

Bible Study for 6-30-20
Gideon Defeats the Midianites
Judges 7:9-21

In quick review and lesson tie-in....

Last week we studied the Call and the Commissioning of Gideon. (Judges 6:11-24)

- There we saw Gideon as a man who was fearful of his oppressors
- He was a man of many doubts and was somewhat cynical.
- He was sarcastic when the Angel of God said to him.. “ **The Lord is with you mighty warrior.** Gideon’s thinking was : if the Lord is with us, then why are we in our present crisis.” Instead of acknowledging Israelite responsibility for the present crisis. He blamed God. Stories that he had heard of past deliveries by God were irrelevant to Gideon in light of the Midianite crisis
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- God graciously was patient with Gideon in his weak faith, and his sign seeking. For sign seeking is not a statement of one’s strong position with God but in reality is a statement of ones weak faith.
- By God’s revelation of himself in instructing Gideon on how to make a proper offering and then consuming the offering showing God’s pleasure. Gideon finally began to get the picture. He finally began realize that he was having an encounter with God. He began to see that it was God’s sovereign will to use him. He finally realized that in God’s work it does not matter what one’s social position is; the authorization of the Lord is all that matters. His being of the small tribe of Manasseh and his being the youngest in his father’s household did not matter.

The in-between verses, ending chapter 6 and moving on into chapter 7 -,for our lesson for today. We find God putting Gideon to work in doing his bidding. (Judges 6:25-31)

-Gideon, at God’s direction, tore down his father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it and then offered his father’s bull as a burnt offering to the Lord upon the site, using the wood of the Asherah pole as fuel for the burnt offering.

[Note: This was the ultimate indignity against the pagan cult. For Asherah functioned as the female counterpart to Baal, in the fertility religion. This deity was normally represented as a carved wooden image with exaggerated sexual features.] (God said tear it down and burn it up)

*-For the scripture teaches... **Ye shall have no other gods beside me***

- Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord told him, but because he still feared his family and the people of the town, **he did it at night.**

- God protected Gideon, against the town’s people who wanted to kill the perpetrator of such a grievous attack on their religious shrine. God used Joash, Gideon’s father, in an unexpected way.(Judges 6:28-32)

- The logic of Joash’s defense of His son was “ If Baal really is a god. Let him defend himself because someone has torn down his altar.”

Then in (Judges 6:33-40) we have Gideon’s Preparation for Battle and Gideon’s Second Thoughts.

Even though Gideon has been empowered by the Lord and is surrounded by a vast army of troops, set to follow him..., he hesitates.

- He continues to test God with demands for signs, this time specifically for assurance that God will indeed use him to provide deliverance for the nation.
- Gideon in his request for signs continues to be a sign of his doubt and unbelief. Gideon uses every means available to try to get out of the mission to which he has been called.
- The remarkable fact is that God responds to Gideon’s tests, (**with the fleece**)

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In (Judges 7:1-8) as we approach our lesson for tonight. We see God's Reduction of Gideon's Troops.

It is evident from Chapter 7 vs 1 going forward, that Gideon finally accepted God's call to divine service. But.. God raises a problem before Gideon, that is quite the opposite of what you and I and for sure Gideon would have expected. The problem from God's point of view is that Gideon's 32,000 troops (irrespective of being against approximately 150,000 enemy troops) was too many for the Lord to use.

- God's point was; given the spiritual waywardness of the people, if the massive force under Gideon was used to defeat the Midianites, they will claim the credit for themselves rather than crediting the Lord with delivering the enemy into their hand.

- God used a two -step process to reduce Gideon's troops (Judges 7:5-6)
 1. Have Gideon to announce to all the troops that any who are frightened at the prospect of the battle with the Midianites may turn around and leave. (*22,000 left*)
 2. The troops still being too large by God's direction. God told Gideon to send the troops down to the water to drink. There He would test them.
 - Those who lapped water like a dog by getting down on their knees were eliminated. (*leaving only 300 who did not*)

- Some have speculated that the first step in the testing of the troops was a test of courage, And the second step of the testing was a test of alertness, (for it is difficult to watch out for the enemy if one kneels down and laps water directly from the spring.

Now with 300 men, we find our lesson (**Judges 7:8-21**) **Gideon defeats the Midianites**