

“Trusting God Against All Odds”

Judges 7:1-25

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Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding one of the most unusual military victories of all-time. To relate Gideon’s experience in overcoming fear to our own experiences with fear today. To recognize faith in God and obedience to His Word will lead us to ultimate victory over the enemy no matter what the odds. To understand God plus us equals a majority, all things are possible with God!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Israel will be victorious, but the glory belongs to God alone (Judg. 7:1-8)

1. Why was Gideon’s name (*“Warrior”*) changed to *“Jerubbaal”* in **Judg. 6:32**? What was the name of the *“well”* that Gideon and the rest of the Israelites were camping beside (**vs. 1**)? What if any significance is there to the name of this well being called, *“Harod?”* (See Bible Footnotes) What well known valley were the Midianite military forces camped in? How far away were they camped from the Israelites?

2. Gideon must have felt frightened and overwhelmed by the thought of 32,000 Israelite soldiers facing an enemy coalition of 135,000 soldiers. What troubling words did God share with Gideon in **verse 2**? How do you think Gideon felt upon hearing the change of plans? Have you ever felt overwhelmed and frightened by your circumstances? If so, how did you respond to that fright?

3. What is *“the gaze and glance”* concept of prayer? How does it apply to the story of Gideon? How can we use *“the gaze and glance”* concept of prayer in our own lives today?

4. What Old Testament Law did God refer to in commanding Gideon to send home the soldiers who were afraid? (See **Deut. 20:3-8**) Why? According to this law, what other people should not go to war? Can fear be a good thing if it is channeled correctly? (See **Prov. 1:7**)

5. After the soldiers who were afraid left, only 10,000 Israelite soldiers remained. What was God's response to the 10,000 soldiers who stayed behind to fight (**vs. 4**)? How did God decide to test the remaining soldiers (**vv. 4-5**)? Why do you think God chose this method to separate the remaining soldiers?

6. According to **verse 6**, how many people lapped up the water with their tongues like a dog? Is there any significance to these soldiers being compared to a dog? Were dogs clean or unclean animals under Old Testament Law? _____

7. What troubling announcement did the LORD make to Gideon in **verse 7**? How do you think Gideon felt after being left with less than 1% of the original group that he had set out with? What major change the Israelite camp took place in **verse 8**?

Part II: Gideon receives a fourth and final sign of confirmation (Judg. 7:9-15)

1. How long did God wait before putting Gideon and his remaining soldiers into action (**vs. 9**)? What promise did God make to Gideon? Did Gideon believe God or was he still frightened (**vs. 10**)? What did God have Gideon do in **verses 10-11**?

2. When is the last time you heard of a General being sent to an enemy camp to spy on them? Who did God allow to go with Gideon? Why? Have you ever had somebody walk through difficult times with you? How did the presence of that person help you? Why is it important for Christians to stick together?

3. What did the Jezreel Valley look like to Gideon and Purah (his servant) that night (**vs. 12**)? Do you think Gideon and Purah were frightened as they approached the camp? Why? What kind of things frighten you? How do you handle your fears?

4. What did Gideon and Purah overhear as they moved nearer to the enemy camp (**vs. 13**)? What makes “*a tumbling loaf of barley bread*” a fitting image for the rag tag Israelite soldiers? What does the tent symbolize in this man’s dream?

5. How did the second Midianite soldier interpret the dream (**vs. 14**)? What can we learn about the knowledge of the Midianites from this passage? This was a message that Gideon desperately needed to hear for himself. Had God supernaturally arranged this dream and the interpretation of it in Gideon’s hearing in order to strengthen him for the battle ahead? What are some ways that God has encouraged you through the words of others in the past? Have you ever wondered why so many people are willing to trust the word of other people but not the Word of God – *The Bible*? Have you been guilty of this? In this case, the word of a Midianite soldier brought comfort to Gideon.

6. How did Gideon respond to the interpretation of the Midianite’s dream (**vs. 15a**)? Do you immediately thank God when He does something kind for you? What are some of your favorite ways to worship God? What makes them so special to you? Why should worship always come from a heart of gratitude towards God?

7. What did Gideon do after this word of encouragement (**vs. 15b**)? The Midianite man’s dream and interpretation were the 4th of 4 signs God had given to Gideon proving that He keeps His word. What were the other three signs? (See **Judg. 6:17-21, 36-40**)

Part III: The battle belongs to the LORD (Judg. 7:16-25)

1. What nontraditional military tactic was used in **verse 16**? Why did this strategy (as inspired by God) require great precision and synergy from Gideon's 300 soldiers (**vv. 17-18**)? What would have happened if even one of them had dropped his clay pot in the dark prematurely?
2. What time of the night was considered to be the middle watch (**vs. 19**)? (See Commentaries) What precise tactics would the Israelites have to perform to make this strategy work? How do we see an early form of "psychological warfare" being used against the Midianites (**vs. 20**)? What kind of horns were used to make this alarming noise? State the importance of each element in this surprise attack.
3. Ironically the Israelites, though crying out "*The sword of the LORD and of Gideon,*" did not use their swords; the Midianites panicked and used their own swords upon themselves and their allies. What lesson in life can every Christian learn from **2 Cor. 12:9b-10**? Why is "*the furnace of affliction*" a good place for Christians to be? What are some ways that you've grown through the furnace of affliction?
4. Have you ever been suddenly awakened in the middle of the night by a crisis? What did it feel like? What happened in the Midianite camp as all 300 Israelites obeyed God and did the simple act He commanded (**vv. 21-22**)? What does God promise if we simply obey Him? (See **Deut. 28:1-2**)
5. What happened as the sound of 300 ram horns blared from every direction (**vs. 22**)? Have you ever experienced a panic attack? What was it like? Were you able to think clearly during it? Note: Remember how dark it was during the battle. Unknown languages may also have contributed to the panic as at least three different languages were spoken within the Midianite coalition.

6. Once the Midianites were on the run, Gideon called in reinforcements. What three Israelite tribes came to help Gideon pursue the Midianites (**vs. 23**)? Note: Some of the soldiers who had previously been dismissed because of fear may have also joined in this pursuit. What additional tribe did Gideon call to for help (**vs. 24**)? Why?

7. What event took place at “*the rock of Oreb*” (**vs. 25**)? What happened at “*the winepress of Zeeb*?” Why do you think the rock and the winepress are named after the two princes of Midian? The story of Gideon began with him fearfully working in a winepress (See **Judg. 6:11**); where does the story end (**vs. 25**)?

8. Gideon was afraid throughout this story until the very end. What are some applications that we can find and apply to our own lives from this story?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- No problem in our life is too big for God to handle!
- With obedience comes blessing, with disobedience cursing!
- God never tempts us to do evil, but He does “*test*” us to see if we will trust and obey Him?
- A country is not saved by the size of its army, it is saved by its faith and obedience in the living God!
- God often used dreams in the Bible to communicate truth about the future; in this case He spoke through a couple of Midianite soldiers who were unaware Gideon was listening!
- Through faith in God and by the mighty hand of God; Gideon’s little army of 300 soldiers defeated a coalition of over 135,000 enemy soldiers!
- In the battles of life, it’s important to remember: “*God plus you equals a majority!*”