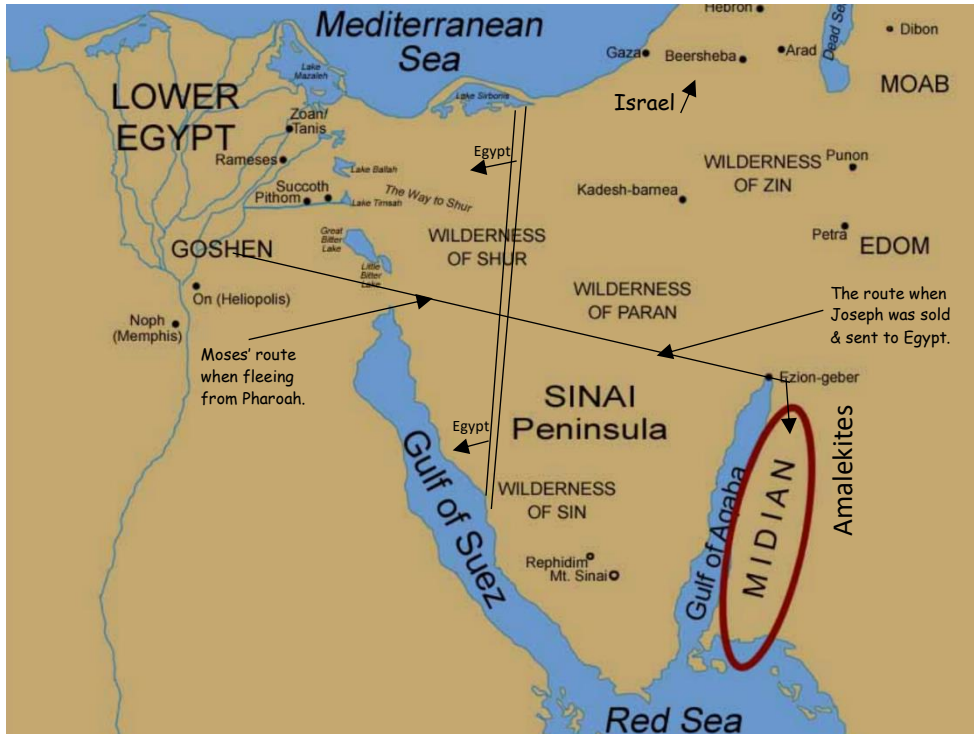


BIBLE RUNAWAYS

There were at least 11 Bible characters who “ran away” when things got tough. They are: Adam, Jonah, Elijah, Mark, Onesimus, Moses, Gideon, Prodigal Son, David, Judas Iscariot, and Peter.

Runaway #7 - Gideon

The name “Gideon” means “great warrior”. It appears that Gideon did not know this.



1. In Judges 6:1-2, with what country was Israel having trouble? _____

2 In Judges 6:3, what other country was hassling Israel?

3 Put an "X" on the map where you find "the people of the east".

4 What town did Gideon live in? _____ (Judg 6:11)

5 Draw a line from "Goshen" in Egypt to the top of the "Midian" red circle. This was Moses' route when he ran from Pharaoh.

6 Circle of nation of the "Amalekites".

This map lesson is in preparation for studying about Gideon. If we understand where he lived, who lived around him, and what were the reasons for his attitudes, it might help us understand him.

7. After Moses killed the Egyptian in Exodus 2:12, he left Egypt quickly and got on the road heading toward Midian. Put a "7" on the arrow line showing this.

8. When Joseph was sold by his brothers, the Midianites and Ishmaelites who bought him got on the road going from Midian to Egypt. Put an "8" on the arrow line showing that.

9. Notice the double line running up and down. That is a rough border between the Egyptian Empire and the nations to the east. Put a "9" at the top of the double line.

Judges 6:1-2 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. So, the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for 7 years, and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel.....

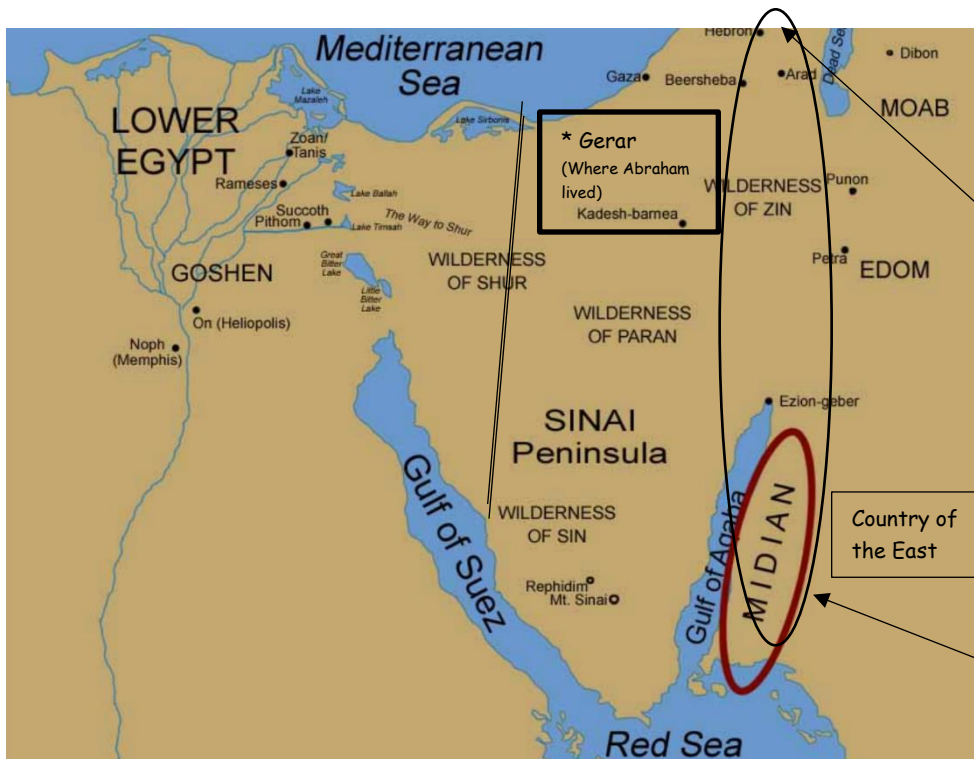
Judges 6:3 So, when Israel planted crops & harvested them, Midian would come up; also, Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them.

Judges 6:4 Then, they (the enemies) would surround them and would destroy their crops just north of the Goshen-Midian Freeway all the way north to Gaza

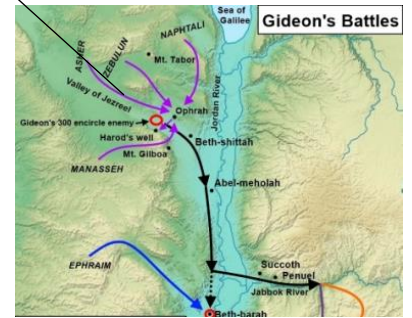
10. True False The Midianites covered a lot of territory in tormenting Israel.

11. True False The activities of Gideon did not happen in the territory of Israel but rather in the territory between Egypt & Midian.

12. Circle the word "Israel" showing the direction of the land of Israel



Let's use the same map again but focus in on where Abraham & Gideon lived and the important locations that they interacted with.



Gideon lived in Ophrah which is farther north in Israel.

Midian is south.

It is possible that the Land of Midian (also called the "Country of the East") stretched north a long way during the time of Gideon. See the large oval shape covering "Midian" on the map. That large oval area could be the area patrolled by Midian. If that is true, then the Midianites would have been very close to where Gideon lived & tried to farm.

Judges 6:3 So, when Israel planted crops & harvested them, Midian would come up; also, Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them.

13. What does it say about Midian in this verse above? _____

Midian must have been located south of where Gideon lived.

14. What other two nations are mentioned in the verse above?

- a. _____
- b. _____

A Few Thoughts:

- I have taken you on this "map adventure" to try and show you the people around Gideon.
- It is possible that what happened in this part of that world affected Gideon's life "big time".
- Let's look at what Abraham did to see if it has any bearing on this Gideon story.

WHAT DID ABRAHAM & SARAH DO?

Genesis 16:1-3 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian handmaiden named Hagar. So, she told Abram to have sex with Hagar since the Lord has prevented her from having children; he did as she asked.

Genesis 16:4 When Sarah saw that Hagar had conceived (become pregnant), she despised & hated Hagar.

Genesis 16:15 So Hagar (an Egyptian) bore Abram a son; Abram named him Ishmael.

Genesis 18:10 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and Behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son".

(Sarah heard the conversation, laughed since she was too old to have children now; then, she denied laughing.)

Genesis 21:2 Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age; he named him Isaac.

Genesis 21:9 Sarah son the son of Hagar (Ishmael) and said to Abraham, "Cast Hagar out with her son; that son will not be heir with my son, Isaac".

Genesis 21:21 So, Ishmael and his mother lived in the "Wilderness of Paran". (He married an Egyptian woman. His descendants (the Ishmaelites) continued to settle in the area of Paran, north of the Red Sea.

15. Gen. 16:1-3 ___Yes ___No God promised to make a great nation from the descendants of Abraham. Did he or his wife, Sarah, really believe that God would handle it?
16. Gen. 16:4 When Sarah's handmaiden became pregnant by her husband at her request, how did Sarah respond? _____
17. Gen. 16:15 The promised son of Abraham should have come from the sexual union of Abraham & his wife (both from God's chosen people). What nation did Hagar (the handmaiden) come from? _____
18. Gen. 16:15 Was this child, named Ishmael, _____ the result of following the will of God, or _____ the result of dysfunctional disobedience?
19. Gen. 18:10 God repeated the promise to Abraham to make a great nation through his many descendants. When Sarah heard it, what did she do? _____

Check out Genesis 21:2.

20. Now, Abraham has two sons, named _____ and _____.
21. How did Sarah, in Genesis 21:9, feel about having the two sons?

22. Here is a key thought for this lesson. Where did Abraham (at Sarah's insistence) send Hagar & the son, Ishmael? _____

A Few Thoughts:

- *Check the second map. The area called "Paran" is far away from Gerar where Abraham lived.*
- *The "Wilderness of Paran" is over close to the "Country of the East".*
- *It is very possible that this "Paran" could be somewhat close to where Gideon might have been.*
- *Keep that thought about Gideon in the back of your head.*

Genesis 23:1-2 Sarah was 127 years old and she died.

Genesis 25:1 Abraham married again to a woman named Keturah.

Genesis 25:2 Keturah gave Abraham six children; one of the six was named "Midian".

Genesis 25:5 Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.

Genesis 25:6 But Abraham gave gifts to these other sons too.

Genesis 25:6 And while Abraham was still living, he sent all these sons & their families eastward, AWAY FROM ISAAC HIS SON, to the "country of the East".

23. Check out map #2 above. What country is "Country of the East" close to? _____
24. From the verses above, where were all these sons of Keturah sent by Abraham to keep them away from the "Promised Son" Isaac? _____

A Few Thoughts:

- *Notice that one of the sons from Abraham & Keturah was named "Midian"*
- *His descendants settled on the east side of top of the Red Sea and became a large nation.*
- *They were called the "Midianites".*
- *As you can see from map #2, the territory the Midianites controlled could have extended from the top of the Red Sea all the way into southern Israel (very close to Gideon territory).*
- *The descendants of Ishmael (Ishmaelites) and the descendants of Abraham's son Midian (Midianites) were the result of disobedience, immorality, and being driven from God.*
- *The decisions that Abraham made created other nations that hated Israel, rejected God, and planned harm & defeat to come to the Jewish people. (This was not God's fault.)*
- *Is it any wonder that Gideon doubted the faithfulness of God; men were evil & God got blamed.*

HOW DOES GIDEON FEEL ABOUT ALL THIS?

25. Judges 6:11 To make a living, what does Gideon have to do?

26. Judges 6:12 Yes No Does he think God is with them?
27. Judges 6:13 What does he blame God for?

28. Judges 6:13 How does Gideon feel that God has changed?

29. Judges 6:13 Yes No Did Gideon even questions God's past actions?
30. Judges 6:13 What did Gideon accuse God of?

31. Judges 6:13 "God, You have delivered us over to the _____."

Obviously, Gideon is afraid and hopeless. People who run away are afraid & hopeless. Hopeless and fearful people blame God for everything.

32. Notice how God is attacked in the verses we just read above: Match the attack with the correct verse in Judges 6.
- a. Judges 6:11 There is no way you can be with us in this mess.
- b. Judges 6:12 Jewish history says you did miracles; probably fiction.
- c. Judges 6:13 I am doing my best here; can't you help at all?
- d. Judges 6:13 You have just let the enemy defeat us; thanks a lot.
- e. Judges 6:13 All you have done is let bad things happen to us.
33. Lord, You are supposed to know all things; You don't know me at all. Match.
- a. Judges 6:15 I can't believe in you until You prove it's You.
- b. Judges 6:15 Don't You know that I can't do what you are asking?
- c. Judges 6:15 Are you going to stay with me or leave me as usual?
- d. Judges 6:17 You should know that I am a "nobody" in my family.
- e. Judges 6:17 You don't care about me or favor me at all.
- f. Judges 6:18 You should know my family is no good; how could I be?

As a "runaway", I have two arguments to justify my actions & attitudes:

- God is no good; He cannot be trusted; He is not reliable; I do not need Him.***
- I am no good; I cannot be trusted; I am not reliable; no one will ever need me.***

GIDEON HAD THESE VERY SAME REASONS FOR HIDING IN THE WINEPRESS.

34. Yes No Have you given up on God to make anything happen in your life?
35. Yes No Have you chosen other ways to create meaning in your life?
36. Yes No Have you dumped all religion & all relationships?
37. Yes No Have you pushed away anyone who might offer love or help?
38. Yes No Have you hurt people so that they will leave you alone?
39. Yes No As with Gideon, do you avoid family contacts as much as possible?
40. Yes No As with Gideon, do you just hide under the radar like a survivor?
41. Yes No My ancestors, like Gideon's, ran from God; do I have a choice?

God knew that Gideon wanted to continue running away from Him.

HOW DOES GOD FEEL ABOUT ALL THIS?

42. Fill in the answer from the verse provided.

a. Judges 6:12 Gideon thought he is a weak loser.

What did God think? _____

b. Judges 6:14 Gideon could not imagine moving forward to do anything.

What did God think? _____

c. Judges 6:14 Gideon had given up & couldn't save himself from anything.

What did God think? _____

d. Judges 6:12 Gideon felt that he was all alone.

What did God think? _____

f. Judges 6:16 Gideon could not & would not depend on God in the future.

What did God think? _____

g. Judges 6:16 Gideon felt like a failure & was totally defeated.

What did God think? _____

WHAT ENCOURAGEMENT DID GOD GIVE GIDEON?

43. Match the verse with the encouragement.

a. Judges 6:18 ___ Do not fear no matter what you face; I'm there.

b. Judges 6:22 ___ You and I can meet face to face through prayer.

c. Judges 6:23 ___ You will not die until I am done using you.

d. Judges 6:23 ___ I will wait for you until I have prepared you.

e. Judges 6:23 ___ The peace I give will work for you.

44. If you feel like running some more, check the following as a promise to do them.

a. ___ I am afraid to do anything but I will trust You to remove my fears.

b. ___ I do not like to ask for help but I will ask You, Lord, to help me.

c. ___ I will admit that God will protect me so that He can use me some more.

d. ___ I am not perfect so I will continue to let you build my character, Lord.

e. ___ When I am wanting to run away, I will let God's peace calm me down.

A Few Thoughts:

- *Though Gideon was a runaway, He cut down his father's (families') evil idols. (Judges 6:25)*
- *Though Gideon was a runaway, He constructed an altar that honored God. (Judges 6:26)*
- *Though Gideon was a runaway, He finally agreed to do what God said. (Judges 6:27)*
- *Though Gideon was a runaway, He gathered other men to serve God together. (Judges 6:34)*
- *Though Gideon was a runaway, He told God that he would believe His promises. (Judges 6:36)*

45. What has helped you in this lesson? _____
