

STUDIES IN THE LIVES OF GIDEON & SAMSON

STUDY NUMBER THREE - Judges 7:1-22

TEXT:

- v. 1 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.
- v. 2 And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, lest Israel become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.'
- v. 3 "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.
- v. 4 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."
- v. 5 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."
- v. 6 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.
- v. 7 And 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."
- v. 8 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.
- v. 9 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.
- v.10 "But if you are afraid to go down, go with Purah your servant down to the camp,
- v.11 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.
- v.12 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.
- v.13 When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend. 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 and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat."

- v.14 And his friend answered and said, "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."
- v.15 And it came about when Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, that 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."
- v.16 And he divided the 300 men into three companies, and he put trumpets and empty pitchers into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the pitchers.
- v.17 And 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."
- v.18 "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!'"
- v.19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and smashed the pitchers that were in their hands.
- v.20 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!"
- v.21 And each stood in his place around the camp; and all the army ran, crying out as they fled.
- v.22 And when they blew 300 trumpets, the Lord set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army; and the army fled as far as Bethshittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abelmeholah, by Tabbath.

INTRODUCTION:

why? where? How?

The story of the biography of Gideon opens when the angel of the Lord spoke to Gideon at the winepress as he was threshing out grain to keep it from the Midianites who have overwhelmed and enslaved the children of Israel. The Lord gave the assurance to Gideon that he is planning on using him to deliver the nation from the Midianites. He has since sought a sign by an offering and also by the fleece.

Cleansed clothed

The beginning of the liberation was the tearing down of the altar Baal and erecting in its place an altar to the Lord, which we saw Gideon do in our last study. Offered a sacrifice to the Lord.

7. Peace

Now having been cleansed and the altar to the Lord erected, we are now prepared to witness the battle that is going to take place in Judges chapter 7.

Authority

v. 1 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.

Baal Battle worship war

Gideon is addressed with his new name Jerubbaal, which means 'idol smasher'; and Midian is a type of the world. And Gideon has come to cut down this opposition to the people of God, into which they have become enslaved.

Gideon had now called all of his forces together from these various places, and had a company of some 32,000. They chose to get up early and to set up camp beside the spring of Harod, where there would be water. And then the latter part of verse 1 described the camp of Midian, who is on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

Racquet Ball, Kit, Toddes & Sasha - Towering Plant Stand!

v. 2 And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, lest Israel become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.'"

The first thing the Lord says to Gideon runs completely contrary to all of his thinking at this point. The people who are with you are too many for me to give Midian into their hand. From the perspective of Gideon, as he looks down at the host in the valley, seeing over 135,000 people, and he has only been able to muster 32,000, this is 4 against 1. From a human, physical point of view, the task already seems impossible.

Gideon still has a real lesson to learn in his life, and we have noted this in prior studies, as he has constantly focused only on himself and his resources, and has been extremely fearful and hesitant about moving ahead because he has not yet learned to really trust the Lord to work through him and to give him the victory. He still feels like everything rests upon his shoulders in this regard.

So the whole army of the Israelites consisted of only 32,000, while that of the Midianites amounted to at least 135,000 or 4 to 1 to the Israelites. Yet the Lord deems this small number entirely too large for the purposes He had in view. And even when diminished to 10,000 orders a still further reduction.

The reason the Lord feels that Gideon has too many to fight for him in the battle against the Midianites is seen in the last phrase, 'Lest Israel become boastful saying, My own power hath delivered me.'

If this vast host went out and fought and the Lord gave Israel the victory like He had promised, then it would be very easy for Israel to boast and say, "My own power has delivered me."

This too is a picture of man's salvation and redemption.

Ephesians 2:8,9 says "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not of works; lest any man should boast."

In this whole situation Gideon is just going to have to learn to believe God, and to believe that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. And as Gideon is able to accept this fact and realize that God must

Let Baal contend against Him.
Manassah
Asher
Zebulun
Naphtali

Valley of Jezreel
100,000
In short

4 to 1 odds

My thoughts
My ways

God be
God

Gideon you are going to have to be put in a position of trust & dependency
So I receive the glory!!

Ph. 1:4:13
Col. 1:11

have the glory, then he will see the victory over the Midianites.

One is reminded of the address of Herod in Acts chapter 12 as he put his feet on the rostrum and began delivering an address to them. Verse 22 says "And the people kept crying out, The voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory and he was eaten by worms and died, but the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied."

Gideon as well as the children of Israel needed to recognize that their situation was hopeless unless God intervened and did something wonderful. So he reduces the forces so that this lesson might be indelibly inscribed upon their hearts and lives.

* Deut. 8:17 "Otherwise you may say in your heart, my power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth."

Only through divine aid was salvation made possible.

* Isa. 10:12 and following "So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will say, I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness. For he has said, By the power of my hand, and by my wisdom, I did this. For I have understanding and I removed the boundaries of the peoples and plundered their treasures; and like a mighty man I brought down their inhabitants, and my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest, and as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth and there was not one that flapped its wings or opened its beak or chirped. Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chopped with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?"

Gideon needs to recognize the fact that he needs to present himself to the Lord as an instrument to be taken in hand and used to bring victory to the Israelites in the battle that is just ahead.

* * v. 3 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.

First the Lord commands Gideon to go before his 32,000 troops and say to them, 'Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.'

You can imagine that the response would almost be expected after realizing that they were playing against 4 to 1 odds. And so there were many of them who were afraid and trembling, which is the result of this command.

If the truth were known, Gideon wasn't the leader He would have been leading
So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained.

Gideon was going to have to be careful that he didn't get killed in the rush, because now his host is reduced considerably; in fact, by 2/3 with this first command. *11,000 empty 2 men tents*

This is going to give Gideon a real opportunity to learn the Lord's way of doing things and to learn how to trust the Lord when the circumstances seem so contrary to the world's way of doing things.

verse 4 the pack!!
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.'

George Bush in his commentary says, "Christianity requires men. David's royal band of worthies was the type of the forces of the church, all valiant men and able to encounter with thousands. Doth but a foul word or a frown scare thee from Christ? Doth the loss of a little land or silver disquiet thee? Doth but the sight of the Midianites in the valley strike thee? Home then, Home to the world, thou art not for the conquering band of Christ. Thou canst not resolve to follow him through infamy, prisons, racks, gibbets, flames? Depart to thine own house and save thy life to thy loss."

Gideon has not as yet had time to recover from the loss of 2/3 of his army, only to hear the Lord say the people are still too many. And then he describes for Gideon a test that He wants him to give to the remaining 10,000. 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 do, This one shall not go with, he shall not go.

✱ Psalms 75:6,7 "For promotion comes neither from the east nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge, he puts down one and sets up another."

Those who are going to have the glorious privilege of seeing God work through them and give them the victory are going to be those whom the Lord has chosen for this purpose. And now Gideon must learn how God prepares his warriors for battle, and how he chooses them.

✱ The word the Lord uses here for "test" is the word which is used for removing the dross from the precious metal by smelting it, removing the elements unfit to carry out the divine plan.

✱ 1 Peter 1:6,7 "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials. That the proof of your faith being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 4:12,13 "Beloved do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange things were happening to you. But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation."

And the Lord is about to test these 10,000 remaining soldiers to determine which ones will be used in his service. So the Lord administers to us as His children individually, tests to bring out the Christ-likeness within us, and to prepare us for His service, and to prepare us for the bearing of fruit, the purpose for which we have been chosen.

His last instructions in verse 4 are very clear. It will only be those of whom he says, they shall go with you, that go; and those who shall not go, shall not go.

v. 5 "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."

There is to be two groups that are going to be formed when he takes the people down to the water. There are going to be those, according to verse 5, who will lap the water with his tongue as a dog laps, and there will be those who kneel to drink.

It is Gideon's responsibility, then, to divide the people by putting all those who should lick the water with their tongue, as a dog licks, into one class, and all those who knelt down to drink, into another--so separating the latter from the former.

The number of those who licked the water into their mouth with their hand amounted to 300, and all the rest knelt down to drink.

Those who took the water from the brook with the hollow of their hand and lapped it into the mouth with their tongue, as the dog does, is only a more distinct expression for licking with the tongue. The 300 men who quenched their thirst in this manner were certainly not the cowardly or indolent who did not kneel down to drink in the ordinary way, but rather the bravest. Namely, those who, when they reached a brook before the battle did not allow themselves time to kneel down to satisfy their thirst in the most convenient manner, but simply took up some water with their hands as they stood in their military accoutrements to strengthen themselves for the battle, and then proceeded without delay against the foe.

v. 6 Now the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth was 300 men; but all the rest of the people kneeled down to drink water.

Lappers
vs.
Kneelers

This meant there were 9700 of those who kneeled down, leaving only the 300 who are now going to be used by the Lord in bringing the victory.

- v. 7 And 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."

I am sure Gideon is stunned by these words from the Lord. He has now had his forces dwindled from 32,000 to 300 men. And he has the promise from the Lord: "I will deliver you with the 300 men and will give the Midianites into your hands." Ends up w/ 300 & A promise.

While the Lord was willing to strengthen the faith of Gideon by the sign with the fleece of wool, and thus to raise him up to full confidence in the divine omnipotence, he also required of him, when thus strengthened, an attestation of his faith by the purification of his army, that he might give the whole glory to him and accept the victory over that great multitude from his hands alone.

- v. 8 "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."

Now the full impact of all that is taking place begins to really weigh heavy upon Gideon. As he can see this vast host of over 135,000 people, all of their animals and livestock, down in the valley, and he now stripped down to just 300 men from a human point of view seems like an impossible task.

This is exactly where the Lord wanted Gideon to be. So that he would have no choice but to be dependent completely upon the Lord for the victory.

- v. 9 "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.'"

After all the testing and the 9700 remaining went home, leading just the small task force of 300 men, that very night the Lord said, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand."

- v. 10 "But if you are afraid to go down, go with Purah your servant down to the camp"

Gideon has been frightened all along and one of the parts of his temperament trait is to be fearful. So the Lord says that he can go with his servant down to the camp.

The Altar
ex porence
the fleece

v.11 "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."

The Lord wants him to go down and hear what is being said in the camp, and then as a result of hearing the conversation, he will then be strengthened to go into the battle.

* Proverbs 29:25 says: "The fear of man brings a snare but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

* II Tim. 1:7 "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

v.12 "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."

We not only have the Midianites, who are descendants of Midian the son of Abraham and Keturah, but also the Amalekites, who have been a thorn in the side of the children of Israel on prior occasions. Amalek is a descendant of Esau. And it goes on to say that all the sons of the East were lying there in the valley, as numerous as locusts.

There were so many of them, and their camels were without number, and as numerous as the sand on the seashore.

v.13 When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend. 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 and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat."

Just as Gideon and Purah get down to the camp, they hear a man telling about his dream to his friend, and they listen. The man says in his dream that a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and as it came to the tent and struck it, so that it fell and turned it upside-down, so that the tent lay flat.

Gideon recognizes that the loaf of barley bread is a picture of him and of his forces.

It does seem humanly ridiculous to think that a loaf of barley bread could roll into the camp of Midian and bring about such destruction; but when the loaf of barley bread belongs to the Lord of hosts, then there will be victory.

Dream both
Directions
Scared the enemy
Strengthened
Gideon
Just An old
Barley Bun

v.14 And his friend answered and said, "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."

His friend interprets the dream that the barley bread is the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. And then he concludes the interpretation with the statement: "God has given Midian and all the camp into his hands."

What a beautiful thing for Gideon to hear in the midst of his fear and the frustration over how the Lord is going to do it with only 300 men.

He himself realizes that God is the one who is going to give Midian and all the camp into the hand of Gideon.

You can imagine how a dream like this is told over and over again over the dinner table that night, and how it spread like wildfire throughout the whole camp to make the people nervous and on edge.

v.15 And it came about when Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, that 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."

As soon as Gideon and Purah got a safe distance away, after hearing the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in an act of worship.

The last time we saw him bowing in an act of worship was after the angel of the Lord revealed himself to him. He came to the altar, which is the place of peace, and there worshipped the Lord.

His heart is now filled with a song. There is a sense of joy, a sense of peace, a new confidence in his step, a new boldness to go forth in courage now.

As he returned to the camp of Israel, he said to his 300 men, "Arise, for the Lord has given the camp of Midian into your hands."

Now Gideon realizes that it is truly the Lord's doing, and he is going to be the one who is going to give victory over the Midianites in the valley.

v.16 And he divided the 300 men into three companies, and he put trumpets and empty pitchers into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the pitchers.

Trumpets, empty pitchers, and a torch are all that are going to be necessary in overtaking the Midianites.

No Atomic Weapons

mel. woman: Good housekeeping - They got up to go to the bathroom at 3:00 AM - bed already made.

Ghost story
At camp
Jumpy
Boo!!

FAITH

3rd worship
① Peace
② Mountain

Melancholy
meticulous detail!!

II Cor. 10:

Spiritual application is not far to seek. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. The torches are symbolical of the fire of the Holy Spirit's activity. The shattered pitchers suggest lives so broken in surrender to Christ. The light can shine through their displacement. The trumpets represent the message of God, sounded out with no uncertain sound.

One is reminded of II Cor. 4:6,7 "For God, who said light shall shine out of darkness, is the one who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Though we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves."

v.17 And 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."

After dividing them into three companies and giving trumpets and pitchers into their hands, he then tells them to be looking at him and doing everything just the same way he does.

v.18 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.'"

Here now in these verses Gideon is giving the 300 men battle instructions. When he blows the trumpet, then they'll blow the trumpets; and at the same time, say, 'For the Lord and for Gideon.'

v.19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and smashed the pitchers that were in their hands.

These three groups began coming down the mountainside from three different directions with 100 in each group. This little invasion began to take place just a little after midnight, after the middle watch had just begun.

Everybody in camp was pretty well settled down for the night, and the changing of the guard had just taken place. They are beginning to relax. And then they blew the trumpets and smashed the pitchers that were in their hands.

v.20 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!"

Torch = H.S.
Pitchers = US
Trumpets = Message

Trumpets +
Breaking of Pitchers
go together.

Breaking of self
so light can
shine out.

Phil. 2:

Proper Order

reversed later

Ephod
for Gideon +
the Lord "

A little after midnight, for the Hebrews divided the night into three watches, at this time they would naturally be sunk in their profoundest slumbers, and of course be thrown into the utmost confusion on being suddenly awakened.

The three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers. Every man probably dashing his pitcher against that of his comrade who stood next to him. The effect of this with the intermingled sound of the trumpets and the shouts of the assailants reverberating on every side of the camp, together with the sudden glare of 300 torches blazing on the scarcely opened eyes of the Midianites, must indeed have been astounding. And the enemy could not imagine that every Israelite had a trumpet and a light, the noise of so many trumpets, the blaze of so many lights, with the crash of the broken pitchers from different quarters, must have conveyed to their minds the most exaggerated ideas of the numbers by which they were beset.

When you have the three companies blowing trumpets from every direction, breaking pitchers one against the other, and the torches begin to light up the sides of the hill, the people down in camp are struck with a horrible fear, knowing that they have been overtaken by an enemy so overwhelming they'll not be able to do anything about-- And an enemy with such an advantage. And on top of all that--to hear the cry: "The sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"

This only verified the dream that had been given, and now everyone is frozen in fear for a moment as they are so quickly awakened from a sound sleep.

v.21 And each stood in his place around the camp; and all the army ran, crying out as they fled.

Each of these 300 men stood in their place and watched their army running and crying out as they fled.

One is reminded of II Chron. 20:17 when the Lord says, "You need not fight in this battle. Station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf. O Judah and Jerusalem, do not fear or be dismayed, tomorrow go out to face them for the Lord is with you."

These were the same words that were given as the armies came up behind the children of Israel as they were facing the Red Sea in front of them:

Exodus 14:13,14 "But Moses said to the people, Do not fear, stand by and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you, while you keep silent."

This little
light of mine
I'm going to
let it shine

Last one
in is an
Egyptian

v.22 And when they blew 300 trumpets, the Lord set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army; and the army fled as far as Bethshittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abelmeholah, by Tabbath.

With the sounding of the 300 trumpets, the Midianites began to fight the Midianites, and the Amalekites began to fight the Amalekites. In the darkness and the confusion with the swords and the noise going on from the trumpets up above, down in the valley, life is taken as one fights against the other.

These 300, along with Gideon, witness the Lord giving victory in impossible circumstances.

These 300, along with Gideon, witness the Lord giving victory in impossible circumstances. Attacks its own wounded.

CONCLUSION:

There are a number of lessons that we can gather from this particular study.

LESSON #1: I Thess. 5:24 "Faithful is he who calls you and who also will bring it to pass."

LESSON # 2: The Lord wants to get the glory from giving the victory, and so He trims down Gideon's forces substantially from 32,000 to 300.

LESSON #3: The Lord meets Gideon's fear with a promise: '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 own home.'

LESSON # 4: The Lord provides assurances for Gideon through the interpretation of the dream.

LESSON #5: Victory came as the 300 men plus Gideon stood and watched after they were obedient to break the pitcher and to blow the trumpet and to shout 'A sword for the Lord and for Gideon.'

Lesson #6 The pitchers must be broken so the light can shine out

Lesson #7 For the Lord + Gideon is right order

Lesson #8 "Arise, for the Lord has given the camp of Midian into your hand = FAITH

Lesson #9 Watch the Lord work Sal, & Growth

Fighting each other!!
Tragic Picture of Church when I Thess. 4: only Army That