

Week #:	181	Series:	God's Judgment	Title:	Gideon – Adonai Prepares Gideon's Army
Scriptures:	Judges 7:1-8				
Songs:	Honey in the Rock – Brooke Ligertwood (4:41)				
	Surrounded (Fight My Battles) – Kari Jobe (4:56)				
	PRAYER:	Come Alive (Dry Bones) – Lauren Daigle (4:52)			
Videos:	Judges Song – What's in the Bible #4 (Time- 31:31-33:25)				

Judge #5 - Gideon: Adonai Prepares Gideon's Army

The first four judges in our study have been:

1. Othniel: He was Caleb's nephew. Israel lived in peace after him for 40 years
2. Ehud: He was known for the physical feature of being left-handed. Israel lived in peace after him for 80 years.
3. Shamgar: He was known for killing 600 Philistines with a farm tool, an oxgoad.
4. Deborah: She was a female prophetess, whom God used to free the people from Jabin [Yavin], King of Hazor, and his commander Sisera.
5. Gideon: Called God's valiant hero.

We left off last week with Gideon being called by Adonai, and Gideon questioning whether this was *really* what God wanted. He laid out two fleeces before the Lord, and God graciously met his expectation with both.

Judges 7:1

¹ Then Yeruba'al, that is, Gid'on, and all the people with him, got up early and set up camp by 'Ein-Harod; the camp of Midyan was north of them, by Giv'at-Moreh, in the valley.

Verse 1 explains how the opposing forces were arrayed. Let me be clear that this is quite a different scenario in this case than it was with Joshua and the Israelite army against the Canaanites. Here the Israelites are strictly a militia of farmers, herders, craftsmen, merchants, and so on who hadn't known battle. The Midianites and Amalekites on the other side were nomadic raiders and bandits; they were in no way a trained and disciplined army but they were huge in number and hardened fighters.

Israel's men were located south of the Midianites near the spring of Harod at the foot of Mt. Gilboa. In Hebrew the place is called Ein Harod and it means spring of Harod (Harod is a tribal or clan name). The Midianites were located due north by the Hill of Moreh. The phrase "in the valley" is referring to the Jezreel Valley that the nomadic forces seemed to prefer each year that they came. Note how the valley of Jezreel is so central to practically every battle concerning Israel and the Promised Land. Barak had won the Jezreel Valley from King Yavin some 50 years earlier; and when the bible speaks of the end-times battle of Armageddon, in reality the battle is going to take place in the Jezreel valley; Har Megiddo (the mountain of Megiddo) called Armageddon in English merely overlooks the valley of that great and final battle.

Judges 7:2

² ADONAI said to Gid'on, "There are too many people with you for me to hand Midyan over to them, because I don't want Isra'el to be able to boast against me, 'We saved ourselves by our own strength.'

In a kind of ironic twist, whereas Gideon tested God twice (with the fleece), now God will turn it around and test Gideon with the demands on this army he is to choose. The Lord says that Gideon has way too many troops; because when they win they will be self-confident and sure that it was by their

own strategies, courage, and abilities. Rather Adonai wants them to clearly understand that it is HE who is the one who gives Israel her victories and thus all glory and honor should go to Him.

Judges 7:3-4

³ Therefore, proclaim to the people ‘Anyone who is anxious or afraid should go back home, while we stay here on Mount Gil’ad.’” Twenty-two thousand returned, but ten thousand remained. ⁴ ADONAI said to Gid’on, “There are still too many people. Have them come down to the water, and there I will screen them for you. If I say of anyone, ‘This one is for you,’ he will go with you; and if I say, ‘This one is not for you,’ he won’t go with you.”

The Lord tells Gideon to offer to his militia that any men who are fearful can return home immediately. Fear is contagious and it can have disastrous and demoralizing effects on an army that can even result in mass panic and desertion. It is a rather sad commentary that in the next verse we see that 2 out of 3 of those who answered the call to war took Gideon’s offer. Of the 32,000 men that came, only 10,000 had the courage to stay and risk their lives.

Judges 7:5-

⁵ So he brought the people down to the water, and ADONAI said to Gid’on, “Put to one side everyone who laps up water with his tongue the way a dog does, and put to the other side everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.” ⁶ Three hundred lapped, putting their hand to their mouth; all the rest of the men got down on their knees to drink water. ⁷ ADONAI said to Gid’on, “I will use the three hundred men who lapped the water to save you; I will hand Midyan over to you. Let all these others go back home.” ⁸ So they took the provisions and the *shofars* of the people; then he sent all the men of Isra’el away, each to his tent. But the three hundred men he kept.

There are 10,000 men, but the Lord tells Gideon that this is still too many and devises a means to reduce the fighting force even further. God says to Gideon (in verse 4) that he won’t make Gideon choose, the Lord Himself will select His elite group.

Adonai tells Gideon to take his men down to the brook so they can drink water. HOW they drink the water will be the determining factor. Here’s how it works: when the men stoop over to drink from the brook all will have to go down on their knees because there is no other natural or practical way to drink from a stream. However, those who use their hands as a cup, and bring the water up to their mouths to “lap” it, so to speak, will be chosen as opposed to those who bend over from their knees and put their mouths to the stream. The idea was that those who lifted the water to their mouths were more instinctive fighters who were alert and wary; while those who would put their faces down to the stream were less so.

So, the first test let the fearful go home; and the second cut-down eliminated those who were careless. The result was that from 32,000 men, a mere 300 men were selected and this was the right balance as far as the Lord was concerned. I can imagine that Gideon wasn’t all that thrilled about now. Only 1% of the men who willingly came to fight for Gideon would be used.