

# GIDEON'S BAND OF SELECTED WARRIORS

BIBLE TEXT : Judges 7:1-8

LESSON 193 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (I Corinthians 1:27).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

## Judges 7:1-8

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men:

BIBLE REFERENCES:

## NOTES:

### Ready for Action

Gideon has won his first battle for the Lord. He has torn down the altars of Baal, and the people are convinced that no ill will come to them for thus dishonoring the heathen gods. The Israelites are now ready to rally around Gideon and go out to fight the Midianites and Amalekites, according to the command of the Almighty God.

This generation of Israelites has never been to war. For seven years they have been living in caves and dens, hiding from the invaders of their land, barely having enough to eat. Are they going to be strong enough to go to war against organized bands?

### Too Many Men

When Gideon counted the men who had come to fight with him, there were 32,000 soldiers. Perhaps he thought that what they lacked in skill they could make up in numbers. And then God told him there were too many men. Gideon did not quibble, but obeyed God; if the Lord said there were too many men, then there were too many men.

We would perhaps wonder why God talked about there being too many soldiers. Surely it would be better to have too many than not enough. What harm could come from their going along, just in case they might be needed? But this was God's battle, and He said there were too many soldiers. The fact that they were afraid was perhaps one reason God did not need them. God told Gideon to send back all the cowards. Perhaps Gideon was startled when he saw two thirds of his army leave for home right on the eve of the battle. But his trust was in God.

### Helpless Without God

God was going to fight the battle against the Midianites. If the entire 32,000 men had gone into the battle they might have said, "We are strong. We can win this battle without God's help."

Too often Christians who started out to serve God fully dependent upon Him have become self-confident and have failed to realize that they need the help of Jesus in everything they do, all the time. Jesus said: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Any work we do for God counts only when the Spirit directs it. Let us be very careful to ask Him to lead our every move and teach us what to say so that we may be a blessing to those we try to help.

The story is told of a minister who felt that he was a poor preacher, and he prayed earnestly that God would give him the message that would go to the hearts of the people. God answered prayer and blessed his ministry. But after a while the Spirit was not felt upon his sermons as at first. The cause was learned when he said: "In the beginning I was helpless and had to lean hard upon the Lord, but now I can get along very well by myself." The true minister of God who keeps the Spirit of God upon his life, will never feel that he can get along by himself

### The Second Test

God told Gideon the remaining 10,000 soldiers were still too

but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

many, so He gave them another test. Gideon took the soldiers to the water so they could drink. How did they drink? Nine thousand seven hundred of them got down on their knees and put their faces to the water. They were not watching for the enemy. But there were three hundred soldiers who were alert. Have you ever watched a dog lap water? He always seems to be looking for something while he *is* drinking. God wanted His people to be guarding against the enemy — watchful. It is likely that the three hundred men scooped up the water with their hands and drank without bowing down or closing their eyes. These Were the men God wanted to use in their first encounter with the Midianites.

### God's Weapons

That band must have looked very small when compared with the host of Midian in the valley below. The Midianites no doubt thought it would be but child's play to set Gideon's little army (armed only with trumpets, pitchers, and lamps) on the run.

Yes, trumpets, pitchers, and lamps were all the weapons of war that the men of Gideon carried — and they were not weapons by which men ordinarily won battles. But they were God's equipment. Whatever God uses for His purpose is sure to be better than what man may think he needs. There were no swords nor spears among the Israelites. They were a subjected people, and it Was much easier to keep in bondage an unarmed nation. So when Israel went to battle there was absolutely nothing they had about which they could say later, "It was by our strength and might that we defeated the enemy."

### The Bride of Christ

Let us compare Gideon's band with the Church of Christ. One day soon Jesus will come again to take His Bride to the Marriage Supper. The Spirit is in the world today preparing His people, proving them to show them their stand before Him The conditions we must meet are given to us in the Word of God. After we have been saved, sanctified, and have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost there is still more we must do. We are taught: "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (II Peter 1:5-7).

All of Gideon's soldiers were Israelites, the children of God. There are many people today who claim to be the children of God and believe in Jesus. But God is sending tests to prove which really are the believers who are making themselves ready to meet Jesus, the Bridegroom, when He comes. The fearful and unbelieving will find that they are not God's children at all and will have their part in the lake of fire. They may say they believe, but they must prove it by doing what Jesus commands. He said: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

There are other people who perhaps have followed the Lord faithfully for a while, but because Jesus did not come as soon as they thought He would, they have become careless and are not really looking for Him. They may live a good life and say that they expect Jesus. But do they, really? When they go to bed at night do they think that Jesus may come before morning? What a glorious thought to the one who is ready!

How many have become neglectful and have done some little thing that they would not like to be doing when Jesus comes? Or would they rather Jesus did not come for a while until

they gained some goal in this world, or had time to enjoy some earthly pleasure for a while longer? What is their first thought in the morning? Are they making their own plans, or are they saying, "Jesus, will it be today?"

### **A Yearning for Christ's Coming**

Do you want Jesus to come today? If you are ready to meet Him, you do. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come." The Lord wants His people to have such an intense desire to see Him that they will cry unto Him, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." The Bride is doing that. She is waiting to hear those words: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7).

God gave John on the Isle of Patmos a glimpse of the New Jerusalem and the glory which shall be hereafter. The thought of that glory to which we all may attain should put a determination into every heart to be ready to meet Jesus at any cost.

Jesus has promised that His people shall be like Him. "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3: 2). The Bride of Christ will have glorified bodies as Jesus had after He arose from the dead, and shall rule and reign with Him for ever and ever.

That part of the Church of Christ who is looking for Jesus, alert to all He tells them to do, and walking in the light He sends, will be the Bride. They will be like Gideon's three hundred by whom God won the battle for Israel. They will be small in number compared with the many who call themselves Christians and yet do not do the commands of God.

The Bride will be chosen because she has been faithful and has fulfilled all that God has required. Everyone has an opportunity to be among the faithful.

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 How many men did Gideon have when he called the Israelites to arms?
- 2 What did God say about their number?
- 3 What was the first test as to whether they were good soldiers?
- 4 What was the second test?
- 5 How many soldiers went home each time? How many were left?
- 6 What kind of weapons did Gideon's band have?
- 7 Who will be the Bride of Christ?