

## Day 245 - SATURDAY: September 2nd

### Judges 7

#### Judges 7:1-25 NKJV

Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley. And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' " And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained. But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place." So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley. It happened

on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp." And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!' " So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they

cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath. And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites. Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

The UCG reading plan states: "The army that Gideon gathered numbered 32,000 men, too large for God's purposes. If the battle had been engaged, Israel would have attributed the success of the battle to their large numbers. Therefore, God set about paring down the force. First, those who were afraid of battle would be dismissed. That left 10,000 soldiers. Still too many. So God instructed Gideon to bring the army down to a stream or pool. There Gideon was to separate the men into two groups—those who scooped water in their hand and brought it to their mouth, and those who got down on all fours to drink by placing their face in the water. Those who scooped the water numbered 300, and those were the men God chose.

As to why God chose this method, we simply do not know. However, being such an unusual occurrence, it is deserving of a comment here. *The Nelson Study Bible* offers a note on this division, the merits of which you may judge for yourself: "Some commentators have suggested that the men who did not get down on their knees were maintaining a higher degree of military readiness by drinking out of their hands. However, they may be reading too much into the account, for the text does not indicate any reason for Gideon's preference. The reference to the way a dog laps might even be derogatory since dogs were despised creatures in the ancient world [as they were considered worthless scavengers] (1 Samuel 17:43; 2 Kings 8:13; Matthew 7:6). If so, God's role in the victory becomes even more apparent, since the three hundred who were left were the ones who did not even have the common sense to drink in a normal fashion. God's comment in v. 7 seems to reinforce this suggestion" (note on Judges 7:4-5). Still, others stress the *alertness* of a dog as a positive. Whatever the reason, we are still left with an incredible miracle of winning with only 300 men.

When the battle was engaged by night, Gideon gave every man a torch, a clay pitcher and a horn. As the troops dispersed in the night, descending on the Midianites in the valley, Gideon gave the sign. The horns blew, the pitchers were broken, the torches flared and a great shout was made—all simultaneously. This was an important stratagem. Normally only the commander of a body of men would have a horn and a torch, so the sound of 300 horns and the sight of 300 torches made it appear that Israel had a very large army. Moreover, the sound of 300 clay pitchers breaking simultaneously would have carried down the valley walls sounding like the clanking of military armor. The valley walls would also have caused the noises to amplify. The sight of the torches and sound of the Israelites' horns and shouting terrified the Midianites, who imagined a huge army bearing down on them. It was every man for

himself, most fleeing without their armor or battle gear, thus becoming even easier prey for Gideon and his little band. In the confusion, the Midianites, Amalekites and Mesopotamians even slaughtered each other in the dark in their panic and desperation.

So God, by the most insignificant man in Manasseh leading an insignificant troop, wrought a great victory for Israel. And there was peace for 40 years (Judges 8:28)” [END]

Verse 14 – As God had brought about the dream, He also provided the interpretation of the dream to these men.

Verse 19 – The John Gill commentary states: “very wisely did Gideon fix on this watch for the time of his coming; for had he come at the first watch, many as yet might not have been in bed, or at least not fallen asleep; and had he come in the third watch, many might have been awake out of their sleep, and others up; but he took this time, a little after midnight, in the dead of the night, when the whole army was fast asleep:” [END]