

Judges 7:1 ¶ 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.

Jerubbaal = Gideon

When all the troops had answered Gideon's call to battle, they got up early in the morning and established camp by the well of Harod. The NIV Commentary notes that this was at the foot of Mount Gilboa. The Midianites were north of them in the valley by the hill of Moreh.

Judges 7:2 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.

Judges 7:3 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.

Again, the LORD spoke to Gideon in some way and told him that he had far too many troops for His purposes. If He allowed this many troops to gain the victory over Midian, they would assume that they had done it in their own strength. This quote from Chuck Smith sums it up well: "God wants to work. But when God works he wants the glory for the work that He has done. He doesn't want people praising the instrument; He wants people praising Him."

So the LORD told Gideon to make an announcement calling for anyone that was afraid to go back home. After that call, 22,000 men left and 10,000 remained.

This was a practical way to cull the troops. The wisdom behind it is recorded in Deuteronomy.

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."

Judges 7:4 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.

Judges 7:5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lapped, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

Judges 7:6 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.

Once again the LORD told Gideon that he had too many fighting men. This time

he was to take them down to the water to get a drink. Those that lapped the water with their tongues like a dog were to be set apart from those that bowed down on their knees to drink. There were 300 men that lapped; the rest got down on their knees to get a drink.

Judges 7:7 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.

Judges 7:8 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.

The LORD then told Gideon that He would use the 300 men that lapped to deliver Israel from the Midianites; all others were to be sent home. They collected the necessary provisions and the trumpets from the soldiers before sending them home. The 300 stayed with Gideon to face the host of Midian.

Judges 7:9 ¶ 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.

Judges 7:10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host:

Judges 7:11 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.

The very night they made camp the LORD told Gideon to attack because He would give them the victory. Because He knew that Gideon was afraid, He provided a way for his faith to be strengthened. He was go with his servant Phurah to the edge of the Midianite camp and listen. What he heard the soldiers saying would strengthen his faith.

Fear is always associated with weak faith.

Psalms 56:3 "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."

Psalms 112:7 "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD."

Proverbs 29:25 "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe."

Isaiah 12:2 "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid:"

Judges 7:12 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 sea side for multitude.

Judges 7:13 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.

Judges 7:14 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.*

To be fair, Gideon's fear was "only human." The troops of Midian and Amalek appeared to cover the valley like a swarm of locusts and they seemed to have as many camels as the sand on the seashore. When Gideon got within hearing distance of the soldiers, he heard one man telling his friend about his dream. He had dreamed that a cake of barley bread tumbled into their camp and struck a tent, causing it to fall down. His friend told him that his dream pictured the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, an Israelite, destroying the host of Midian because God was with him.

Isn't it interesting that the enemy soldier had such a dream? Isn't it interesting that an enemy soldier knew Gideon by name? Isn't it interesting that Gideon and his servant just happened upon the exact spot that allowed them to overhear the soldier's dream and its interpretation? Coincidence? I think not. God's miraculous intervention is clear!

Judges 7:15 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.

When Gideon heard all that the men said, he worshipped the LORD and returned to the camp of Israel. He told his men to get up because the LORD had given them the victory over Midian (implied—this very night).

Judges 7:16 ¶ 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.

Judges 7:17 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.

Judges 7:18 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.*

Gideon divided the men into three companies; I assume that each company had 100 men. He gave every man a trumpet and an empty pitcher that contained a torch. He told them to keep an eye on him; and when they reached the outside of the enemy camp, they were to do exactly as he did. When he and those with him blew their trumpets, they were to do likewise from their positions on the other sides of the camp. This would make it appear as though they had the enemy surrounded with much greater numbers than there actually were. They were also to yell, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon."

Judges 7:19 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.

Judges 7:20 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.

Judges 7:21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

Judges 7:22 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.

Gideon and his group reached the outside of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch. They blew their trumpets that they held with their right hands and broke the pitchers that they held in their left hands and yelled, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon." The enemy camp responded by crying out and fleeing in fear. In a panic, men turned their swords against each other throughout the enemy camp. They fled to Bethshittah in Zererath and to the border of Abelmeholah and to Tabbath.

Interesting sidenote: Clarke notes that Abelmeholah was the birthplace of the prophet Elisha.

Judges 7:23 ¶ 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.

Judges 7:24 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.

Judges 7:25 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.

Though not specified, it seems that the news quickly reached those in the tribes of Naphtali, Asher and Manasseh; and they pursued the host of Midian. Since things happened so quickly, it is possible that the men told to return home were still fairly close by. They probably heard the trumpets and hurried back to see what was happening.

Gideon sent messengers throughout mount Ephraim asking for reinforcements to overtake the enemy before they could reach the waters at Bethbarah and Jordan.

The men of Ephraim responded and captured two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb upon rock Oreb and killed Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. (I'm sure these places were named after the fact, and were well known at the time this book was written.) They brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.