

230125-4 Judges 7, The LORD Proves Gideon-CThurman

For sin the LORD delivered Israel into the hand of Midian. And for seven years Israel was oppressed terribly by them. They came like locusts with their livestock and camels devouring the land and destroying their crops until Israel was greatly impoverished, living in dens, caves, and crevasses of the rocks (strongholds). And when they cried out to the LORD, He sent to them a prophet to remind them that they were suffering these things because they had disobeyed the LORD. But the LORD heard their cry and called for a man named Gideon to deliver them.

It was to Gideon that the LORD revealed Himself in the form of an angel or perhaps as a simple human messenger to tell him that the LORD was with him. Then Gideon proves the authenticity of the messenger. How does he know that this messenger is telling him the truth, that the LORD is with him? It certainly doesn't appear to be so, given his and Israel's present circumstance. Gideon wants proof; he wants a sign. So, he asks the messenger not to depart but to tarry until he brought his present, which in the Hebrew was a meat offering. I think the idea is that Gideon would detain the messenger with a meal, fellowship with this one with the expectation of receiving some sign during this time. So, the LORD waited. But when Gideon brought the unleavened bread and the pot roast of lamb or goat's meat the messenger commanded him to lay it all upon a *this* rock, but to pour out the broth. This Gideon did. Then the messenger touched the meat and the bread with the tip of his staff and fire suddenly came up out of the rock and consumed it all and the angel disappeared from Gideon's sight. Of course this was very distressing to Gideon, realizing that he had seen an angel (messenger) of the LORD face to face. But the LORD immediately comforted Gideon saying *peace be unto thee, fear not: thou shalt not die*.

It was in this very same night that the LORD directed Gideon to take his father's two oxen, throw down his father's altar to Baal and to cut down the grove. For this the men of the city thought to kill Gideon, but his father refused to give up his son demanding that Baal defend himself if he is indeed a god. For what his son Gideon had done his father changed his son's name to Jerubbaal, meaning 'let Baal plead against him.' Then the time came for what was probably the Midianites' annual invasion. They began by pitching camp in the valley of Jezreel. At this the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon with Himself so that Gideon blew

the trumpet, the shophar, a ram's horn. Then those of his family, the Abiezrites gather to him. Gideon also sent messengers out to a couple of other tribes, but certainly not all of them. Then Gideon seeks to prove the LORD a second time. He desires proof that the LORD will use him to deliver Israel from the Midianite oppressors. So Gideon lays out a fleece on the threshing floor. Twice he will do this to establish the truth. For the first proof he asks the LORD to cause the fleece to be wet with the dew of the morning, but dry on the ground all around it. For the second proof he asks the LORD to leave the fleece dry and the ground wet. These things the LORD did for Gideon. He is now sure that the LORD will do this thing by his hand. Gideon had proved the authenticity of the message-bearer and the authenticity of the message. Now, in chapter seven, the LORD proves Gideon through two means.

The LORD told Gideon that He would deliver Israel from the hand of the Midianites, but He didn't say how He would do this. This really puts Gideon's faith to the test.

Chapter 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
camp

were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

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
glorify

vaunt, Hithpael (reflexive act.) fut. of the verb פָּאָר, pah-ar, tss. to glorify, to beautify, to glorify, to vaunt, to boast.

against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever
cry, name, read

[is] fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead.
fly away

Ps.44.1 ¶ «To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil.» We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, [what] work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

2 [How] thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; [how] thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

4 Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.

5 Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

6 For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.

8 In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.

But the LORD says that these are too many. He knows that Israel will think that they brought about their own deliverance because of their numbers and sheer force of power. So, 2/3rds of the warriors flew off as easily as they came, leaving Gideon now with only a force of 10,000 men.

4 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people [are] yet [too] many; bring them still

down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, refine

I will try them, Qal fut. of the verb תִּצַּח, tzah-raph, also tss. to refine, to melt, to purge away.

[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.

And so Gideon chose not to go alone, but to take Phurah with him.

נפל

12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay

אַרְבֵּה

along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels [were]

locusts

without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude.

the ... side, שַׁפָּת, sah-phath, a fem. noun tss. language, speech, shore, brink, bank, lips, border, binding, side of, a band. (vs. 12, the side, v.22, border).

Just as they had for the past seven years the Midianites hoped to come into Canaan and do the same things once again. (cf. iud.6.5)

13 And when Gideon was come, behold, [there was] a man that told
recollected

that told, Piei (intensive act.) part. of the verb סָפַר, sah-phar, tss. to number, to tell, to count, reckon, to account, to declare.

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,
camp

cake, צֶלֶל, tz'lool, a masc. noun, see also צֶלֶל יל, tz'leel; only this once in the OT and tss. cake.

tumbled, of the verb הִפְּךָ, hah-phak, tss. to turn, to overthrow, to turn again, to overturn, to pervert, to retire, to turn back; v.13, tumbled, overturned.

נָכַח
and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay
struck

נפל
along.
fell

overturned, **מַעַל**, mah-[g]al, tss. *above, over, upward, exceedingly.*

Quite unusual, a cake to tumble into the camp and upend a tent. But that's the idea. Something very unusual is about to occur.

14 And his fellow answered and said, This [is] nothing else save the sword of

נָתַן

Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: [for] into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.

given

Unbeknownst to Gideon his fame preceded him. They not only knew Gideon's name, but the name of his father too. Perhaps it was because of his stand among his own people, his own father, against Baal. Whatever it was this Midianite was convinced that they were doomed to fall. How this must have encouraged Gideon to hear this among the enemy.

15 And it was [so], when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the recounting

interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel,
break-down camp

interpretation, שֶׁבַר, sheh-ver, a masc. noun tss. broken, interpretation, destruction, affliction, bruise, hurt, crushing.

worshipped, of the verb שָׁחָה, shah-chah, tss. to bown down, to stoop, to worship, to humbly beseech, to crouch.

נָתַן

and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.
given

רָאשׁ

נָתַן

16 ¶ And he divided the three hundred men [into] three companies, and he put parted heads gave

a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.

firebrands
torches

pitchers, כַּד, kad, tss. pitcher (always, of water}, barrel (of meal, but once barrels of water).

lamps, לַפִּיד, lap-peed, a masc. noun also tss. lightnings, brands, firebrands, burning lamps, torches.

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.

edge, brim

18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that [are] with me, then blow ye the

blow, of the verb תִּקַּע, tah-qa[g], tss. to pitch, to blow, to strike, to fasten, to smith (the nail, Jud.4.21).

trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say,

around

on every side, סָבִיב, sah-veev, a masc. noun, tss. round about, about, on every side.

[The sword] of the LORD, and of Gideon.

The words 'the sword' are supplied but v.20 tells clearly that this was the cry that they made.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that [were] with him, came unto the

רֵאשִׁית

outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had

edge

head

midst of guard duty

middle, תִּיכוֹן, tee-kohn, an adj. tss. *middle* (bar, watch, chamber, court), *midst*, *middlemost*.

In the NT the night watches were divided into three or four parts. (Lk.12.38; Mt.14.25)

Lk.12.38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find [them] so, blessed are those servants.

The difference in this case would be only about an hour. The time would be about 9-10p.

but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that [were] in their hands. dashed

brake, of the verb נִפֵּץ, nah-phatz, also tss. *to overspread, to scatter, to disperse, to discharge, to dash, to beat in sunder.*

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and

brake, of the verb שָׁבַר, shah-var, also tss. *to crush, to tear, to quench, to destroy, to view, to hurt, to break off, the birth.*

held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to
retained torches

blow [withal]: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.
[all together]

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

ran, of the verb רָוץ, rootz, also tss. *the guard, the posts, hastily, speedily, to stretch out, to run away.*

cried, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb רָאָה, roo-a[g], also tss, *to smart* (to be sore broken), *to be destroyed*, *to blow an alarm*, *to cry alarm*, *to cry aloud*, *to sound an alarm*; also positive joyful shouts of triumph.

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.

It looks like the place that is called Abelmeholah (dancing meadows, Abel, meadow + מְחֹלָה, mah-chol) is located on the Jordan River, a little south of the River Cherith. And the city of Tabbath about 10 miles further southeast of Jordan.

23 ¶ And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali,
from

gathered themselves together, of the verb צָעַק, tzah-[g]aq, tss. *to cry*, *to cry out*, *to gather together*; vss.23, 24.

and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.
from from followed

pursued, of the verb דָּרַךְ, rah-daph, also tss. *to pursue*, *to follow*, *to chase*, *to persecute*, *to put to flight*.

Very likely these men which joined in the fight are the very same that had earlier been dismissed for fear and trembling. Now they have been encouraged.

24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Bethbarah
capture

take, of the verb לָכַד, lah-kad, also tss. *to catch*.

and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan.

captured

25 And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb;
captured

Oreb, from the Hebrew עֹרֵב, [g]oh-rehv, a raven.

Zeeb, from the Hebrew זֵאֵב, z'ehv, tss. a wolf.

and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb,

These places being named where the princes of Midian fell.

and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.

The heads being brought to Gideon was proof positive that these princes are dead.

In the next chapter there will be more of an account about this conflict, how some, probably of the nations that had remained in the land of Canaan with them failed to render aid to Gideon and his men as they gave pursuit of Oreb and Zeeb.

Mesopotamian oppression (v.8)	8 years (ch.3)
Othniel's peace (v.11)	40
Moab's oppression (v.14)	18
Ehud's peace (v.30)	80
Shamgar (unknown)	--
Canaanite's oppression	20 (ch.4)
Deborah's peace	40
Midianite oppression	7
Total	213 years

Note: Caleb was 85 when he went to battle against Hebron and took it, killing the three sons of Anak, Ahiman, SheShai, and Talmi. (cf. Nu.13.22; Jos.14.10; 15.14; Jud.1.10)