

Gideon's Lesson

Week of Nov. 4 - 10, 2019

Introduction

For many years, the Israelites were a loose confederation of God's tribes living in the land of Canaan. Every now and again, God would raise up a leader, called a judge, to rescue His people from danger. These included Samson, Deborah, and Gideon. In this week's passage, we see how God instructs his leaders to lead by faith rather than by force of numbers. Gideon, who put out his fleece to verify God's will, now is directed to go forth with a handful of men and a heartful of faith.

Lesson Judges 7:1-12

¹ Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. ² The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.' ³ Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink." ⁶ Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home." ⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley. ⁹ During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. ¹⁰ If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah ¹¹ and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp. ¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

Questions

1. How is God's "weakening" of Gideon's army prior to saving Israel a great example of how we are saved from sin?
2. If God could have easily defeated the Midianites Himself, why do you think he used Gideon and the 300 Israelites in the process?
3. Why do you think God first sorted out the soldiers who were afraid?
4. Why did God want Gideon to go down to the enemies camp?
5. Gideon's family was not an important family and Gideon was not an important member of his family. Why, do you think, God would choose such a person for this important task?

Prayer

Dear Lord, Thank you letting us remember that God chooses us for important tasks. Help us to trust you as you lead us to do important things. We may be called upon to do what is right, even though it may be a hard thing to do. Thank you for trusting us to do your work and for showing us the way. Amen.