

11/17/13

Judges 7-8

Gideon has been commissioned by God to liberate the people of God from their bondage to the Midianites. Judges 6

1. Gideon began as a coward hiding from the Midianites, as he was threshing wheat in the winnery by accusing God of their condition.
2. Gideon was sarcastic in accusing God for their present bondage.
3. Gideon demonstrated his repentance by destroying the altar of Baal and establishing the altar of Yahweh.

Now God in chapter seven lays out to Gideon the conditions for the victorious defeat of the Midianites. Josh. 7:1-25

7:1-8 *The selection of the men for battle by God.*

7:1-3 The first phase for choosing the fighting men.

- 1) The army of Gideon prepared themselves for the battle. vs. 1
 - a) Gideon is called Jerubbaal, let Baal contend, given to him by his father for his courageous destruction of the altar of Baal. Judges 6:27-32

b) Gideon and all the people arose early and encamped besides the well of Harod. vs. 1a

- 1) The people were Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, on the north of I. Judges 6:35
 - 2) The well of Harod was located at Mount Gilead at the north end of Mount Gilboa. vs. 3d
- c) The Midianites were encamped on the north of them by the hill of Moreh, in the Valley. vs. 1b
* About 4 miles distance.

- 2) The number of fighting men that show up was objected to by God. vs. 2
 - a. The proclamation was not natural, Yahweh said there were too many fighting men for Him to hand over the Midianites into their hands.” vs. 2a
 - 1) Most commanding Generals would welcome every fighting man, but not God
 - 2) Most would complain about being outnumbered, even with 32,000 men, they were outnumbered 4 to 1, The Midianites having 135,000.
 - b) The objection was very natural, God know the heart of the 32,000 to glory in their own might for the deliverance, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ vs. 2b-d

* Israel would take the credit for the great victory.

3) The number of fighting men was reduced according to the Law of going to war. vs. 3

a) The provision regarded the cowardly. vs. 3a-e

* The provision included those who planted a vineyard and not partaken of it and betroth to a woman and not yet married and fearful to go to war. Deut. 20:6-8

b) The provision in the Law thinned down the number of fighting men, "And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained." vs. 3f-g

1)) Two thirds of weakness was gone.

2) The remaining third were 100% strong for the battle.

7:4-8 The second phase for choosing the men for battle.

1) God objected to the 10,000 fighting men. vs. 4

a) The covenant God Yahweh could still see the prideful heart of Israel with the 10,000 fighting men, He needed to thin them down further. vs. 4a-d

1)) The One in command is always God. vs. 4-b

2)) The One who tests men is God, like a smith refining gold. vs. 4a-d

b) The covenant God Yahweh would choose the final number of fighting men to go out to battle. vs. 4e-k

1)) God is the One who approves men and we should not use those He does not approve. vs. 4e-g

2)) God is the One who rejects men, and so should we. vs. 4e-k

2) The men were taken to the water for God to test. vs. 5-6

a) God instructed Gideon to place the men in two groups. vs. 5

b) God stated a clear separation of the two groups. vs. 6

1)) Many say it was because they were more alert, but the text does not say this, at all.

2)) The testing was of faith, not human ability or vigilance.

3) The men were commissioned by Yahweh the covenant God. vs. 7-8

a) God gave the order to deliver Israel by the 300 men. vs. 7a-c

b) God released the 9,700 to their homes, not being men of faith. vs. 7d-e

c) God confirmed the faith of the 300. vs. 8

1)) The 300 were prepared for battle taking their provisions and their

- trumpets, not swords and spears.
vs. 8a
- 2)) The 300 men of faith did not complain or fear at the departure of the 9,700. vs. 8b-d
* The sifting reduction occurred before the camp of the enemy!
- 3)) The selection of the 300 took place Midian was below in the valley.” vs. 8e
* Jonathan told his armor bearer, “For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.” 1Sam. 14:6

7:9-15a-c *The preparation of Gideon by God to be courageous for battle.*

9-11a-b The communication of God to Gideon for the victory.

- 1) Gideon was instructed to go down into the camp of the Midianites. vs. 9
a) The command was a military order from the Captain of the armies of heaven the same night. vs. 9a-c
b) This was a step of faith, believing God the battle had already been won. vs. 9d
1)) Then the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the

- hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?” Judges 6:14
- 2)) “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.” Judges 6:16
- 3)) “But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.” Judges 6:34
- 2) Gideon was sent on a reconnaissance mission to bring him to full confidence in God for the battle. vs. 10-11b
a) God knew his fear, so He gave him the option to take his servant, Purah. vs. 10
* “Though one may be overpowered by another, **two** can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” Eccl. 4:12
b) God revealed the recon information would remove his fear and doubt, causing his faith in God to grow for the victory. vs. 11a-b
* The word strengthen “chazaq”, means to be firm, bold and courageous.

7:12-15c The confirmation of God to Gideon for the victory.

- 1) The situation was intimidating. vs. 12

- a) The confederated enemies, Midianites and Amalekites, were lying in the valley. vs. 12a-c
- b) Their great number put the odds against Israel, as locusts and their camels, innumerable as the sand by the seashore in multitude. vs. 12c-e
 - * The Midianites had 135, 000, 450 to 1. Judges 8:10
- 2) The intelligence gathered by Gideon was very valuable. vs. 13-14
 - a) God had given a dream to one of the enemy soldiers about the battle. vs. 13
 - * God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream of the kingdoms of the world for the “Time of the Gentiles”. Dan. 2
 - b) God gave the interpretation to another soldier about Gideon’s victory. vs. 14
 - * God revealed the secret to Daniel in a night vision, so Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Dan. 2:19
 - c) God was worshipped by Gideon in response to God’s faithfulness. vs. 15a-c
 - * The word worshipped “shachah” means to bow down, to prostrate oneself, before a superior.

7:15d-25 *The plan provided by God for battle.*

7:15d-18 The plan of attack for battle communicated by Gideon.

- 1) Gideon’s contagious courage is expressed to the 300 men of faith. vs. 15d-g
 - * He commanded them to arise because Yahweh had delivered the camp of Midian into their hand.
- 2) Gideon prepared his army for the battle. vs. 16
 - a) Placing them in three different locations, in three companies. vs. 16a
 - b) Equipping them with strange weapons, trumpet, empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. vs. 16b-c
 - c) Instructing them with their orders to follow his lead by example and act on his signal. vs. 17-18

7:19-23 The men of faith carried out the orders for the attack for the battle. vs. 19-23

- 1) The first company of 100 approached the closest boundary at the camp of the enemy. vs. 19
 - a) Gideon led the attack. vs. 19a-b
 - b) Gideon gave the signal catching the enemy by surprise. vs. 19c
- 2) The second and third company did the same at Gideon’s signal. vs. 20
 - a) The sudden alarm of the trumpet, shattering of pottery, bright lights and unified shout of victory sounded out. vs. 20

- b) The natural affect was sudden fear and disorientation, causing them to run and flee. vs. 21
- c) The Supper-natural affect was the killing of each other, as the fled. vs. 22
- d) The 300 chased after the enemy and those who had returned home. vs. 23

7:24-25 The call for Ephraim to Join in the attack of the battle.

- 1) He called for them to secure the enemies water sources. vs. 24
 - a) Ephraim was one of the leading tribes, coming from the south to seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.” vs. 24
 - b) Ephraim apprehended and killed the generals of the Midianites, Oreb “raven” on a rock and Zeeb “wolf”. at a winepress. vs. 25a-d
 - c) Ephraim presented Gideon with the two trophy heads on the east side of the Jordan. vs. 25e

8:1-3 *The contention Ephraim expressed to Gideon regarding the battle defeating the Midianites.*

- 1) The Ephraimites were discontented and reprimanded Gideon sharply for not calling them to the battle till the end. vs. 1

- * They had cooperated with Ehud and Barak. 3:26-29; 5:13-14a
- 2) The wisdom God gave to Gideon appeal to man’s vain pride, declaring that what he had accomplished was nothing in comparison to them, for God had delivered to them the two princes, Oreb and Zeeb, their gleaning was better than his vintage. vs. 2-3a-c
- 3) The result was that their anger was subsided when they heard that. vs. 3d
 - * A leader always has discontented people, it is part of the cost of being a leader!

8:4-9 *The rebellion towards Gideon from the inhabitants of Succoth and Peniel for the finalizing of the battle.*

- 1) He crossed the Jordan and asked for food for the exhausted men from the men at Succoth, 40 miles from the battlefield, as he was in pursuit of Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian. vs. 4-7
 - a) They resisted and denied him, due to the fact that they feared the kings and as long as they were not in Gideon’s hands, they would not take a chance. vs. 6
 - 1)) The reference to their hands, is to the custom of cutting them off at capture.

- 2)) Succoth means "booths" and is the site where Jacob put up booths for his cattle and built a house for himself; when he parted from Esau. Gen. 33:17
 - * It symbolized a place of oneness and brotherhood, yet it was being denied!
- 3)) The city was located east of the Jordan near the ford of the torrent Jabbok.
- b) The judgment declared by Gideon was that when God delivered the kings into Gideon's hand he would return and tear their flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and briers. vs. 7
- 2) He asked the same of the men of Pennuel and received the same answer. vs. 8-9
 - a) Pennuel also denied Gideon with help. vs. 8
 - 1)) Pennuel was six miles east, means "Face of God", the place where Jacob wrestled with Angel of the Lord, a place not far from Succoth.
 - 2)) The city equally was on the east of the Jordan and north of the river Jabbok, half way down between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Gen. 32:24-32
 - * It symbolized a place of dying to self and blessing, yet it was being denied!

- b) The judgment was equally declared, in his return Gideon would tear down their tower. vs. 9
 - * The tribe of Gad had compromised in their choice of the land on the east side of the Jordan and settled these two cities and now they compromised their allegiance for feared future vengeance, if they helped Gideon.
 - * A leader will encounter opposition from the people of God from within at times, again, it is part of the cost!
- 8:10-21** *The vindication of Gideon against those who appeased him in battle.*
- 1) Gideon caught up with Zebah and Zalmunna at Karkor. vs. 10-12
 - a) About 15 miles southeast of Penniel, their army was down to fifteen thousand. vs. 10a-c
 - b) Their casualties had been one hundred and twenty thousand men who fell. vs. 10d
 - c) The attack was sudden and fatal, while the camp felt secure. vs. 11
 - d) The two kings were taken. vs. 12
 - 2) Gideon took vengeance on the two cities. vs. 13-17
 - a) Gideon as he return from the battle took a young man captive of Succoth

and interrogated him and acquired the names of the leaders and elders, numbering seventy-two. vs. 13-14

- b) Gideon reminded them of their ridicule of him and presented the two Kings and chastened them with thorn and briers. vs. 15-16
- c) Gideon then tore down the tower of Pennuel and killed the men. vs. 17
- 3) Gideon executed the two Kings. vs. 18-21
 - a) Gideon asked the Kings the kind of men they had killed at Tabor and their response was , “As you are, so were they ; each one resembled the son of a king”. vs. 18d-f
 - b) Gideon answered them, “They were my brothers, the sons of my mother”. vs. 19a-c
 - 1)) It seems as if Zebah and Zalmunna had massacred the family of Gideon, while he was absent on this expedition.
 - 2)) They boldly acknowledge it, and describe the persons whom they slew, by which he found they were his own brethren.
 - c) Gideon declared, “As the Lord lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you”, and commanded his firstborn son Jether, “Rise, kill them”, but he would not being young and afraid. vs. 19d-f

- d) Gideon was asked by the two Kings that he rise up and killed the for as a man is, so is his strength, signifying that he had strength sufficient to kill them at once, which his son had not, and therefore they would not die a lingering and painful death as well as being an honorable death by the hand of Gideon. vs. 20-21

* The ornaments on their camels’ necks were articles of gold and precious things distinguishing a King.

8:22-35 *The distinction of honor and dishonor ascribed to Gideon.*

- 1) Gideon honor God in his refusal to rule over the Israel. vs. 22-23
- 2) Gideon dishonored God and himself in his request to Israel. vs. 24-28
 - a) He requested all the golden earrings from the plunder for the enemies were Ishmaelites. vs. 24
 - b) He was given the golden earrings, one-hundred-seven-hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes of the Kings and the chains around the camel’s neck. vs. 25-26
 - c) He made an ephod and set it up in his city of Ophrah and all Israel played he harlot with it there, therefore it

became a snare to Gideon and to his house. vs. 27

1)) The ephod pertained to the priest, the breastpiece of judgment was attached to it with the Urim and Thummim, to know the will of God. Ex. 28: 28-30; 39:2-5

2)) Gideon had left the people of Israel worse than at the beginning, for the chastening hand of God had been removed, the Midianites, and they were led back into idolatry by the very man who had delivered them!

d) He gave them forty years of quiet rest to pollute themselves! vs. 28

* Forty is the number of judgment throughout the Scriptures!

3) Gideon was indifferent and self absorbed despite the condition of the nation. vs. 29-35

a) He dwelt in his own house. vs. 29

b) He multiplied wives and had seventy sons. vs. 30

c) He had a concubine also in Shechem who bore him a son. vs. 31

d) He died in a good old age and buried in the tomb of his father Joash, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. vs. 32

e) His death unleashed Israel to play the harlot with the Baals. vs. 33

f) His nation did not remember the Lord their God who had delivered them from the enemy nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal in accord with the good he had done for Israel. vs. 34-35