

## **BROKEN PITCHERS, *NOT* BROKEN PROMISES**

Presented by

**Blake Brown**

God's Word teaches us many important things. But surely one of the **most** important things we learn as we study the Bible is **God's true nature**. For example, Joel 2:13 tells us that God is "gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." Exodus 34:6-7 tells us that God "abounds in goodness and truth..., and forgives sin." And James 1:17 tells us that with God there is "no variation or shadow of turning," which tells us that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

But there is another important trait that God possesses. He **never** lies—and **always** keeps His promises! In Titus 1:2, Paul told Titus that God "cannot lie." And he told Timothy, "Even when we are too weak to have any faith left, he remains faithful to us and will help us, for he cannot disown us who are part of himself, and he will always carry out his promises to us" (2 Timothy 2:13, The Living Bible).

There is a fascinating account in Judges 6 and 7 about a promise that God made to His people, and about the unusual way in which He kept that promise. The Midianites and the Amalekites were bitter enemies of the Israelites, and wanted to make God's people their slaves. But God was **not** going to let that happen. So, God sent an angel to an Israelite by the name of Gideon to tell him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!... You shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites" (Judges 6:12,14).

That was the pledge God made to Gideon. But did He keep His promise? Yes, He certainly did—in a most unusual fashion. Here is what happened. God told Gideon to form an army composed of Israelite men. By the time Gideon had finished, he had **32,000 soldiers!** But in Judges 7:2-3 the Lord told Gideon that 32,000 was too large a number. If the Israelites won, they would think that they had defeated their enemies by their own power instead of by the power of God. So, the Lord told Gideon that if any of the soldiers were afraid, they should be allowed to go home. When Gideon asked his soldiers if any of them were afraid, **22,000** said that they were. So, by God's command, they were allowed to return home to their families. Now Gideon had only **10,000** soldiers left. But in Judges 7:4 God said, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there." When Gideon brought the soldiers to the water, God said to him, "All those who lap the water with their tongues, as a dog laps, you shall put to one side; all those who kneel down to drink by putting their hands to their mouths, you shall put to the other side" (Judges 7:5).

The soldiers who lapped water like a dog were instructed to go home, which they did. According to Judges 7:6, that left **only 300 soldiers** remaining in Gideon's army! But the Lord said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men, I will save you, and I will deliver the Midianites into your hand" (Judges 7:7).

The Bible then tells us that Gideon divided the 300 men into three groups. Once he had done that, he gave every soldier a trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a torch to put inside the pitcher. Then, according to Judges 7:17-18, Gideon told the soldiers, “When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. When I blow the trumpet, then you also blow the trumpets around the whole camp, and shout, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’” Judges 7:20-23 then tells us what happened next.

“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 they cried, ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’ And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran, shouted, and fled. When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the Lord set every man’s sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the enemy’s army fled. And the men of Israel pursued the Midianites.”

Judges 7:25 tells us that the Israelites not only caused the Midianites to flee for their lives, but also captured and killed the princes who had been the Midianites’ leaders. Then, when the battle was over, Gideon said to the people of Israel, “God has delivered the princes of Midian into your hands” (Judges 8:3). God had told Gideon, “You shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites” (Judges 6:14). And, just as God had promised, Gideon had done exactly that—**with God’s help!**

In Joshua 6 God promised the Israelites that He would give them the city of Jericho—and He did! Then, in Judges 6, He promised the Israelites that He would help them defeat their enemies, the Midianites and the Amalekites—and He did! In Judges 2:1 God had told the Israelites, “I will **never** break my covenant with you.” And He never did—because God **always** keeps His promises.

And aren’t we today **glad**—since God has made certain promises to us, too! In Hebrews 13:5 He promised, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” In John 11:25-26, He promised that whoever believes in and obeys His Son, Jesus Christ, “will never die.” And in Hebrews 7:25 He promised to “save to the uttermost” those who come to Him. God may break **pitchers**, but He never breaks **promises!** And aren’t we glad?!