

Judges Chapter 07 Commentary

1 ¶ "Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. **2** And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."

Herein is set forth a principle that is easily a trap fallen into if we are not very careful. What do you mean? The principle of trusting in multitudes rather than trusting in God. One example we can give is that of prayer. Often, we see and hear today, people calling upon the multitudes to pray, believing that the prayer of the multitude will get the desired result of their request. Do not misunderstand, there is nothing wrong with asking others to pray, if we remember that God is the answer, and provider. We may forget to go to God in humble penitence on our own, by trusting in the strength of others. In our darkest hours, and deepest distresses, our hearts are humbled enough to make effectual and fervent prayer to God. Such prayers as these will be heard, as seen in: ***Jas 5:16 "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."***

Another principle is that of vain glory, or vanity, or pride. As God points out here, if you get the victory and think it is because of your own strength, you will be lifted up in pride. Pride is one of the sins of people of the world as seen in: ***1Jo 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.***

God also uses those who feel their own weakness. Remember, in the previous chapter, Gideon was telling God how inept he was, and his family was the least of Israel? Scripture testifies of this in:

- ***1Co 1:26-31; 26 "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But 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; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*** This text needs no explanation.
- ***1Ti 3:6 "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*** This admonition is to a minister, so we make application to Gideon. God will not use many people to make Israel's deliverance, lest Gideon be lifted up in pride. As we see here, pride is a tool of the devil.

3 "Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand."

We do not want to go to war with those who are so fearful that when the fight begins, they flee the scene and weaken the faith of others.

4 "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Everyone that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise everyone that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place."

The number being to many still, God instructs Gideon of how to reduce the number, to the right amount of people, by the men who lapped water. What did the way they drank water have to do with God using them for the battle? Those who lapped water, dipped up the water in their hands and by doing so they could see all around and be on guard for the enemy. Those who bowed down had to put their faces down to the water which obstructed their vision, and most likely they also laid aside their weapons to drink from the stream.

The message for us: we should always be alert, constantly looking for the enemy to keep them from sneaking up on us. Understand, it is better to know the enemy is coming than to be ambushed. Also, we cannot lay down the weapons of our warfare and expect to be successful.

8 "So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley."

Notice, these three hundred chosen to go to battle, not with swords, but with food and trumpets. A lesson we can learn here is; when we go to war, we need to be well fed to give us strength and keep us in good physical shape. God's people should be in attendance of church services, to be fed from the glorious gospel to maintain our strength. To have fellowship and encouragement one with another. We also need out daily food which we receive by maintaining fellowship with one another and with God daily. This is best done by reading and studying God's word of truth, the King James bible.

9 ¶ "And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. 10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: 11 And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. 12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seaside for multitude. 13 And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. 14 And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. 15 And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

If you remember, at the end of the previous chapter, we told you God would offer voluntary assurance to Gideon, to strengthen his faith and trust in the word of God, which is what we have just read. Now, Gideon is established in his confidence of God, and the victory that is to be forthcoming.

There is also a prophetic picture of the coming of Jesus to usher in the age of salvation by grace. What do you mean? The dream tells us, a cake of bread came into the camp and destroyed the Midianites. The Midianites are a picture of the satanic forces of evil in this world, who possess the multitudes of mankind, who are not born-again. Jesus, the bread of life, came from heaven, and has overthrown these satanic evils forces in the lives of all those, that God the Father gave to him to save eternally.

We can also make application to each born-again child of God. If you have been saved by grace, the bread of life, Jesus Christ, has entered your heart, and soul, and driven out all the sinfulness. Praise God for the finished work of eternal salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ!

Notice, this revelation came before the battle began and in the darkness of night. So it is with every child of God. Out of the darkness of satanic possession you are born-again to the marvelous light of Christ. First, your salvation is revealed to you, then you can make the public declaration, break the pitcher so your light will shine, and blow upon the trumpet of God, join the visible church, be baptized, and walk in faithful service to God and Christ.

16 ¶ "And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. 17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. 18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. 19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled."

Gideon divided the three hundred into three groups, and strategically located them around the camp of the invaders. He instructs them to do as he does. Remember this is happening in the night. Imagine being awakened from sleep at the sound of trumpets blaring, hearing men shout the sword of the Lord and Gideon, and seeing lamps shining all around your camp. Also, remember, God has already began preparing the Midianites to believe they will be overcome by Gideon, by the dream and interpretation. Thus, God has sent the invaders into a dreadful fright, and they begin to flee away.

Notice, Gideon, and his men, stood firmly in place while all this is happening. This reminds us of a scripture seen in: ***Ex 14:13 "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever."***

We are told of the dividing into three groups which reminds us of the power of God in the trinity of the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, which are always in harmony and agreement. They are the solid rock of the foundation which God's chosen people stand upon, without fear. They are the deliverance of God's people in eternal salvation.

Consider Gideon's action of dividing into three groups. This was simply a military decision which showed the prudence of Gideon. A reminder to us: God does provide the victory and the saving power; however, God expects us to use prudence in living our lives and in fighting the spiritual battles in our Christian lives. God expects his people use sound judgment and then take action, to bring glory to his name.

"Look on me, and do likewise:" Gideon instructs his men to do as I do. Jesus has instructed us to be like him. How? We are to obey him fully, as Jesus obeyed his Father completely. Why were the followers of Jesus first called Christians? They went about doing good, teaching, and preaching the truth that eternal salvation is by the grace of God through the finished work of Christ. This we are to do by living example, and through verbal confirmation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

22 "And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath."

We are further reminded, in our daily struggles in life, we know that God is on the throne and in control of all things. We should take comfort in this fact, and we should be willing to stand firmly upon the truths of God's word, proclaiming the glory of God, and allowing him to do his effectual work. Remember, our protection, and the ability to overcome our enemies, is in our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ. Our victories are by the Holy Spirit power that Jesus sent to take his place on earth.

Notice, God so confused the invaders that they began to fight against each other. Remember, it is in the middle of the night when all this begins. Those fleeing away did not know if they were meeting friend or foe, thus, in the black despair of darkness they were striking out at anyone they encountered.

23 ¶ "And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. 24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan. 25 And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan."

The invaders being put to flight and destroying themselves, Israel gathers and pursues after them to bring to completion their destruction. Gideon now sends out the call to Israel, come and fight against the enemies who have been your captors for these seven years. They killed two of the ringleaders of the Midianites.

Did you notice that Gideons instruction was to take the waters? Gideon instructed Israel to destroy those, who have been guarding the wells of water, which we read about in chapter six, throughout the

land of Israel these seven years. By taking the waters back from the enemy, the enemy no longer has sustenance in Israel.

Remember the scripture where Jesus is conversing with the Samaritan woman at the well, seen in: ***Joh 4:14 "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."*** As we consider what happened to Israel when they turned from God to idolatry, we see they lost access to the wells of water in the land of promise. This same principle is true in your Christian life. If you turn from God, you lose access to the water of life which is Christ Jesus and his glorious gospel. The water is still there but you have lost access to it.

However, praise and glory to God, God has provided a way for us to return unto him in this age of salvation by grace. When we realize the desolate condition, we are in because of our idolatry, we can turn to God in repentance, and in prayer, and he will forgive us, even though we may suffer here as a consequence of our disobedience. Through the Holy Spirit power, God will restore us to our land of promise, the church, with the well, of water the water of life, being accessible to us again.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your protection and sustenance in our lives as Christians. Help us to be faithful servants to thee and to one another. As you taught us in scripture to pray, let us not forget your admonitions and pray each day with fervency: ***Mt 6:9-13; 9 ¶ "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."*** If we want to be delivered from temptation, Christ charges us to pray to be delivered from it. If we want the protection of God in our Christian lives, we are to pray for that each day. Oh, how often I forget to pray for these things. Lord help us to be more faithful and better servants to you each day, we ask in Jesus's name, Amen!