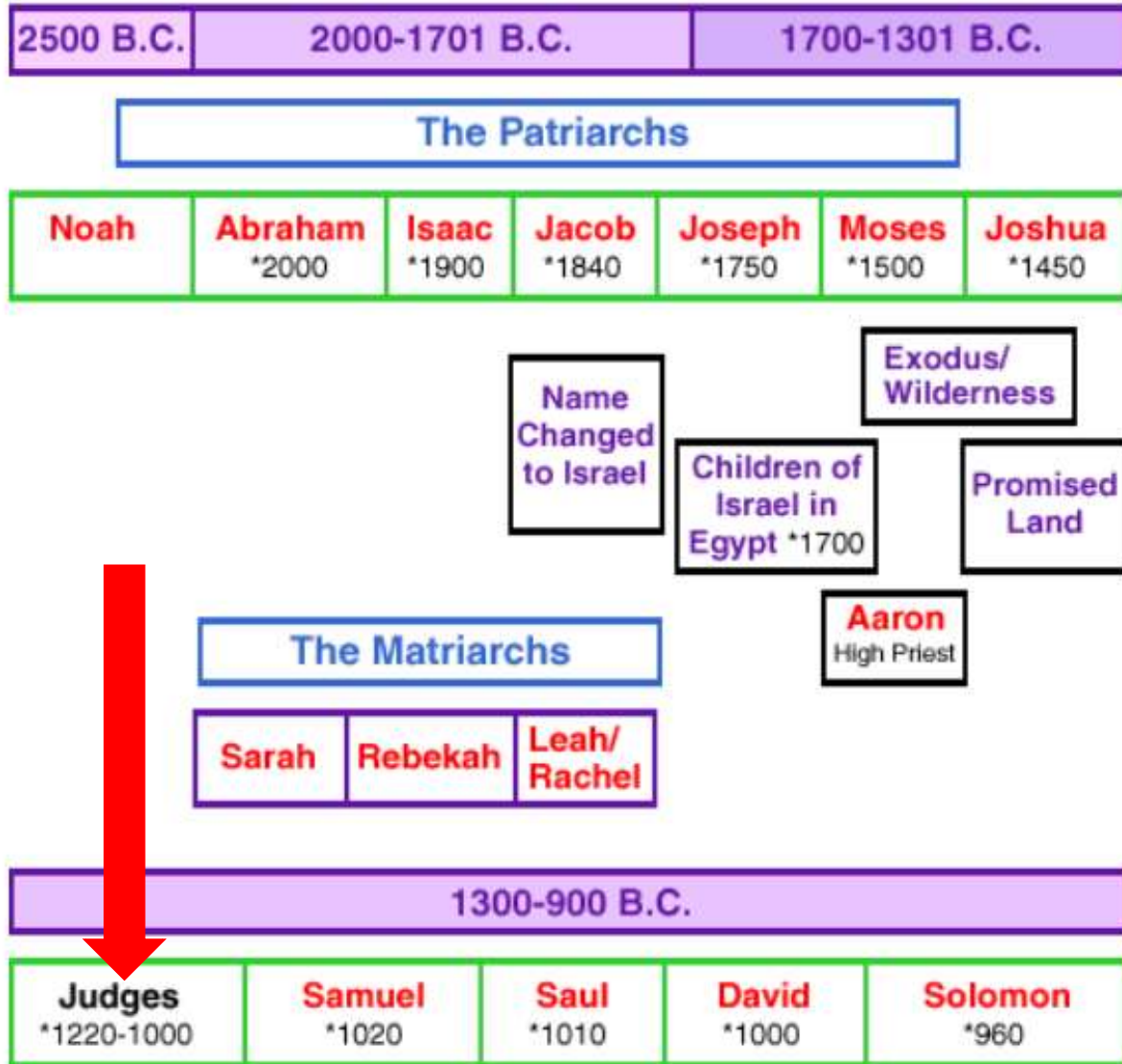
A dramatic scene featuring a whale's tail breaching the surface of a dark blue, stormy sea. The sky is filled with lightning bolts, and rain is falling diagonally across the frame. The overall mood is intense and powerful.

# EPIC TALES

**RELEARNING THE ANCIENT BIBLE STORIES IN A BRAND-NEW WAY**

# Bible Timeline

By Genelle Austin-Lett and Mary Jane Chaignot



# Gideon

## Judges chapters 6-8

Gideon, whose name means “cutter” or “cutter of trees,” was Israel’s 5<sup>th</sup> judge and his judgeship receives the most extensive narration in the Book of Judges (100 verses comprising three chapters). – Bible Knowledge Commentary

# EPIC TALES

# The Days of the Judges

Judge	Tribe	Enemy Defeated	Years of	
			Oppression	Rest
<b>Othniel</b>	Judah	Mesopotamia	8 yrs	40 yrs
<b>Ehud</b>	Benjamin	Moabites	18 yrs	80 yrs
<b>Shamgar</b>	?	Philistines	?	?
<b>Deborah</b>	Ephraim	Canaanites	20 yrs	40 yrs
<b>Gideon</b>	Manasseh	Midianites	6 yrs	40 yrs
<b>Tola</b>	Issachar	?		23 yrs
<b>Jair</b>	Manasseh	?		22 yrs
<b>Jephthah</b>	Manasseh	Ammonites	18 yrs	6 yrs
<b>Ibzan</b>	Judah	?		7 yrs
<b>Elon</b>	Zebulun	?		10 yrs
<b>Abdon</b>	Ephraim	?		8 yrs
<b>Samson</b>	Dan	Philistines	40 yrs	20 yrs



**TALES**

A dramatic scene of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean's surface. The water is dark and turbulent, with white foam from the whale's splash. The sky is a deep, dark blue, filled with rain falling in diagonal streaks. The overall mood is epic and powerful.

*Judges chapter 6*

**EPIC TALES**

Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord gave them into the hands of Midian **seven** years. Judges 6:1

## Last week in the Samson and Delilah story...

Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, so that the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines **forty** years. Judges 13:1

The people of Israel keep falling into sin but God always redeems because His commitment is unconditional. People can break their side of the bargain but God can't break God's side of the bargain.

**EPIC TALES**

The power of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. For it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites would come up [at harvesttime to steal crops] with the Amalekites and the sons of the east and go against them. So they would camp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to devastate it. Judges 6:2-5

\*Judges 8:10 says that Midianite army numbered 135,000 men

Midianites  
and  
Amalekites  
are  
nomadic  
raiders, not  
conquerors  
... see  
mentions of  
hiding in  
mountains  
and caves

**EPIC TALES**

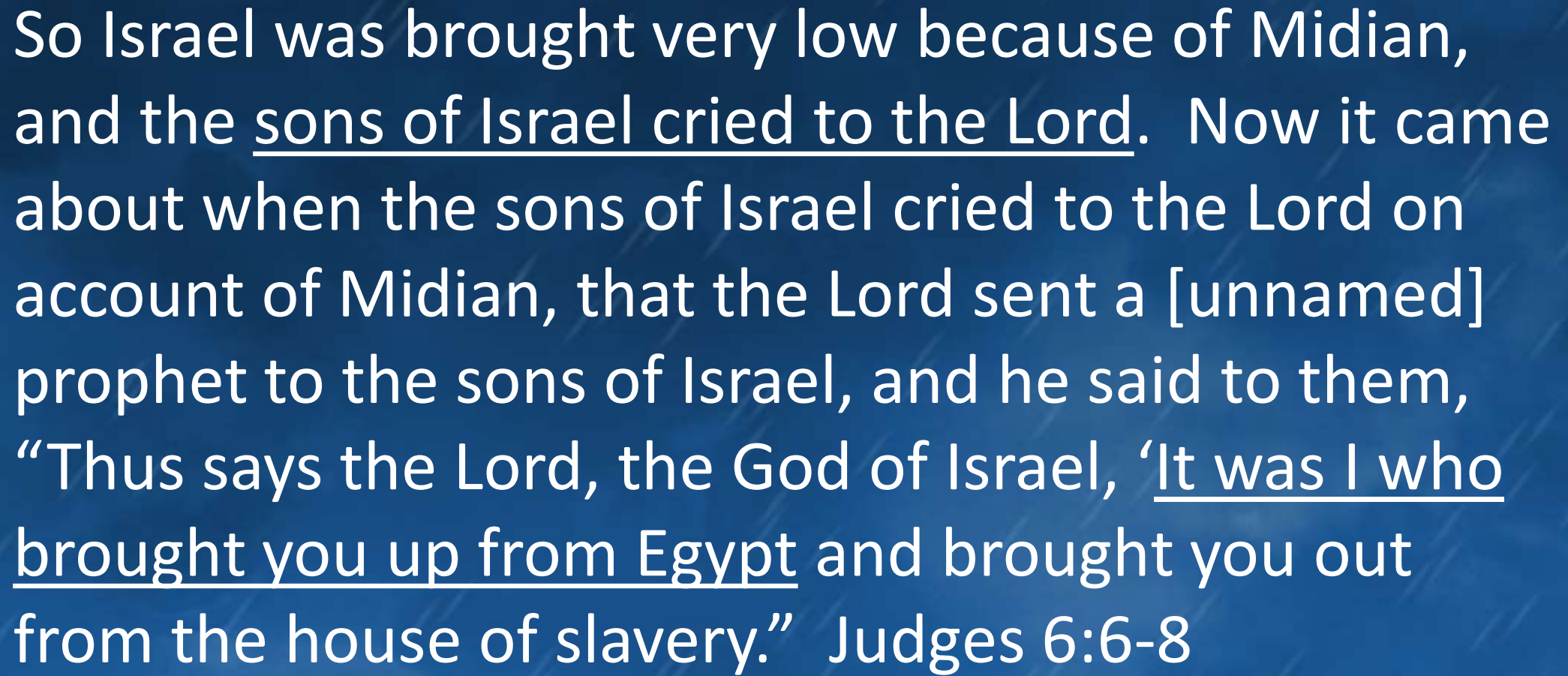
# History Lesson

- For seven years, before the calling of Gideon, God allowed the Midianites (and their allies) to ravage ancient Israel. God allowed this to punish the people for their sins, chief of which was idolatry (Judges 6:1, 8 - 10). The Midianite-led army would regularly enter Israel's territory east of the Jordan River and would sweep both west and south.
- The marauding journey of the Midianites would take them as far south as the Philistine city of Gaza (Judges 6:4). As the hoard traveled, they pillaged and destroyed crops, took whatever cattle and other goods they desired, and committed mass murder (against Gideon's family, see Judges 8:18-19).
- This great army of eastern nomads relied heavily on camels (Judges 6:5), an animal who not only could carry heavy loads and go without water for long periods, but was also relatively fast and could travel up to 100 miles in a single day. The destruction and violence caused by the Midianites brought widespread poverty and led the people, including Gideon, to live in constant fear (Judges 6:2, 6, 11).

<http://www.biblestudy.org/maps/battles-of-gideon.html>

**EPIC TALES**



A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean on the left side of the image. The background is a deep blue sky with light rain falling diagonally across the frame. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

So Israel was brought very low because of Midian,  
and the sons of Israel cried to the Lord. Now it came  
about when the sons of Israel cried to the Lord on  
account of Midian, that the Lord sent a [unnamed]  
prophet to the sons of Israel, and he said to them,  
“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘It was I who  
brought you up from Egypt and brought you out  
from the house of slavery.’” Judges 6:6-8

God is saying... “I am trustworthy, powerful, merciful”

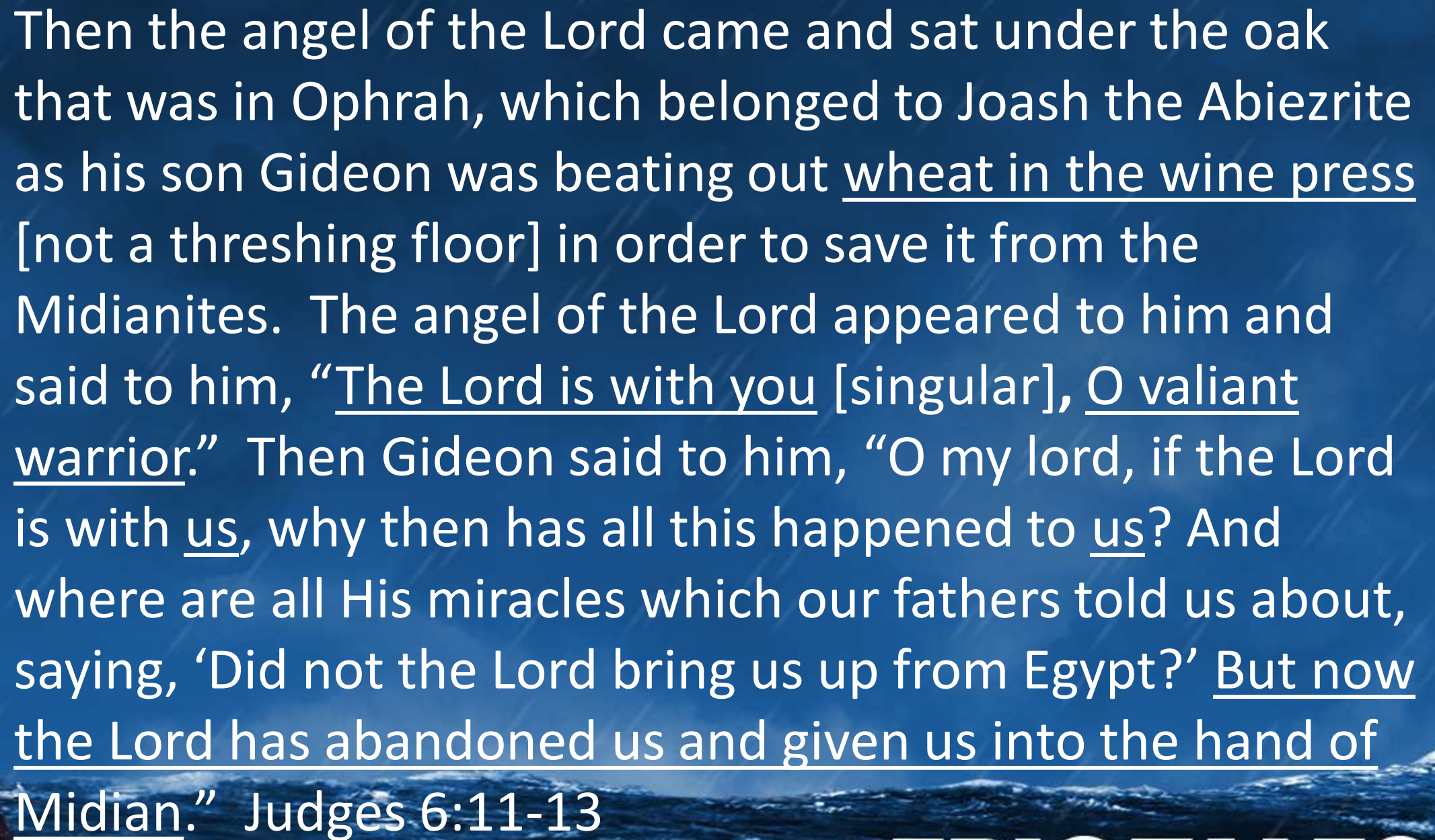
**EPIC TALES**



“ ‘ “I delivered you from the hands of the Egyptians and from the hands of all your oppressors, and dispossessed them before you and gave you their land, and I said to you, “I am the Lord your God; you shall not fear [worship, respect] the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But you have not obeyed (שָׁמַעַתְּ Shema) Me.” ’ ” Judges 6:6-10

- It is hard for people to believe in and trust an invisible and infinite God, as opposed to idols (like the gods of the Amorites).
  - Adam and Eve walked with God and heard from God in the Garden of Eden, but did not see God. They saw the serpent.

**EPIC TALES**

A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Then the angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezerite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press [not a threshing floor] in order to save it from the Midianites. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, “The Lord is with you [singular], O valiant warrior.” Then Gideon said to him, “O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.” Judges 6:11-13

**EPIC TALES**

# Gideon's family



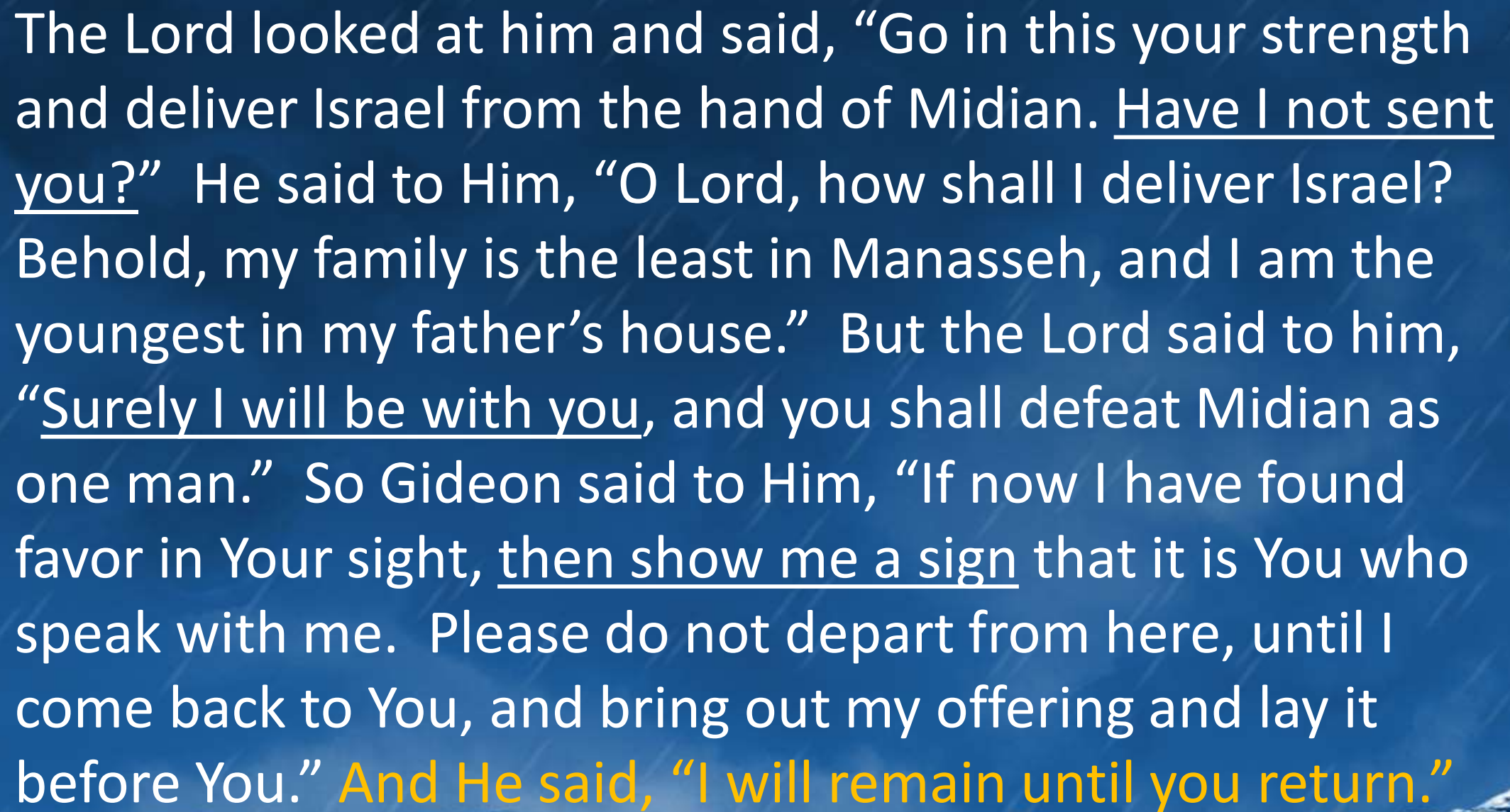
Gideon was of the town of Ophrah in the tribal area of Manasseh.

-Harper's Bible Dictionary

Gideon

4

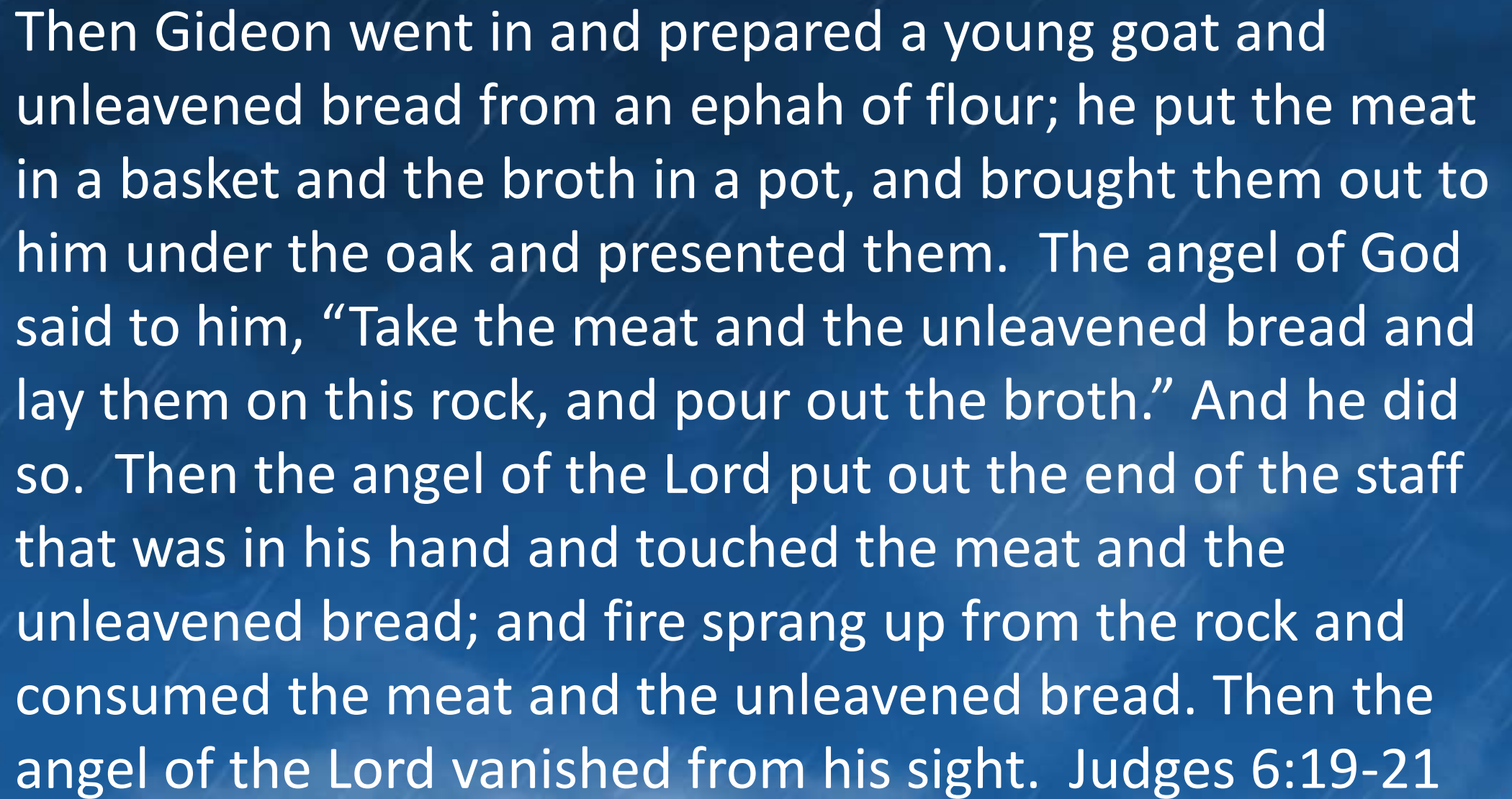
# EPIC TALES



The Lord looked at him and said, “Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?” He said to Him, “O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s house.” But the Lord said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man.” So Gideon said to Him, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You.” **And He said, “I will remain until you return.”**

Judges 6:14-18

**EPIC TALES**

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke rising out of the ocean. The water is a deep blue with white foam at the base of the tail. The sky is a lighter blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

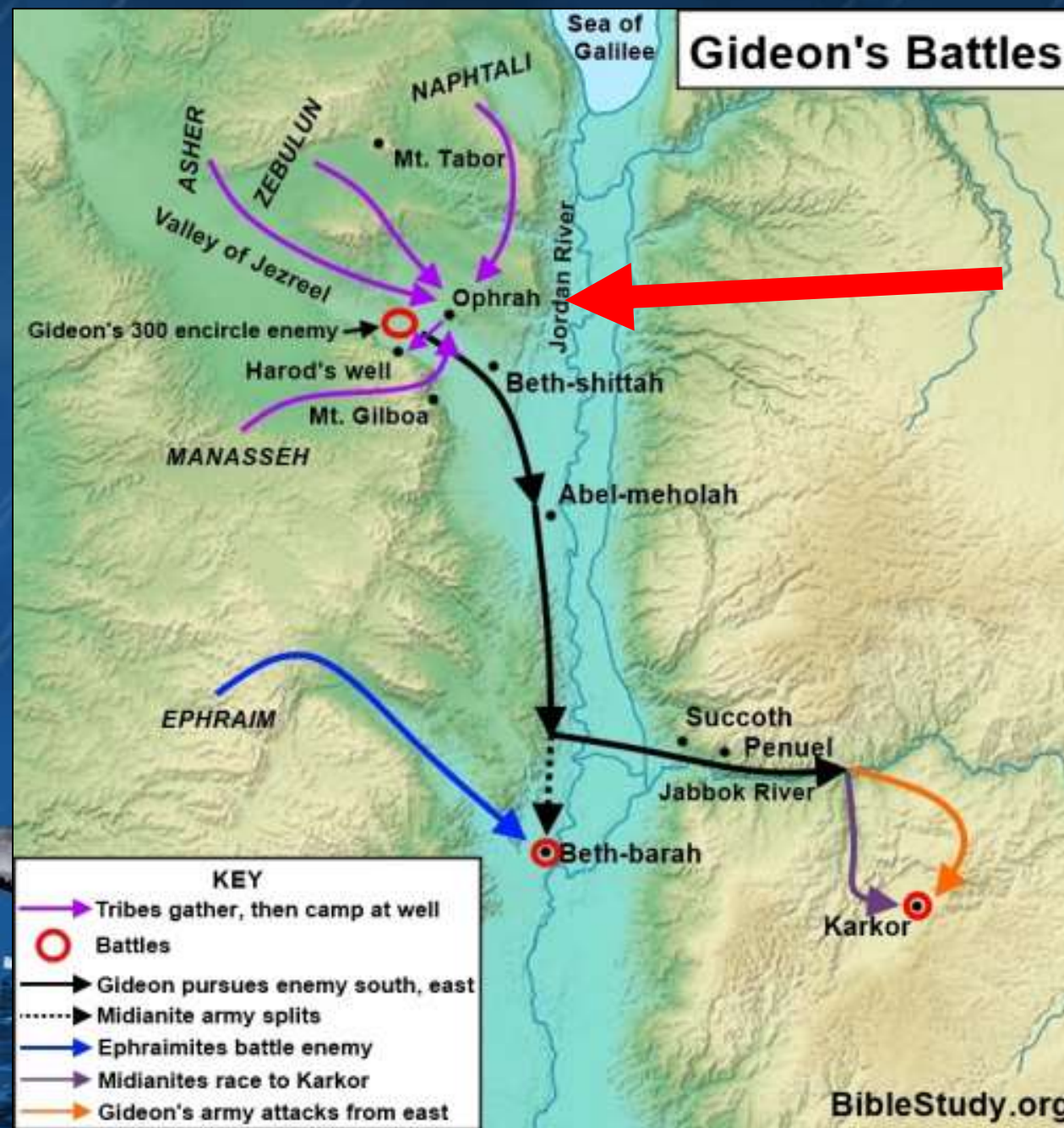
Then Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour; he put the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, and brought them out to him under the oak and presented them. The angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so. Then the angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the Lord vanished from his sight. Judges 6:19-21

**EPIC TALES**

# Gideon and Moses


With the arrival of the angel it became clear that the Lord intended to save Israel once again, and that his chosen instrument on this occasion was Gideon, whose call followed the same pattern as that of Moses in Exodus 3. Like Moses, he received his call while he was in hiding from the enemy, doing menial work to keep his family alive (Judges 6:11). Like Moses, he was told that the Lord was sending him on a mission (6:14). He protested, as Moses did, that he was inadequate for the task (6:15). He received the same promise as Moses received, 'I will be with you' (6:16), and, like Moses, he received a sign to confirm his call (6:17). Miraculous fire signaled God's presence (6:21), as it did in the call of Moses. The message is clear: Gideon was to be used by God to save Israel from the Midianites, just as Moses was used to save Israel from the Egyptians. The God of the exodus has come to Israel's rescue again.

## Gideon's Battles



When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the Lord, he said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face." The Lord said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die." Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and named it The Lord is Peace (יהוה שלום). To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. Judges 6:22-24

# EPIC TALES

A close-up photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the dark blue ocean, creating white foam at the base. The background is a deep blue sky with light rays filtering through.

Now on the same night the Lord said to him, “Take your father’s bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to **your father**, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it; and build an altar to the Lord your God on the top of this stronghold in an orderly manner, and take a second bull and offer a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah which you shall cut down.” Then Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had spoken to him; and because he was too afraid of his father’s household and the men of the city to do it by day, he did it by night. Judges 6:25-27

\*Gideon passes the first test of faith

**EPIC TALES**

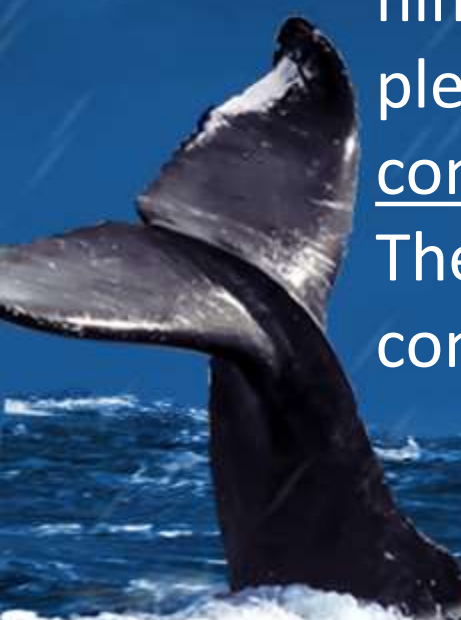


Judges 6:25 **“Pull down the altar of Baal.”**

We cannot do great things for God when there are other gods, other distractions, in our lives. The Lord has to be the first priority in our hearts and minds.

The first of the 10 Commandments states  
**“You shall have no other gods before me.”**  
Exodus 20:3

**EPIC TALES**

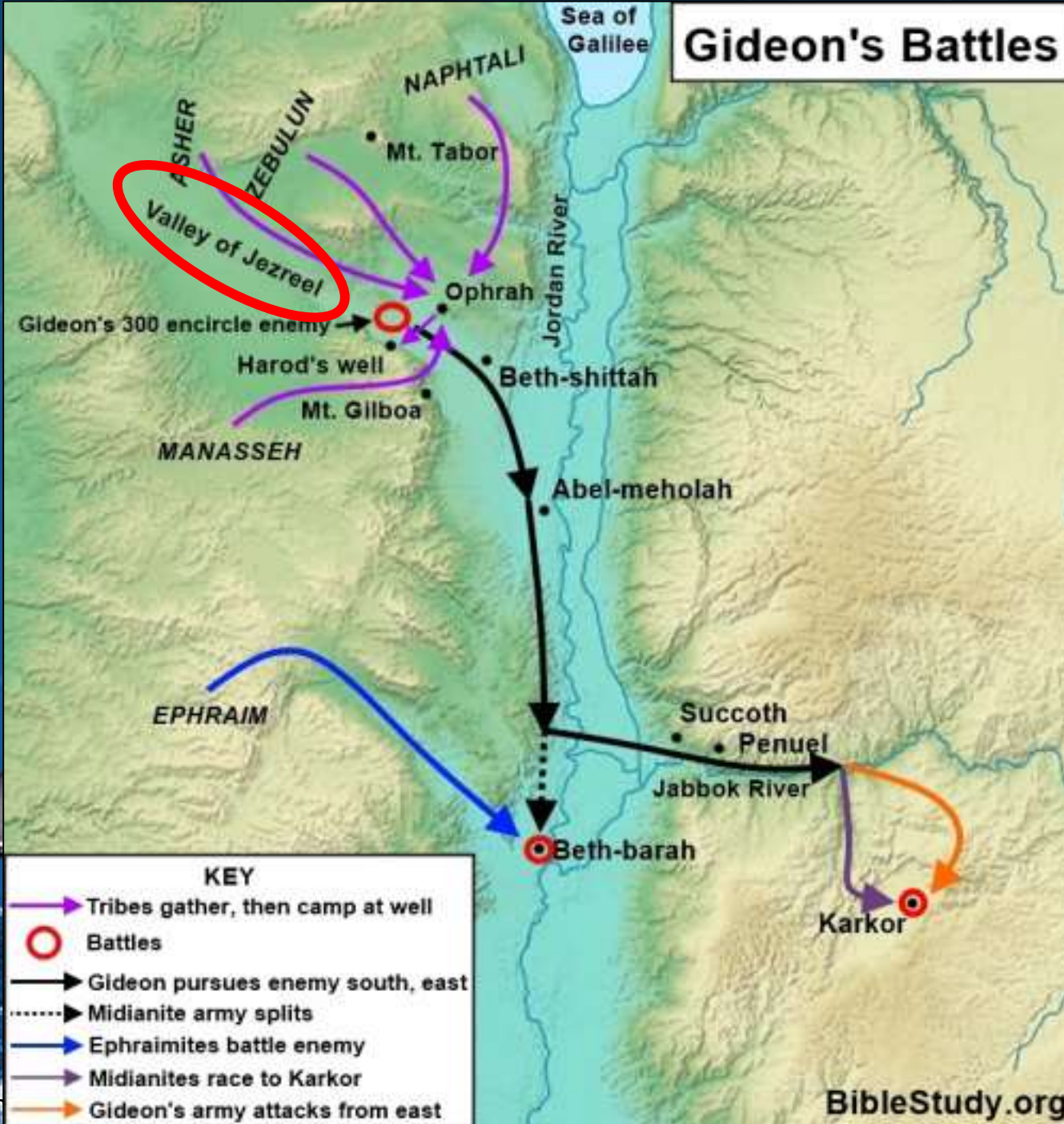


When the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah which was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar which had been built. They said to one another, “Who did this thing?” And when they searched about and inquired, they said, “Gideon the son of Joash did this thing.” Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has torn down the altar of Baal, and indeed, he has cut down the Asherah which was beside it.” But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar.”

Therefore on that day he named him Jerubbaal, that is to say, “Let Baal contend against him,” because he had torn down his altar. Judges 6:28-32

**EPIC TALES**

# Gideon's Battles



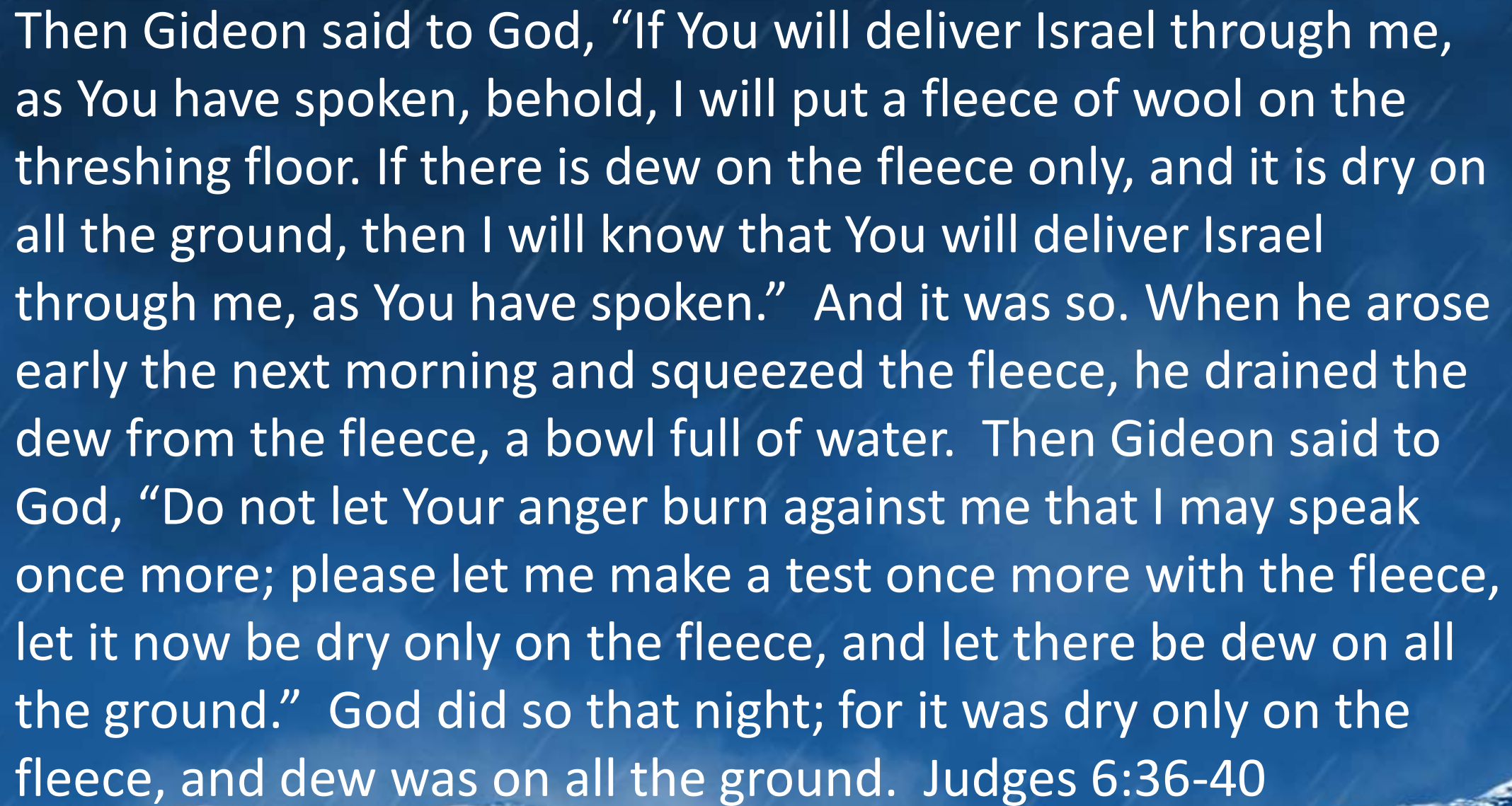
Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the sons of the east assembled themselves; and they crossed over (the Jordan River) and camped in the valley of Jezreel. Judges 6:33

# EPIC TALES



So the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites [the people whose idols Gideon destroyed] were called together to follow him. He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, and they also were called together to follow him; and he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they came up to meet them. Judges 6:34-35

**EPIC TALES**



Then Gideon said to God, “If You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken.” And it was so. When he arose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he drained the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water. Then Gideon said to God, “Do not let Your anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me make a test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground.” God did so that night; for it was dry only on the fleece, and dew was on all the ground. Judges 6:36-40

**EPIC TALES**

What kind of **fleece** are you asking God for?  
In what areas of life is your **faith** weak?  
Do you need the **patience** of God?

Gideon was not using the fleece to discover God's will, for he already knew from divine revelation what God wanted him to do. The sign related to a confirmation or assurance of God's presence or empowerment for the task at hand.

– Bible Knowledge Commentary

The dilemma in the fleece story was between “do nothing or do something.” It was NOT deciding between two good choices.

**EPIC TALES**



A dramatic scene of a whale's tail fluke rising from the ocean's surface. The water is dark blue and turbulent, with white foam from the whale's splash. The sky is a deep, dark blue, filled with rain falling in diagonal streaks. The overall mood is epic and powerful.

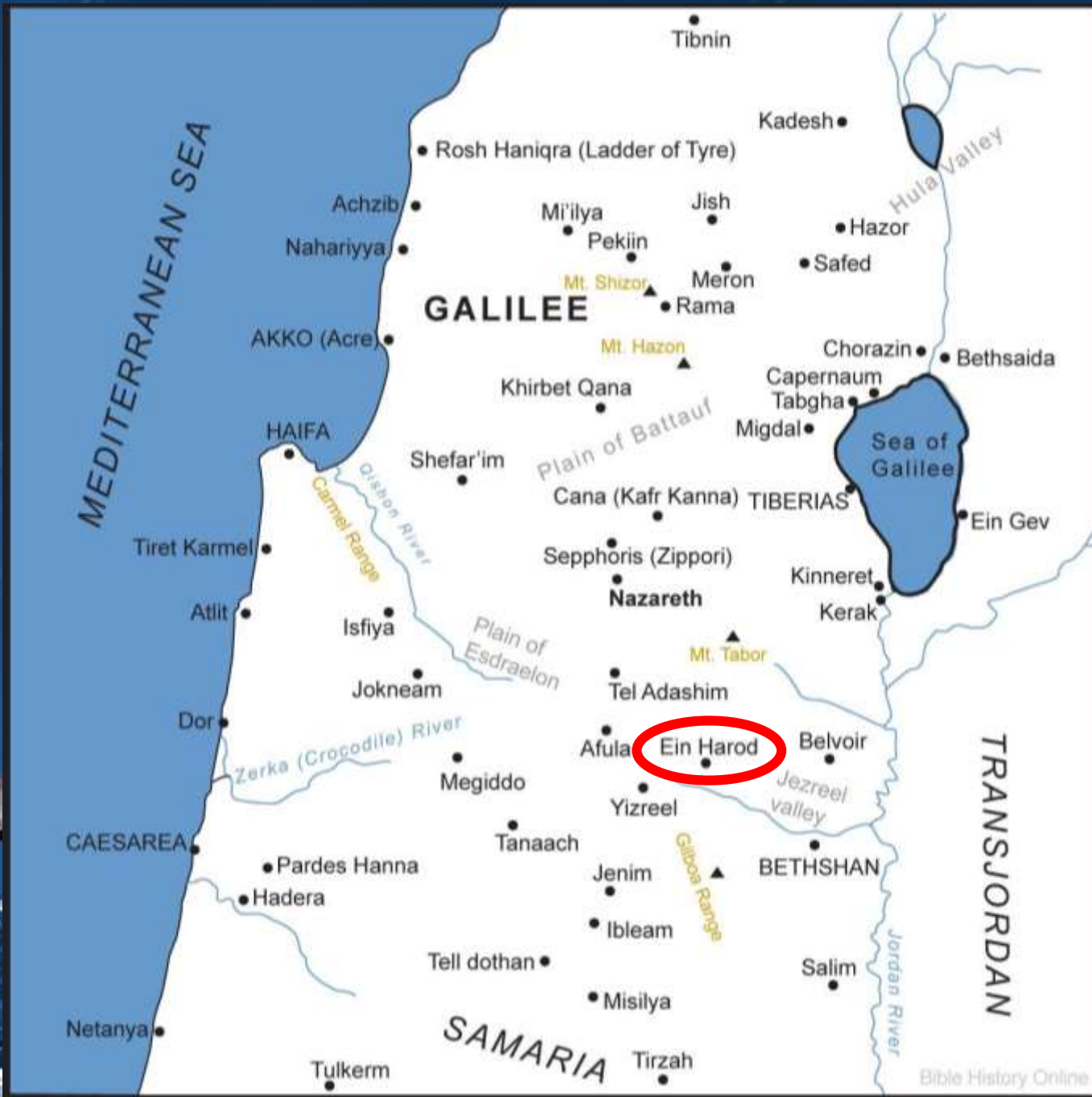
*Judges chapter 7*

**EPIC TALES**



Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him, rose early and camped beside **the spring of Harod**; and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.  
Judges 7:1





**EPIC TALES**



At the base of Mount Gilboa in Israel, a spring still flows today as it has for millennia. Green grass, a swimming pool, and beautiful picnic spots surround the spring that takes its name from the valley that spreads before it. **Ein Harod**, sometimes called, "Gideon's Spring," is the place where Gideon selected his three hundred men to fight the armies of Midian.

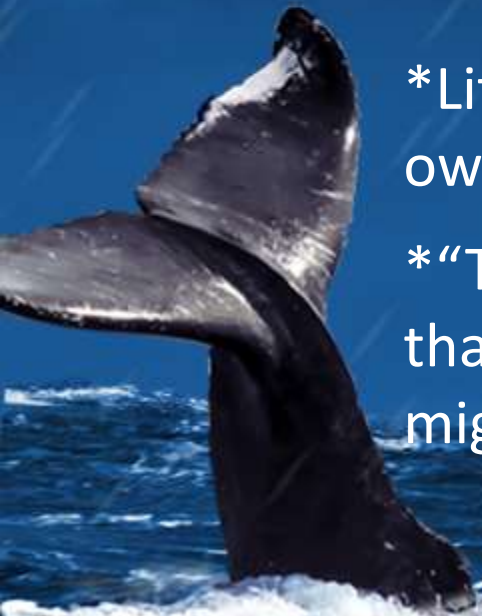
<https://waynestiles.com/truths-as-lasting-as-their-settings/>

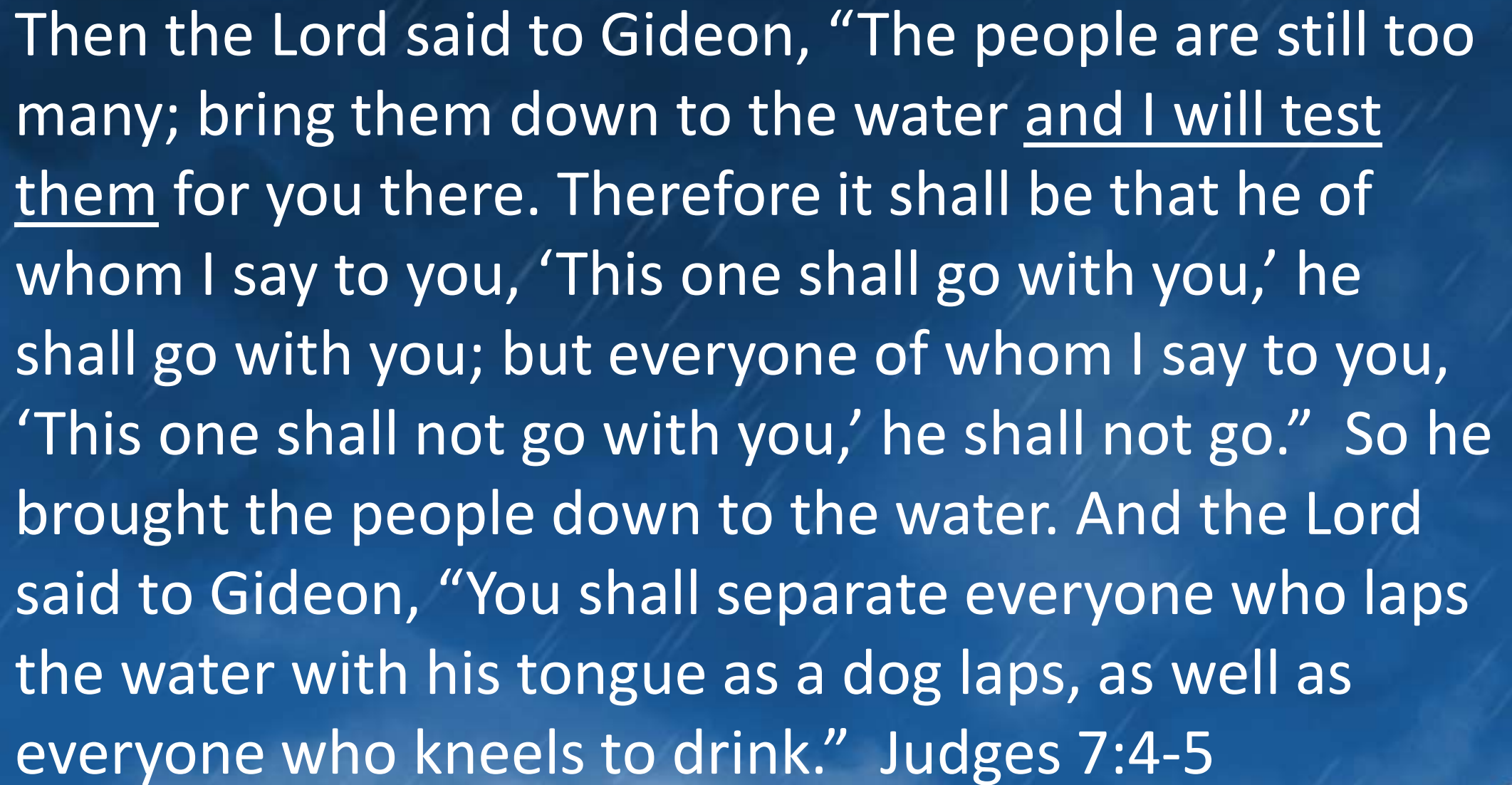
The Lord said to Gideon, “The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, ‘My own power has delivered me.’ Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.’ ” So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained. Judges 7:2-3

\*Literally “**glorify itself against me**”... the ultimate degree of sinful pride; “My own power has delivered me.”

\*“Then the officers shall speak further to the people and say, ‘Who is the man that is afraid and fainthearted? Let him depart and return to his house, so that he might not make his brothers’ hearts melt like his heart.’” Deuteronomy 20:8

**EPIC TALES**



A whale's tail is visible on the left side of the image, breaching the dark blue ocean. The background is a bright blue sky with white light rays or sunbeams radiating from the top. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

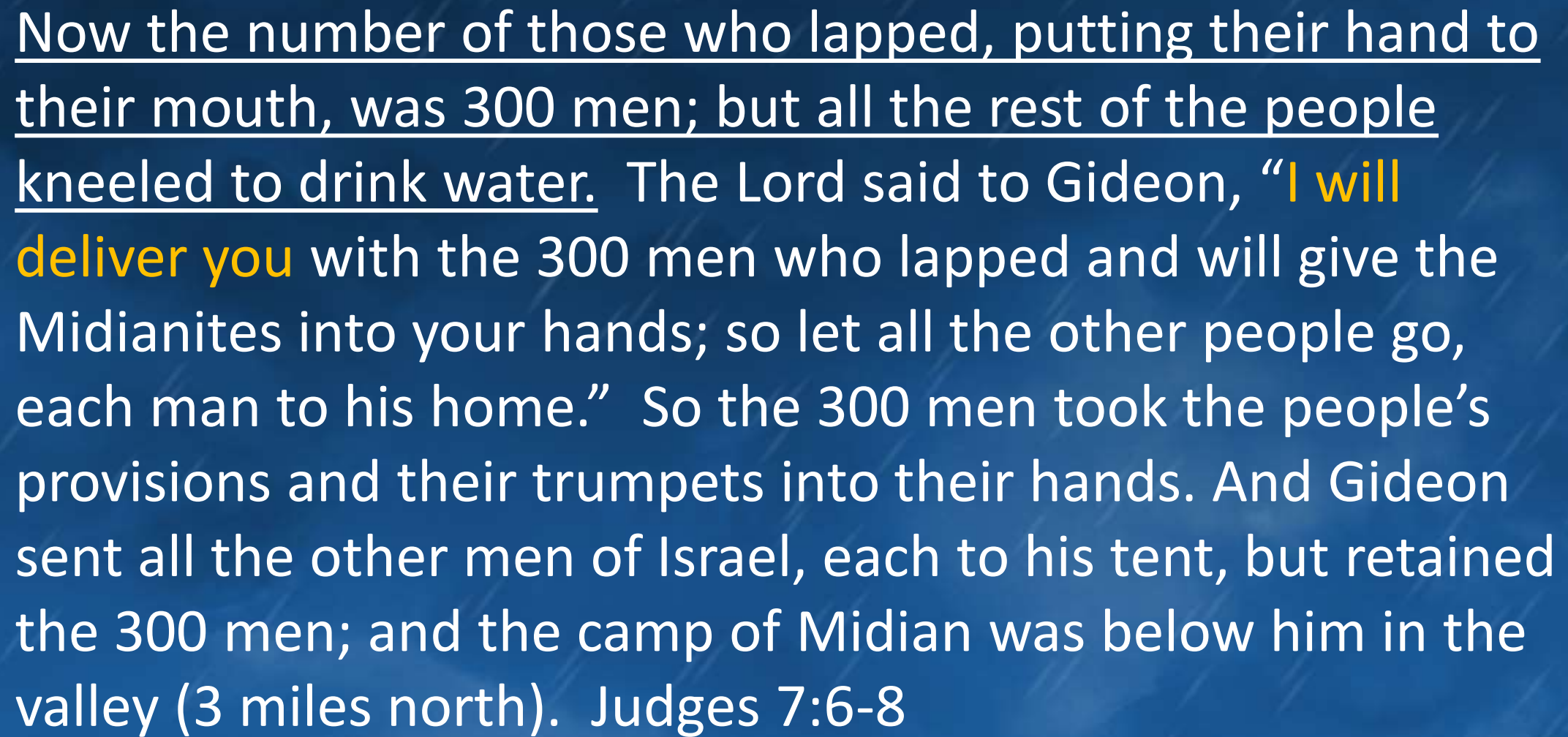
Then the Lord said to Gideon, “The people are still too many; bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there. Therefore it shall be that he of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go with you; but everyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.” So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, “You shall separate everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps, as well as everyone who kneels to drink.” Judges 7:4-5

**EPIC TALES**



Those who kneel were not aware of the enemy – they are also likely the people who are used to bowing to Baal and were not prepared spiritually


**TALES**

A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean on the left side of the image. The water is a deep blue with white foam at the base of the tail. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Now the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men; but all the rest of the people kneeled to drink water. The Lord said to Gideon, “**I will deliver you** with the 300 men who lapped and will give the Midianites into your hands; so let all the other people go, each man to his home.” So the 300 men took the people’s provisions and their trumpets into their hands. And Gideon sent all the other men of Israel, each to his tent, but retained the 300 men; and the camp of Midian was below him in the valley (3 miles north). Judges 7:6-8

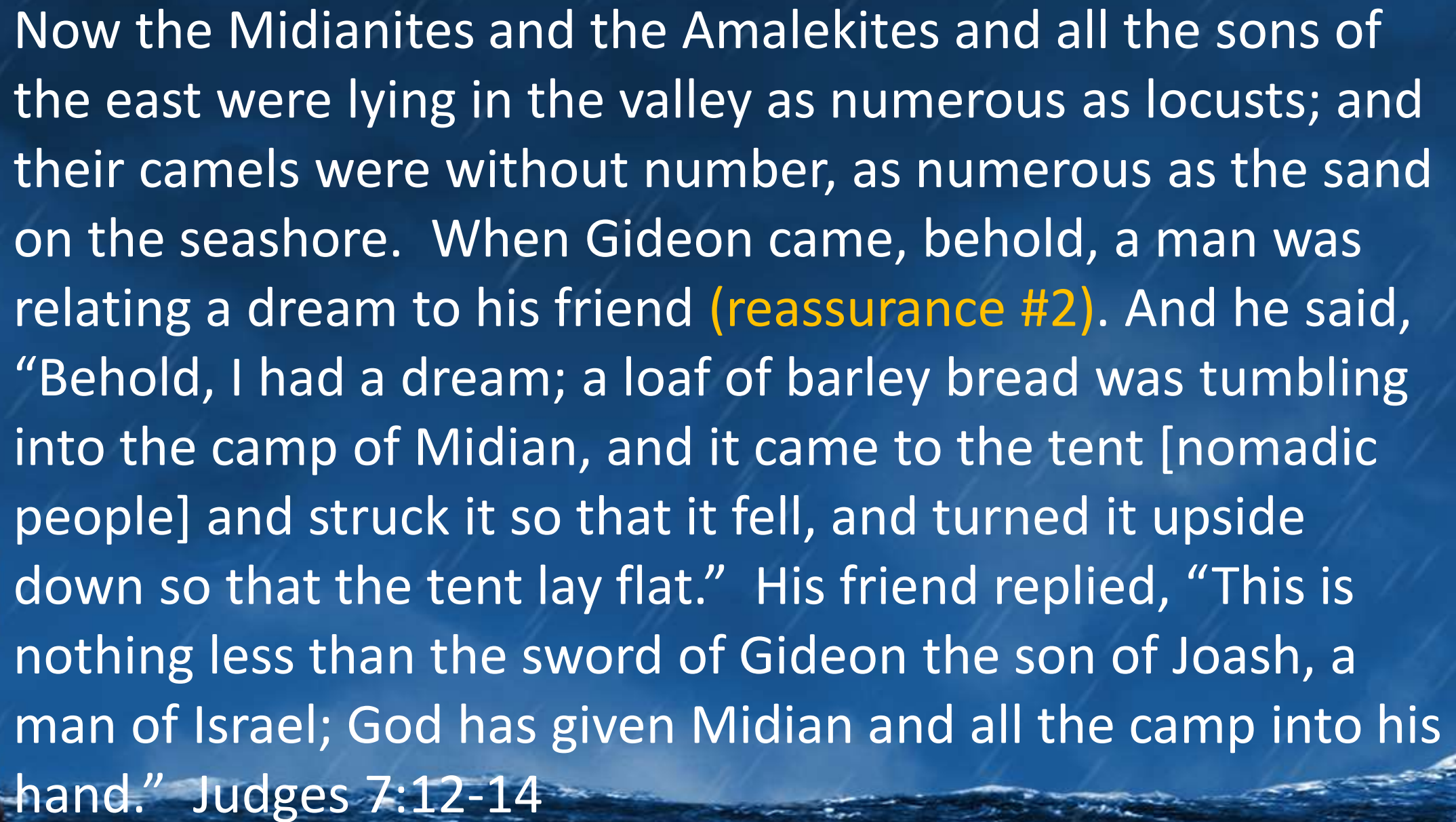
\* Sovereignty of God vs. Free Will of Man

**EPIC TALES**

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean, set against a background of a blue sky with light rain or mist. The whale's tail is dark and curved, with white markings on the underside. The ocean is a deep blue with white-capped waves.

Now the same night it came about that the Lord said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hands (reassurance #1). But if you are afraid to go down, go with Purah your servant down to the camp, and you will hear what they say; and afterward your hands will be strengthened that you may go down against the camp.” So he went with Purah his servant down to the outposts of the army that was in the camp. Judges 7:9-11

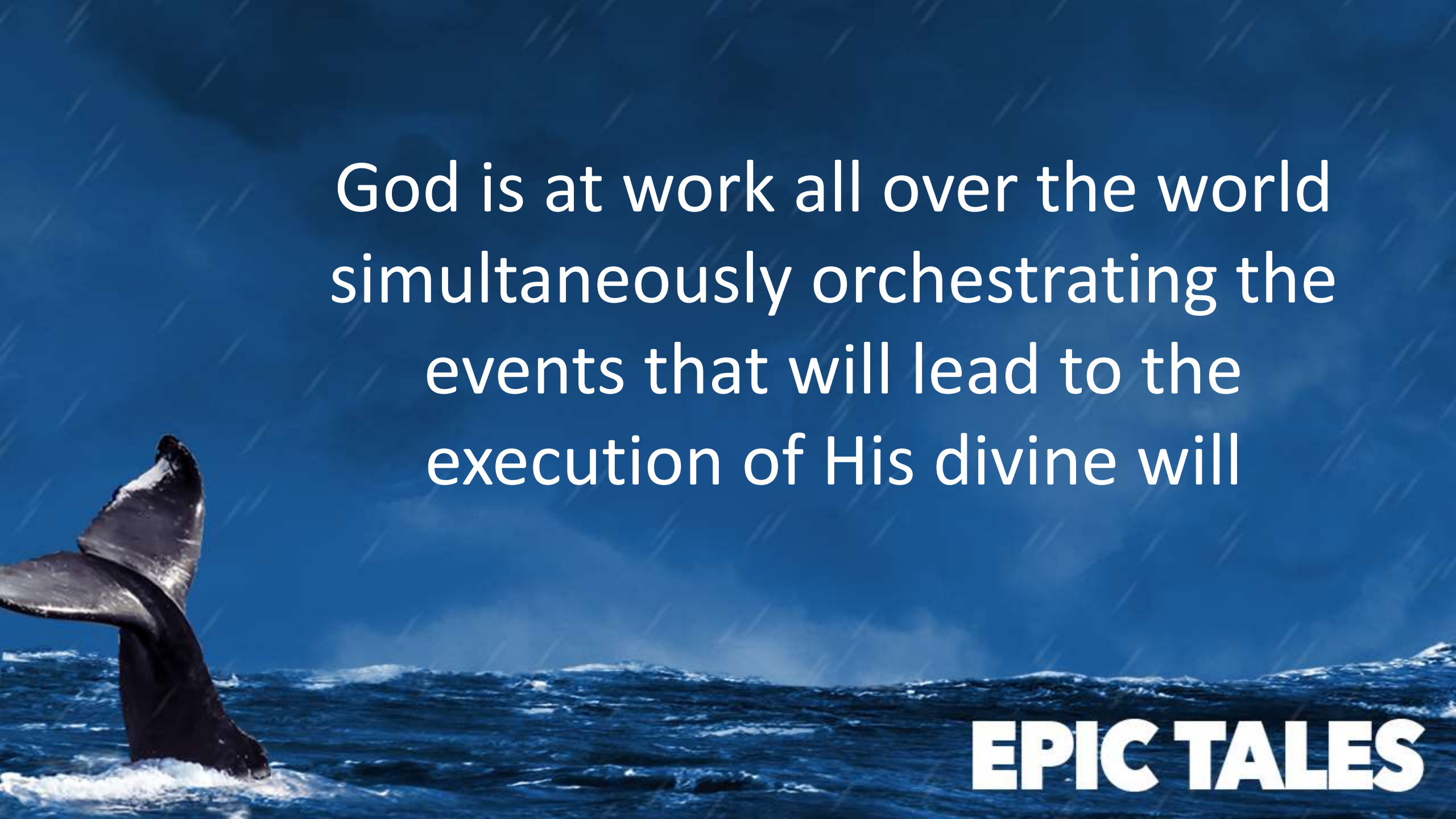
**EPIC TALES**



Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the sons of the east were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend (**reassurance #2**). And he said, “Behold, I had a dream; a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent [nomadic people] and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat.” His friend replied, “This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand.” Judges 7:12-14


**EPIC TALES**



A dramatic scene of a whale's tail fluke breaching the ocean surface amidst a heavy rainstorm. The sky is dark and filled with streaks of rain, creating a sense of intense action and divine power. The water is turbulent with white foam from the whale's splash.

God is at work all over the world  
simultaneously orchestrating the  
events that will lead to the  
execution of His divine will


**EPIC TALES**



When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship. He returned to the camp of Israel and said, “Arise, for the Lord has given the camp of Midian into your hands.” He divided the 300 men into three companies, and he put trumpets and empty pitchers [easily breakable earthenware] into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the pitchers. He said to them, “Look at me and do likewise. And behold, when I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. When I and all who are with me blow the trumpet, then you also blow the trumpets all around the camp and say, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon.’ ” Judges 7:15-18

\*You should believe in God but you still have to do the job...  
Gideon had faith but he also created a smart military strategy

**EPIC TALES**



So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch [10 pm], when they had just posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and smashed the pitchers that were in their hands. When the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing, and cried, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” Each stood in his place around the camp; and all the army ran, crying out as they fled. When they blew 300 trumpets [shofar], the Lord set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army; and the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. The men of Israel were summoned from Naphtali and Asher and all Manasseh, and they pursued Midian. Judges 7:19-23

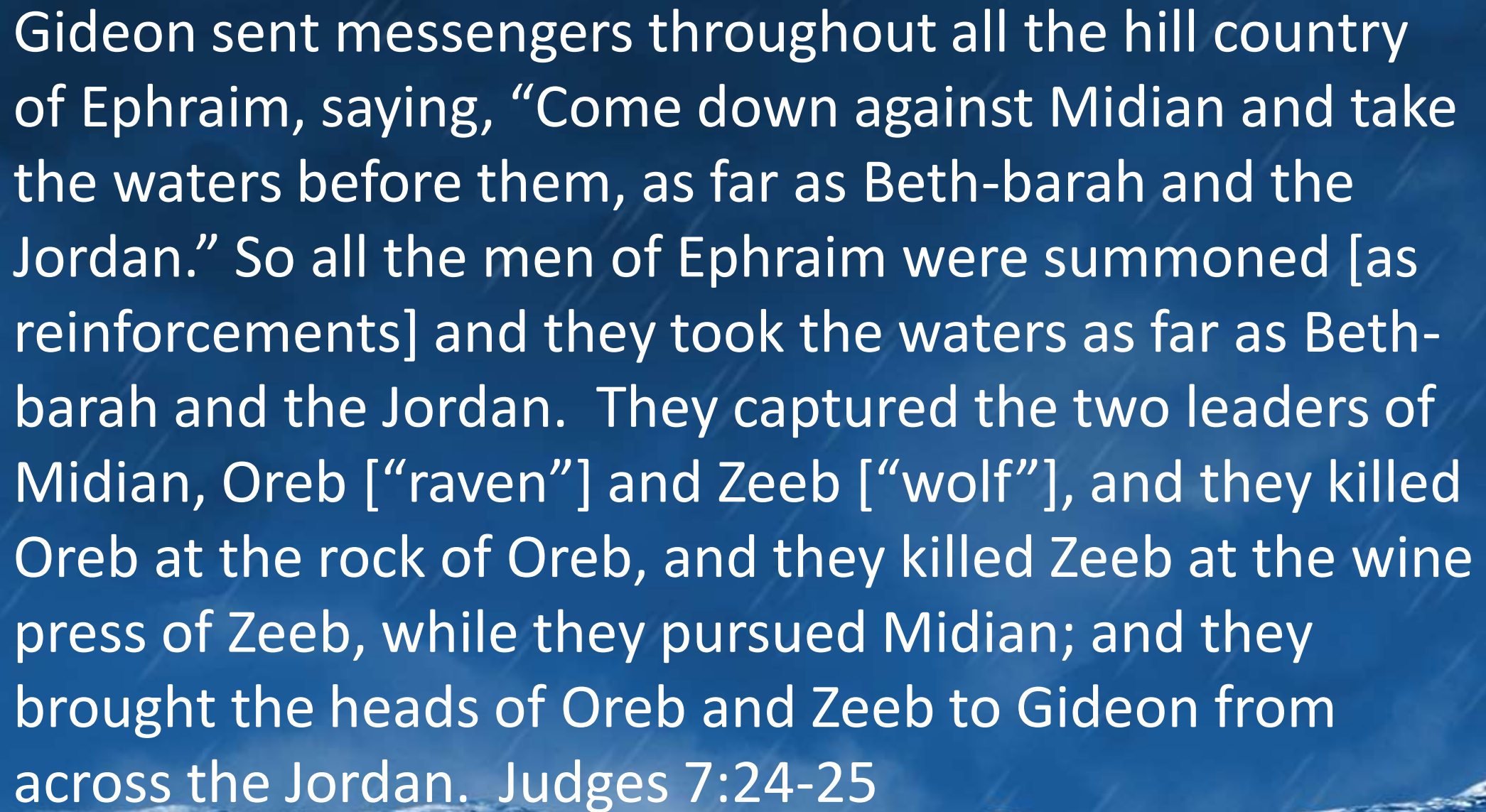
**EPIC TALES**

# Gideon's Battles



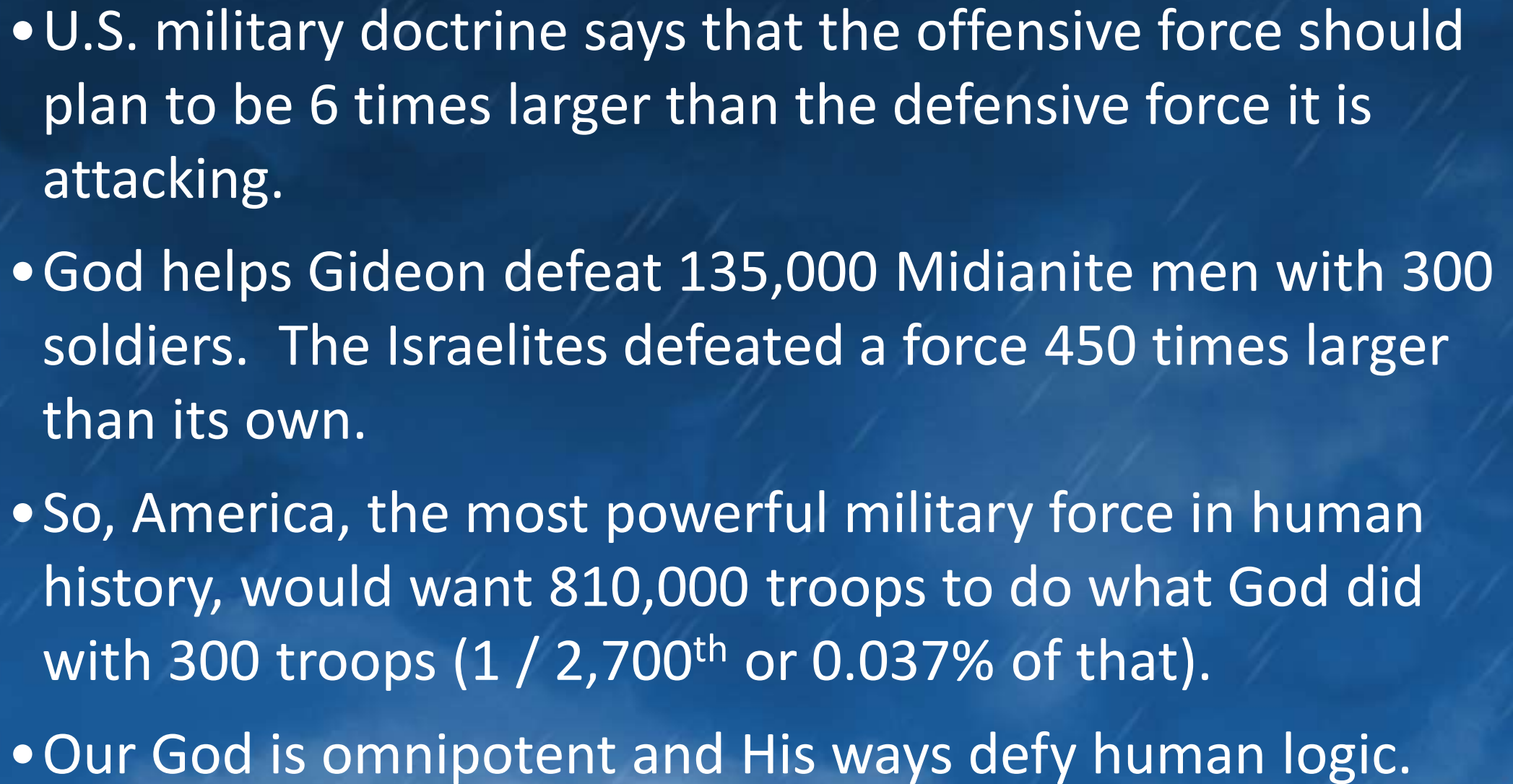
\*Gideon's army does not surround the enemy, he offers them a way to flee... enemy soldiers are much more likely to panic and disintegrate rather than fight to the death (classic military strategy).  
\*Sun Tzu said "When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard." (Art of War)

# EPIC TALES

A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean on the left side of the image. The water is a deep blue with white foam from the splash. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against Midian and take the waters before them, as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.” So all the men of Ephraim were summoned [as reinforcements] and they took the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. They captured the two leaders of Midian, Oreb [“raven”] and Zeeb [“wolf”], and they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and they killed Zeeb at the wine press of Zeeb, while they pursued Midian; and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon from across the Jordan. Judges 7:24-25

**EPIC TALES**

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- A photograph of a whale's tail breaching the ocean surface, set against a clear blue sky. The whale's tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit from the water. The ocean is a deep blue with some whitecaps.
- U.S. military doctrine says that the offensive force should plan to be 6 times larger than the defensive force it is attacking.
  - God helps Gideon defeat 135,000 Midianite men with 300 soldiers. The Israelites defeated a force 450 times larger than its own.
  - So, America, the most powerful military force in human history, would want 810,000 troops to do what God did with 300 troops ( $1 / 2,700^{\text{th}}$  or 0.037% of that).
  - Our God is omnipotent and His ways defy human logic.

**EPIC TALES**

A dramatic scene of a whale's tail fluke rising from the ocean's surface. The water is dark blue and turbulent, with white foam from the whale's splash. The sky is a deep, dark blue, filled with rain falling in diagonal streaks. The overall mood is epic and powerful.

*Judges chapter 8*

**EPIC TALES**

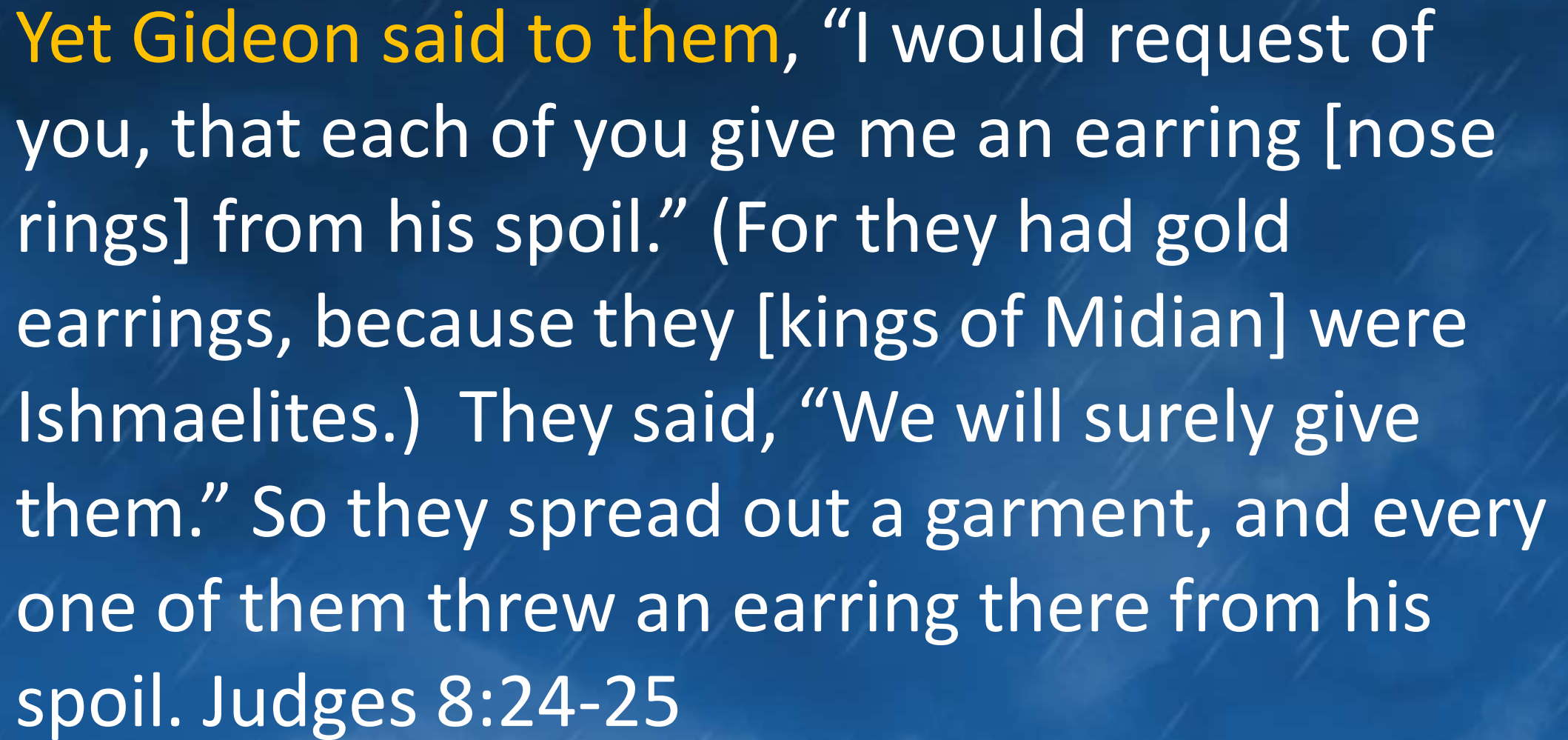
(after a series of battles in Judges 8:1-21)

Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son’s son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.” But Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.” Judges 8:22-23

\*Gideon was opposed to hereditary monarchies (see George Washington or Caesar Diocletian [Roman emperor 284-305 AD])


**EPIC TALES**



A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean. The water is a deep blue with white foam from the whale's splash. The background is a clear, bright blue sky.

**Yet Gideon said to them,** “I would request of you, that each of you give me an earring [nose rings] from his spoil.” (For they had gold earrings, because they [kings of Midian] were Ishmaelites.) They said, “We will surely give them.” So they spread out a garment, and every one of them threw an earring there from his spoil. Judges 8:24-25

**EPIC TALES**

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the blue ocean, positioned on the left side of the frame. The background is a deep blue sky with light rays filtering through.

The weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold [43 pounds], besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the neck bands that were on their camels' necks. Gideon made it into an ephod [a breastplate or mask used in cultic worship], and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and **all Israel played the harlot with it there**, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household. So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads anymore. And the land was undisturbed for forty years in the days of Gideon.

Judges 8:26-28

**EPIC TALES**

# Lessons from the life of Gideon

- God's way is successful and victorious, but not easy
- 1 Corinthians 3:19-21 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless." So then, let no one boast in men.
- The result of Gideon's faithfulness was blessing.
- God's divine will is accomplished through us, after we humbly choose to follow Him.
- Psalm 33:16 "The king is not saved by a mighty army; a warrior is not delivered by great strength."
- Like the jars of Gideon's army, the light of Jesus does not show through us until we are broken. Some of us are not broken, and therefore the light of Jesus within us cannot show forth.

**EPIC TALES**

# What have we learned in this series?

- Jonah and the Big Fish
- Noah and the Ark
- Joshua and the Battle of Jericho
- David and Goliath
- Daniel and the Lions' Den
- Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
- Tower of Babel
- Jacob's Ladder
- Writing on the Wall
- Valley of Dry Bones
- Abraham offers Isaac
- Samson and Delilah
- Gideon

**EPIC TALES**



# Lessons from the Epic Tales

- God initiates the call to do something great for Him
- God expects more out of us than we do
- God uses humble, faithful servants
- God promises “Surely I will be with you.”
- God is patient and gracious while we doubt and fear
- 1 Peter 5:6 “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.”

**EPIC TALES**

# Lessons from the Epic Tales

Now **faith** (πίστις pistis) is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

And without **faith** it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean, set against a blue sky and sea background.

**EPIC TALES**