

## September 7

**Scriptures:** Read Judges 7

**Key Verse:** "... By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand..." (Judges 7:7)

### Overview

Because Gideon bravely challenged Baal (6:32), he was nicknamed Jerubbaal, meaning, "Let Baal strive". Word of what he had done must have spread (even to the Midianites, v.13-14), and those who supported him from his tribe, as well as men from Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, came when they heard the call for battle. There were 32,000 men, but as God made clear, not all were eligible for battle.

God desired that His people learn to trust and rely on Him only and not to think the victory was gained because of their own strength. God refined the army by a process of elimination. The first step was to let anyone who had any fear or doubts leave and return to his home. Moses had allowed for this exemption as well, because fearful men in an army can be demoralizing (Deut.20:8; cf. 2 Tim.1:7). The Lord did not use people who would bring shame to His name, but desired only those who would be good soldiers (2 Tim.2:2-3).

Even though 22,000 men had left, there were still too many for God's army. Only a select few were required for God's task, for the quality of the men was to be of greater advantage than the quantity. The next step of elimination was the test in the way the men drank water. Only those who remained on their feet, scooping the water up to their mouths with their hands, were to remain in God's army. These 300 stood ready and prepared in case of an ambush, unlike the majority who knelt and drank in a more comfortable way.

With 9,700 men gone, Gideon was left with less than one percent of the original number of men. However, the 300 that remained would be the most dedicated and disciplined, and those are the type that God will use for His Glory. With such a small number of inexperienced, untrained men, and having never before led or even been a part of a military campaign, Gideon was perhaps apprehensive. It is no wonder God offered him yet a third sign to encourage him and dispel any fear. By one Midianite's interpretation of another's dream, which Gideon overheard while spying in their camp, he realized they feared him! This boosted his confidence and led him to worship God.

When Gideon returned to his own small army, he was ready to prepare the unusual surprise assault plan, which was actually a type of psychological warfare—no doubt revealed to him by God. Weapons were probably scarce in Israel, but with God fighting for them, there was not even the need for weapons. God armed them with trumpets, a clay jar, a torch and their own vocal cords. That night, each company of one hundred men was strategically placed around the huge encampment of innumerable sleeping Midianites, Amalekites, and many other desert people from the East. When Gideon signaled, they all blew their horns, broke the jars (simulating the clash of arms), thus revealing the bright lights of the torches, and all shouted together! This so startled their sleeping enemies that, when they awoke, each thought the battle had already

begun against a great army and, in great confusion, began to fight each other and flee from the advancing Israelites.

The great victory brought courage to the other tribes who responded to Gideon's instructions to pursue the enemies and cut off any escape routes. This led to a national campaign to rid the land of the oppressors. The heads of the enemy princes were trophies of victory and signified the complete defeat of their adversaries. Clearly, the Lord gave them a supernatural victory, for with only a few select men need, in our generation, a select army raised up by the Lord to courageously confront the power of the enemy, Satan, and bring freedom to thousands now in his bondage.

### **Prayer**

Lord, many of Your people today have turned away from You, people whose parents and grandparents were godly. Make us like Gideon's 300, breaking the jars of our fleshly desires through the cross so that the light will shine and putting the trumpet of God's Word to our lips and sounding out Your Truth.