

Judges Chapter 7

Review:

1. God picks an unlikely hero in Gideon.
2. God speaks to Gideon, receives an offering from his hand, and gives him clear direction.
3. Gideon then “tests” God through the fleece to see if God will do what He said He would do – this is not commendable, not an act of faith.

Hebrews Ch. 11 “Hall of faith” – fill with the not so obvious... like Gideon.

- Describing Moses as a man of faith it has been said: “he was able to see the invisible, choose the imperishable, and do the impossible.”
- As we read through this account the issue is that of faith:

1 John 5:4 “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”
- Christians are either overcome because of their unbelief or they are over comers because of their faith.
- Part of what were reading about is the testing of Gideon’s faith, faith that hasn’t been tested is faith that can’t be trusted.
- Our faith is tested for two reasons:

1. To see if it is genuine or not. 2. To strengthen our faith.

V: 1 Gideon is referred to by his nick name – “let Baal plead” – “let Baal defend himself”.

- Map: Gideon and the men that had gathered to him, approximately 32,000 at the well of Harod which is at the foot of Mt. Gilboa.
- The Midianites camped out just North of them in the valley near the hill Moreh.

V: 2 Too many for God to be glorified. 32,000 vs: 135,000 – odds are 4 to 1.

Isaiah 42:8 “I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.”

1 Corinthians 1:27 & 29 ²⁷But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;” – ²⁹That no flesh should glory in His presence.”

V: 3 This was all part of the law concerning war anyway:

Deuteronomy 20:8 “And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, what man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren’s heart faint as well as his heart.”

- Initially 32,000 respond but 22,000 are afraid and returned to their homes: roughly 70%.
- 10,000 facing 135,000. Odds are now 13 to 1
- The issue is faith vs: fear. The fearful are disqualified; God knows that the fearful are looking at the enemy as opposed to looking at or being focused on God.

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

Revelation 21:7-8 “⁷He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. ⁸But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

V: 4-5 The Lord speaks again – still too many.

- God will give them a test to select those that will go into battle.
- Some will get on their hands and knees and stick their face in the water, others will cup their hands and take the water to their mouth. One is warrior like and the other is not.

V: 6-7 300 cup their hands and bring it to their mouth; they are selected to go forth into battle.

- By the 300 – 2 things.
 1. I will save you – speaking of personal survival.
 2. I will deliver the Midianites – speaking of corporate / national survival.
- 300 vs: 135,000 The odds are now 450 to 1.
- Elijah would face the same odds: 450 prophets of Baal against 1 prophet of the true and living God. God wins every time!

1 Samuel 14:6 “... for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by a few.”

V: 8 Gideon sends all the rest, the 9,700 home – and the 300 take up their supplies and prepares for battle.

V: 9-14 That same night – quickly, the wisdom of God; not giving anyone too much time to think about it.

- Get down to them, time to get this show on the road, start the battle.

V: 10 But if you're afraid... Gideon had already sent all those that were fearful home...

- If that is the case just take your servant and go down to the Midianites and see what is going on.
- The dream recited and the interpretation given: a barley loaf – barley is poor man's bread – rolls into the tent / camp and takes it down.

V: 14 This is none else than Gideon – for God has delivered Midian into his hands.

- Just the words that Gideon wanted to hear: confirmation.
- God has given Gideon a reputation as a great warrior amongst the Midianites.
- Only a few people saw it, but the word had spread how Gideon had torn down the altar to Baal and taken down the grove of Astaroth – mighty deeds – and had survived!

V: 15-18 Gideon worships God – before the victory; his faith is strengthened.

- The Lord hath delivered – tense. It's a done deal.

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

“look on me and do likewise...”

As Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 11:1 “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”

- The plan: 3 companies move to the edge of the enemy camp, trumpets, lamps under cover until the last moment.
- With a trumpet in one hand and a lamp in the other there is no provision for a sword or a shield. God is their protection.

V: 19-21 Middle watch was from 12 AM to 3 AM, so the beginning of the watch would be 12 AM at the changing of the guard when most of the camp would be asleep.

- “The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.” God had put the fear of Gideon into their hearts.

V: 21 Every man stood his ground – nobody ran away.

V: 22-23 All the “host”, the enemy army began to run away in confusion and began to kill each other.

- The enemy retreated across the Jordan River in both directions – then the rest of the near by tribes joined in: Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh – pursuing after the Midianites.
- The victory was gained when the light from within the earthen vessel was released and the trumpet was sounded.

Correlation:

2 Corinthians 4:7 “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

- When this earthen vessel is broken, when the light is released or revealed, when that trumpet sounds – then we too are victorious!

V: 24-25 Gideon sends messengers to Ephraim who join in; they end up capturing the Midianite kings Oreb & Zeeb killing them. Their names mean “Raven” and “Wolf” respectively.

- This story started out with Gideon hiding in a wine press, here it ends for one of the Midianite kings, being killed in a wine press.

Judges Chapter 8

V: 1-3 Ephraim begins to up-braid or chasten Gideon: why didn't you call us sooner?

- Gideon very diplomatically and graciously responds that he couldn't have done a better job than what they had done.
- The gleanings – the left overs – of Ephraim were better than the best of Abiezer.
- The Lord delivered the kings into the hands of Ephraim – and Ephraim was satisfied – no insult taken.

Proverbs 15:1 “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”

V: 4-7 Gideon and his 300 men – they have not suffered any losses.

- Pursuing after the Midianites – arriving hungry at Succoth, the tribe of Gad.
- The princes / leaders refused to help or feed Gideon's men.

V: 7 "When" God has delivered them into my hands you'll be chastised.

Matthew 12:30 "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad."

- There is no middle ground – we always have to choose sides.

V: 8-9 Next stop is Penuel: same response from both sides.

V: 10-12 Still pursuing after the other kings of Midian: Zebah (Slaughter / Sacrifice) and Zalmunna (Protection is withdrawn or Zelem (god) rules).

- These kings fled to Karkor (East of the map) and what was left of their army.
- Thus far 120,000 dead – now add the 15,000 to that and the capture of the two kings.

V: 13-16 Gideon took the two Midianite kings back to Succoth and gathered the "princes" or elders of the city that refused to feed them prior to the battle.

- Gideon then "taught" them – "counseled"

V: 17 Somewhat more severe for the men of Penuel – they all died.

- Contrast between the tribe of Ephraim and their prideful insults – dealt with graciously.
- Succoth and Peniel were dealt with harshly.
- The difference between personal insult, by those who did actually help Gideon and fight the Midianites – and those who not only refused to help or fight, but in so doing rebelled against the will of God.

V: 18-21 Zalmunna and Zebah had slain Gideon's brothers and their complimentary description would not save them.

- In those days, how a soldier died was important to his reputation.
- Abimilech didn't want to die at the hand of a woman, King Saul didn't want to fall into the hands of the Philistines.

- For a child to kill a king would be the ultimate in humiliation, thus Gideon tells his young son Jether to execute the two criminals.
- He would avenge his family and uphold the law, humiliate the two kings, and bring honor to himself for the rest of his life – but he wasn't ready – so Gideon does it.

V: 22-23 The men of Israel want to establish a dynasty – Gideon, his son, and his grandsons.

- Gideon wisely refuses, deferring to the Lord.
- There is an implicit conclusion in Gideon's refusal – that is that it was the Lord the gave the victory and everything good attached to that.
- It wasn't Gideon's wisdom, or plan, or strength – it was all the Lord's.

V: 24-27 Gideon requests and receives the gold ear rings of the slain Midianites who were descendants of Ishmael.

- Gideon received about 50 pounds of gold – which he used to make an ephod.
- It became a snare because is was a sin to make another ephod beside the one that resided with the Levites in Shiloh at the Tabernacle .
- The ephod was used to discern the will of God, which may be what Gideon was trying to do, but things degenerate quickly.
- The people began to worship the ephod – whoring after it – being unfaithful to God and worshipping this in animate thing.
- Later the people would do the same thing with the brass serpent of Moses time:

[Speaking of king Hezekiah:](#)

2 Kings 18:4 “He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called is Nehushtan.”

- Gideon had refused to be their king, but seemingly had a desire for the priesthood.

V: 28-31 The Midians were subdued and Israel had rest 40 years in the days, as opposed to the rule of Gideon.

- Gideon prospered in this time: He had his own house, he had 70 sons from his numerous wives.
- He rejected the kingdom, but he lived like a king...

- Mention is made of one of Gideon's concubines – this one in particular because she bore him a son by the name of Abimelech. (My father is a king...)
- The next two chapters are about his actions which were horrible.

V: 32-35 Gideon died at a good old age and was buried with his father – a distinction and honor.

- He lived a good life.
- While Gideon was alive he was an influence for righteousness and like the others as soon as he was gone the nation turned again and went whoring after the other pagan gods all around them.
- They forgot about their God who was the real deliverer and they forgot about His servant Gideon.

Once again we see God using an ordinary man to accomplish extraordinary things.

If we keep our eyes fixed upon the Lord we will not forget about Him.

Keeping our eyes fixed upon the Lord will allow us to stand our ground.

If we keep our eyes fixed upon the Lord He will deliver us and give us the victories.

We need to be just as watchful after the victory as before it.