

Judges 08-04-11a

This is Friday, the 11th of April, 2008. We continue after a two-week hiatus in our study of the book of Judges. We're in chapter 7. It's the story of Gideon, a very famous episode involving lamps, pitchers, Midianites, and so forth.

We'll take a moment, as is our custom, to go to the Lord in prayer. It gives each of us individually the opportunity to not only ensure that we're prepared for the study of God's Word, but also by the sanctification that comes from the acknowledgement of our personal sins. It puts us in a position to be a blessing to our fellow believers.

We are each gifted. Our presence here is designed to be an encouragement and an edification to other believers, and that function also is greatly inhibited if there is unconfessed sin or if there is distraction or other obstacles to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. So not only is this a time for us to learn and fellowship in God's Word together, but it is the opportunity to bless and be blessed by that which every joint supplies.

Shall we pray? Father, what a blessing it is to find ourselves once again assembled and with a passage from your Word before us, with the ministry of your Spirit close at hand, and all of these provisions enabling us and guiding us and strengthening us for what remains of this life and the eternal ages to come. We thank you for your gracious provision. We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ, who came and exemplified your character before us, revealed your eternal Godhead and deity to us, and redeemed us and entered us into eternal realms, despite the fact that we were lost and hopeless and without any redeeming qualities of our own.

We are grateful for this training time that we have in what remains to us of our lives. We know that the day is rapidly approaching when the Lord Jesus will return, and we will enter into the next phase of your plan. We thank you for the passage that is before us, and we pray that you will bless it to our souls.

May God the Holy Spirit find us ready pupils and impress these truths on our hearts so that we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Judges chapter 7 finds Gideon having been called, having been both publicly and privately assured that God is the one calling him. There is the manifest presence of the angel. There is the voice of God in the night.

There is the dew on the fleece, which is something of an unusual sign. Have you ever stopped to think if you were going to get a confirming sign from God, you're about to make a decision, yes or no, on a certain thing, you're going to stay or you're going to move, you're going to up the ante or you're going to fold, you're going to do something, you're going to make a decision, and you say, oh, I wish God could give me some affirmation that what I'm about to do is the right thing, that I really am in His will, that He's going to bless this course of action that I'm about to undertake. So, what would you choose? How would you expect or request God to

manifest His blessing on your endeavor? You say, well, I would like three doves to fly over in formation.

I'm going to step outside my door, I'm going to look up, and I'd like to see three doves in a perfectly straight line fly over. That's how I'll know that God is saying yes to my proposal, to my request or to my question. Or if this is God's will, and I've actually heard this from a believer or two, I believe that this is what God wants me to do, and the next believer that I speak to, if this subject comes up, they're going to affirm that they think that this is the best course as well.

And this will be God speaking through a fellow believer, someone speaking the truth in love. I've analyzed this thing, and I think that choice A is the way to go. Next time I talk to a trustworthy believer, in the multitude of counselors or in the greatness of counsel, there is safety.

So, I'll bring it to this person, and if they say, well, I really think you ought to do A, I'll know that God is affirming, you know, this is the way some people do it. There have been entire books written on this subject. I've mentioned before one of the more prominent ones by Gary Friesen called Decision Making and the Will of God, where he basically debunks and pooh-poohs any such affirmations or other signals and signs from God.

I'm not quite so quick to cast that particular infant out with the detergent and so on. But it remains, and I'll just say this to you, each of us has his own or her own relationship with God, and it is not my place to stand here and tell you how your relationship with God works. I personally think that if you are wise in God's Word, if you are schooled in the truth of the Bible, God doesn't need to use a lot of miraculous signs.

Miraculous signs have tended to be for those who are at a very initial starting place. The new nation of Israel coming out of bondage in Egypt needed miraculous signs to affirm that God was with them. Giant pillar of cloud by day, pillar of fire by night, parting of the Red Sea, miraculous provision daily to sustain their infant faith.

But once they grow up and become mature and learn to take the land with their own hands under Joshua, after the sun stands still and the walls of Jericho fall, you find that there's much less of that sort of thing. A mature believer doesn't need constant affirmations in the same way that people who have a mature relationship between themselves don't necessarily depend upon it. It's a wonderful thing to get signs and affirmations of love and so on, but you don't wonder if your spouse of 20 or 30 years loves you, if they forget to get a card.

You've got a lot of history that is much more effective than did somebody happen to dispatch their secretary to get you a gift and wrap it and send it or some such thing. You understand what I'm saying. The fact remains that Gideon asks for a sign and he receives it.

Why would this be? Is he a Joshua? Is he a Caleb? Is he a Moses at the latter period? Moses at the beginning gets a miraculous sign, doesn't he? Sticks his hand in, pulls it out. It's leprosy.

Sticks it in, pulls it out.

Water turns to blood, various other things. Stabs into snakes and so on. These affirm Moses because he's a great prince in Egypt and has a wonderful secular education from the University of Egypt, but what Bible did Moses study to become a great hero of the faith? He wrote the first five books of the Bible, didn't he? And in order to get to that place, God gave him some miraculous signs of affirmation.

The early days of the church, same thing. You've got the apostles. How do you know who's an apostle and who's not? Well, when this guy walks by and his shadow hits a sick person, they get well.

I would say this man must be from God. Here's somebody that can heal the blind, raise the dead. Guy falls out of a third-story window and he's dead and breathless and broken neck down there.

Paul gets a hold of him and raises him up and he's fine. Man is likely to be from God. Seems like a pretty easy conclusion to draw.

When these men communicate the truth of the word of God and once that truth is recognized, the apostle Peter recognizes the writings of Paul. He says people twist the writings of Paul as they do the other scriptures. Puts the writings of Paul on a par with the Old Testament.

And in the latter days of the ministry of Paul, he leaves Trophimus behind sick. Why didn't Paul just cast his shadow or wave his hand or drop a hanky or something on him and heal him? Remember that? Some of the handkerchiefs and things that Peter and the other apostles touched would heal sick people. He could take the hanky over and drop it on them.

People have tried that today. Write in and we'll send you a prayer cloth. We'll send you a little bottle of anointing oil.

Hit yourself with that stuff and wait for the miracle. Don't hold your breath, but you can anoint yourself and wait for the miracle. But in those days, God used miraculous signs to affirm that the message or the messenger is from Him.

This is why the prophets were able to do extraordinary things. It gave them credibility. People had no doubt that they were speaking the truth of God.

Gideon is in a day of great apostasy, great idolatry, great falling away. There are no Levites around teaching through the ritual system. So he gets this miraculous sign.

Now, what about you? What about me? Should we say, well, God, show me a sign? I'm going to... Here's my idea. If the phone rings in the next hour and it's a believer, I'll know that you're behind me in this endeavor or whatever. God may in fact do this for some people today.

I don't know. But I personally would be embarrassed to put God to that kind of test because I

know better and you know better. That which is complete has come.

We have the full revelation of God in Scripture. Everything we need to know is there. And if we are so ignorant of God's Word that we have to ask for a sign in order to determine His will, there's something wrong with us.

We're in the days of apostasy in our own soul. Remember, the nation of Israel represents the individual believer in the church age. When the nation of Israel is ignorant, when the nation of Israel is in its spiritual infancy, when the church is in its spiritual infancy, this is the time of miraculous affirmations.

This is the time of signs. As we grow, as revelation unfolds, as the Word of God and the messenger of God is identified and becomes clear, miraculous signs tail off and cease. That which is in part is done away so that that which is complete can take its place.

Paul talks about this. Remember that over in Corinthians? What should dominate is love. That's your whole 1 Corinthians love chapter there.

Which chapter is it? What's the love chapter? Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love, I become a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. What chapter is that? Everybody. 1 Corinthians 13.

12 and 14 both talk about temporary sign gifts. And right in the middle of that, Paul says, here's the most important thing. Love.

Love transcends. Love endures. When that which is in part passes away, faith, hope, and love will endure.

These are the tools. This is the mechanism. This is the power in the Christian life.

The motivation. The means. And the result of spiritual activity, spiritual health and vitality, faith, hope, and love.

Not miraculous signs. You and I ought to be mature enough to function on the Word of God. I'm not saying, and I suspect that God does, in fact, still work with people just as He did with Gideon because in their soul and in their environment, there is a dearth of truth and there is a need for certain parts of God's plan to be accomplished.

God can do whatever He wants. But it's not best. It's not the better thing.

The better thing is to be discerning, to learn from what God has provided. There's an infinitude of truth in His Word. So, God did so, verse 40.

That's the last verse of Judges chapter 6. It was dry on the fleece, but it was dew on the ground. What is the essential component of this sign? What is it without which you don't have this sign? It's one of the fundamental elements on the earth. And when I say element, I don't mean on the

periodic table.

I mean we have earth, air, fire, and water. Ancient man, ever since the earliest days, they have said the elemental components of earthly life, you've got earth, air, fire, and water. You've got the guys in the 70's, you know, earth, wind, and fire.

What do they leave out? The water. And the water is the most important thing. Washing of water by the Word.

Water is an essential component in the Levitical rituals. Washings, baptisms. In Hebrews it talks about the fact nothing is sanctified without these washings.

Some of the fundamental truths mentioned in Hebrews 6, not laying again the foundation of, and part of it is baptisms, washings. What is the meaning of water in Scripture? It's a very important element. Jesus walks on water.

Jesus turns water to wine. Water is very, very important all through Scripture. You can't get two verses into the Bible without hitting water.

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. The Spirit of God moved on the face of the water. From beginning to end, the earth begins in water and it's going to end in fire.

So you've got earth, water, fire, and you have the heavens. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. You've got all of those things.

Earth, air, fire, and water. It's as old as the ancient of man. So the element in this sign for Gideon is water.

Now that's important to understand what's coming up, because we're going to see water play a vital part in chapter 7. So Jerubbaal, that is Gideon, all the people with him, rose early and encamped, this is chapter 7 of Judges, beside the well of Herod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh in the valley. This is the valley of Jezreel. And the hill of Moreh is the northern prominence that is the gateway to that valley of Jezreel in that particular area.

So the Midianites are on the north, Gideon and his assembled Israelites are on the south. Gideon is beside the spring, this is Ein. If you look at places in Israel today, it says things like Ein Gedi.

Ein is the word that means spring or well. This is the spring of Herod. It's actually Karod, C-H-A-R-O-D.

The camp of the Midianites is on the north, by the hill of Moreh. Now you may think this word looks a little bit familiar. If you go back to some earlier scripture, there are some terebinths of Moreh, the oaks of Moreh.

Remember that? The oak of Moreh, associated with Abraham. This is not the same place. Same word, not the same place.

We'll talk about this shortly. The Lord said to Gideon, The people who are with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands. Into their what? Into their hands.

What does the hand represent in scripture? Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee.

Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Represents power, doesn't it? Represents control.

How many times have we seen in these cycles of discipline that are going on in the book of Judges, it says someone has been delivered into the hand of. They were delivered into the hand of King Jabin and his general Sisera. And then Sisera is delivered into the hand of.

And they are delivered into the hand. The hand is the power and the control, right? That's what it represents. So, you have this hand mentioned here.

If I give them into their hands, Israel will 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 elephs of the people returned, and ten elephs remained.

Twenty and two. It's neat in Hebrew to look, because the word for twenty is the dual form of the word for ten. So, you have the same word in just a different form.

So, aseret is the word for ten. Aserim is the word for twenty, because im is the dual. Remember I told you shamayim, the heavens, it's actually a dual.

Mayim, the waters, it's a dual or a plural of greatness and majesty. So, aserim v'shanayim, and shanayim is two. You know, Shania Twain, her name is actually a redundancy, because shania means two, and twain means two.

You know, rent and twain, rent and two. Shania Twain, her name is Tutu. Maybe she's related to Desmond or something.

But her name basically means Tutu. Shania Twain, Tutu. Well, that's not really pertinent to our subject.

So, aserim depart, and aseret remain, in terms of elephs. And the funny thing is, to me, and this is just a quirk of grammar, but when you have aserim, shanayim, eleph, eleph is all by itself, it doesn't have any suffix. So you have twenty-two eleph, and then it says ten aseret elephim.

So you've got to have an em in there one way or another. So when you have twenty-two eleph, it's by itself. And then when you have ten, it has the em on the end.

I don't know why that is, but actually it's because the em is on the... You've got the aserim and the shanayim, and so then it's just eleph with no em. But then you have aseret that has no em, and so you put the em on the eleph. Now, why do I belabor all this? The Hebrew is really important in this passage.

That particular portion is not, but it's just interesting to me, and you have to suffer along with my interest. So, anyway, we've got the... What does this tell us, though? What it does signify is that the people have been cut by two-thirds. And it's really evident in Hebrew because you have the same word is dual and then singular.

And it basically says two-thirds of the elephs left, and one-third of the elephs remain. And it's much more marked than to say that there are twenty-two... He started out with thirty-two thousand people, and he ends up with ten, because basically two-thirds of them leave. Now, here's what is fascinating to me in terms of Hebrew.

And bear with me, don't glaze over when I say Hebrew, because this is important. Where did they camp? Where are they camped? This is the spring of Kairod, right? So Gideon announces to the people, at God's behest, according to God's command, in order that people will not boast, Proclaim in the ear of the people, of the army, Let him return whoever is fearful, This is Yare, this is the classic Hebrew word that means to be fearful, Ra, and it's Yare. And Trembling.

Guess what the word is for Trembling? Kared. It's another form of Kairod. It's the very same word.

This is the spring of Trembling. They have camped by the spring of Trembling. That's its name.

And it may in fact have gotten its name from this episode, as is so often the case. You have these eponymous situations. And so they are camped by the spring of Trembling.

And so Gideon stands up and says, If you're afraid or if you're trembling, go home. Now, there's a problem. If you're familiar with the geography of the Holy Land, you see this problem.

If you're even reasonably familiar, if you remember the division of the land according to the tribes, and you remember who's on what side of the Jordan, you should see this problem. What is the problem in verse 3? Whoever is fearful and whoever is Kairad, here by the spring of Kairod, let him turn and depart at once from where? From Mount Gilead. Where is the spring of Kairad? What valley? Jezreel.

Where is Jezreel? North, central, Israel proper, right? The Vale of Jezreel. This is the same valley that's become the Valley of Armageddon. Eventually, it points in a southwesterly direction, all the way down to Jerusalem.

Way, way, way, way down there. That valley goes all the way up, and then it turns into a real valley, kind of opens up into a plain, but it turns into a valley up there at Jezreel. Well, this is on the west side of the Jordan, right? Where is Mount Gilead? Where is Gilead the land? It's on the

east side of the Jordan, right? So how can you depart from Mount Gilead if Mount Gilead is clear over on the other side of the Jordan? There is no Mount Gilead at Jezreel.

There is no Mount Gilead. The name of the mountain is Moreh. That's where the Midianites are camped.

So where are these people going from? Pay attention here, because no commentary I could find got this. But you, I think, will see the sense of it. Who lives in Gilead? There is a great old song, and there is a verse that says there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sinsick soul.

This has nothing to do with that, but you know where Gilead is, right? Gilead is on the other side of the Jordan. What tribes live over there? Reuben, Gad, and half of what tribe? Manasseh. Who are the Abiezrites part of? What's Gideon's tribe? Manasseh.

Gideon blew the trumpet at the end of the last chapter, and what people came to him? What tribes? Did anybody from Reuben come? Did anybody from Gad come? Who came there? If you look at a map in the back of your Bible, and if I was some kind of a PowerPoint guy, I would flash this up on the screen. But if you can see in your Bible this orange right here, that's Manasseh on the west side of the Jordan. And this green over here, that's Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan.

Manasseh is the tribe that responded to the call. Look how big that is. You add up all that orange and all that green.

Get a map in the back of your Bible that shows the tribal divisions of the land. Manasseh is huge, with a capital H. It's enormous. Then the other tribes that responded are Asher, Zebulun, and Issachar.

Right? Look at their little tiny patches, these little pipsqueak tribal areas here. Manasseh just dwarfs them. Manasseh is like Texas, and these places are like New Hampshire.

Okay? So where do you think the majority of the troops that have assembled behind this Abiezrite call to battle have come from? What tribe do you think they are mostly from? They're mostly from Manasseh. Now, you need your pencil to straighten out what has happened in your Bible. Because here's what happened.

The sentence has been divided at the wrong place. The Hebrew is fine, but it's been divided in the wrong place. What it says is, Whoever is, in verse 3, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn, period.

Basically, let him return. This is the classic Hebrew word for return. Whoever is fearful and afraid, whoever is fearful and trembling, charad, let him return, period.

And, capital A, at once, from Mount Gilead, 22 Alephs of the people departed and returned. As soon as he said, Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him return, 22 Alephs, 22 big units, departed

and returned. And guess where these people were from? They were all from Mount Gilead.

They were all Manasseites from the other side of the Jordan that had come over and responded at the trumpet call. But when they assembled and heard that the Midianites were there, and they said, You know what? The Midianites are not bugging us over in Gilead. They're coming over here and they're bugging Asher and Zebulun and the West Manasseh tribes.

We don't really have a stake in this fight. These are the same guys that promised to come over and fight with Joshua. And when the fighting is over, we're going home.

And now they have responded to the call, but all they have to think about is their fear. They don't have a stake. They're not being overrun by Midianites.

And so when Gideon says, If you're fearful about this, you're over here, what helps you overcome your fear? You say, I've got a problem and I'm not going to solve this problem unless I overcome my fear and get this done. Right? You think about when you learn to drive. You've got to drive.

You've got to be able to operate a vehicle, but it's a scary thing to get behind the wheel and everything is new. After you've been driving a while, you think, What was I so afraid of? This is a piece of cake. But when you first start doing it, it seems like the car swerves when you didn't do anything and you're too slow and you're too fast and people are whizzing around and somebody honks.

But you overcome that fear because you've got to learn to drive. You have to solve that problem. You have to have that skill.

And trust me, you do have to have that skill. So get over it. I'm not talking to anybody in particular.

But there's this fear. Well, what if you never are going to need to do this? People go to school and they say, I'm never going to use trigonometry. And if you think, I'm never going to do this.

I'm rich. I'll always have a chauffeur. There's rich people that have never learned to drive because they've always been chauffeured.

And that fear remains and they're not going to overcome it because they don't have to overcome it because they have no stake or no need to overcome it. That's the problem with these people. They're trembling and they're saying, yeah, I don't even know why I'm here.

God bless my cousins and so on, my distant fourth and fifth level cousins here in West Manassas. So, whoever is fearful, whoever is trembling, let him turn. And at once, 22,000 of the people departed and returned.

And these people are from Mount Gilead. This is what the scripture is trying to say. It has kind of gotten mangled.

But these 22 LFs, these 22 quote unquote thousands, they're all from the other side of the Jordan and they go back. Now, doesn't this make sense? Who are the people who decided they wanted to remain on the other side of the Jordan? God said, your inheritance is on the west side. These people said, but the grass is greener on the other side of the river.

We'll come over and do our duty, but we don't really want to live in the land. We don't really want to have to perpetually drive out. The battle has already been won over here.

We want to live over here. The grass is green. The enemy is gone.

Don't challenge us. We're pastoral. We're Pacific.

We're cattle and goats and mountains and greenery and that whole battle thing and going in on the challenge and climb the hills and follow Caleb. No, no, no. We want to be over here.

Well, these guys have agreeably come over, but they don't have the stomach for it. Gideon says, go home. 22 LFs go back across the Jordan.

Now, the word that says they departed at once, this is a real unusual word. And it's used so rarely in Hebrew that we have to go to the Arabic to figure out what it means. And it means to return by a circuitous route.

In Arabic it means to braid something, to coil it or to turn it. And these people wended their way. They didn't go straight because they would have had to go too close to the Midianites.

So they departed and took a circuitous route to a safe crossing of the Jordan and back to Mount Gilead. So they made this long traverse. They just didn't want to get anywhere near anything dangerous and they just departed by this circuitous route.

It means to depart in a skulking way, to surreptitiously wend your way back. That's what they did. So, the Lord said to Gideon, the people are still too many.

You've got ten units here. You've got ten great big units of people, still too many. Bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there.

Now, once again, I asked you at the beginning of the lesson, how would you have God reveal His will? Gideon chose the fleece. Let it be dry, let it be damp. Actually, let it be damp and then let it be dry was the order.

And so water was the signal. Once again, water is going to come into play to designate those whom God has chosen. And it's no accident that it's water.

Thereby the spring of trembling here, the spring of charade, right? A bunch of people that were charading have already wended their way back home. I will test them for you there. Now, God doesn't say, I will pick them there, I will designate them, I will mark them out, I will reveal them, any one of a number of words that could have been used.

What is the word that's used? I will test. Now people say that this is some sort of means of determining who is the most tactical, you know, who's looking up, watching for the enemy and who's mindless and so on. It's a different kind of test.

And it's a symbolic sort of test and we'll see as we go forward. It will be whom I say to you, this one shall go with you, the same shall go with you. And whomever I say to you, this one shall not go, the same shall not go.

Do you notice anything about this weeding out process? We're going to get down to 300 men. We started out with ostensibly 32,000, at least 32 big units full, right? And there are two successive weeding. Think about those two, those two trimming downs, those two weeding outs.

The first one, how does it happen? Who makes the choice? Who chose who would stay and who would go? The people, it's offered to them, right? If you keep your finger here and go to Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse 8, these are instructions. This chapter, Deuteronomy 20, this is the law of Moses that is in effect in Israel in Gideon's day, if anybody happens to remember it. Whenever you go out to battle against your enemies, it says in 20, verse 1, you see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you.

What is the command? What does Deuteronomy 20, verse 1 say? When you see people more numerous than you, what is the command? Do not be afraid. These people who acknowledge that they are afraid, they are acknowledging that they are disobeying the law because the law says be not afraid when you see people more numerous than you because the Lord your God is with you, the one who brought you up from the land of Egypt. So it shall be when you are on the verge of battle that the priest shall approach and speak to the people.

Where are the priests now in Israel? They are essentially defunct. If there are any at all, they must be somewhere down there in the vicinity of Eli and Shiloh. There aren't any priests functioning up in Gideon's neck of the woods.

So there is no priest to perform this function. He is supposed to come up and speak to the people and say, Here, O Israel, today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint.

The second time God has emphasized you should not be afraid, even though the odds are against you, even though from a human point of view it looks like doom and gloom, death and destruction. Don't be swayed by that. Do not let your heart faint.

Notice. Do not let your heart faint. Your heart is going to want to faint.

It's a natural reaction. You're going to be tempted. You're going to be tested to faint.

Don't let it happen. God says, Do not fear. Do not let your heart faint.

Do not be afraid. And look. Do not what? In verse 3, Do not what? Do not tremble.

Do not tremble or be terrified because of them. For the Lord your God is He who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you. This is God's whole point.

You've got too many people. Israel is going to think they are delivered by their own hand. I want you to be sure and understand that it's me.

I am fighting for you. So the officers then in verse 5 of Deuteronomy 20 speak to the people saying, What man is there who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him return. What man has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it? Let him return.

Who is betrothed to a woman and has not married her? Let him return. Look at verse 8. The officers shall speak further to the people and say, What man is there who is fearful and faint hearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart. That kind of attitude is infectious.

God says, If you're afraid, the officers are to stand up and order those people home. If you haven't got the guts for this fight, go home. We don't need you.

We do not need anybody standing here trying to fight that's got a spirit of fear. Go home. The Lord's fighting for us.

We don't need you and your pathetic, weaselly, fearful efforts. If you do not believe that God is with us, if you do not believe that God is giving us the victory, go home. What is the antithesis of fear? God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of what? Power, love, self-control, sound mind.

Anybody that doesn't have those things, it's either fear or faith. It's one or the other. And the officers are to stand up and order home anybody that's not of faith, because the victory is going to go to the faithful.

God is going to fight with the faithful. That's the principle in Deuteronomy chapter 20. So, back in our passage, Gideon, at the word of the Lord, does what the law prescribes.

He stands up in the hearing of the people. If you're trembling, if you're fearful, go home. Who chooses? They choose.

They make up their own mind. Anybody who says, you know what, I really am of faith. I don't want to be here.

They leave. They chose to depart. Now there are ten Eliphs, there are ten big units standing there.

By the way, apparently, virtually everybody that left are these people from the Mount of Gilead. That ridge, that mountain ridge of Gilead across the Jordan. Everybody that's left is from these other four tribes.

And they've got a vested interest, don't they? Because they're the territory, theirs is the territory where Midian is invading. But the Lord says, the people are still too many. Bring them down to the water and I will test them.

I will say to you who stays and who goes. Now there is a divine choice. People can eliminate themselves, can't they? I'm just not even going to try.

There are those who say, no, I am going to try. And God is going to eliminate them. Two different ways you can be taken out of the victory.

You can be taken out of the conflict and out of the battle. You can take yourself out or God can look at you and take you out. And this is what's happening now.

This is a divinely ordained choice. 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. Now the people do not know that this is a test. And they don't know why certain ones are being set aside.

They don't know if this is good or if this is bad. It's sort of an inscrutable divine choice. The number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men.

All the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. There's no word in the Hebrew here for knees. It says they bowed down.

And I could give you a big long etymology of this word, but it's from the word kara, K-A-R-A. And it basically means to prostrate yourself, to bow down, way down. This is the kind of bowing that Solomon did before the Lord when he dedicated the temple.

This is the kind of bowing down that is pictured in Scripture in supplication, in the worship of God. 1 Kings 8, verse 54, When Solomon had finished praying his prayer and supplication to the Lord, he had been kneeling on his knees with his hands spread toward heaven. This is the oriental way of bowing, where you fold yourself into a flat Z or a flat S. You're not kneeling, sitting up, looking around.

You are down with your forehead on the dirt. And your hips and your knees and your ankles and everything, you're squashed completely down. You have made yourself small.

This is the kind of bowing down that is spoken of in Scripture as a result of defeat. You will fall down in defeat or in death. 2 Samuel 22, verse 40, You have girded me with strength for battle, you have subdued under me, you have bowed down under me those who rose up against me.

This is subjugation. This is humiliation. This is denigration.

This is flattening someone to the earth, pushing them down to the ground. Their face is in the

earth. You can put your foot on their neck in this position.

So, how are these people drinking the water? Are they dipping with a pitcher and standing upright and taking a swig? No. Are they kneeling on one knee and pulling the water up to their face with their hand? No. They are down.

The people kneeling, it says here, are not kneeling at all. They are prostrate and they are sucking the water out of the spring straight from the source. Their face is down in the water.

Their face is down in contact with the water and they're sucking it up as if you were in the swimming pool gulping water. That's how they're drinking. They're at the edge of the spring and their face is in the water and they're drinking it straight from the pool.

Most people are doing this. There's 300 who are upright because if you don't use your hand to get the water to your mouth, how does the water get in your mouth? You've got to put your mouth in the water. So, the 9,700 or whatever the equivalent is in LFs, the 9,700 LFs are sucking the water out of the pool directly.

Now, what does that mean? Why is that important? We're going to pause here and take our break. And when we come back, I think you will be amazed. I was amazed.

I have never in my entire life understood what was going on with these two groups of guys and now I do. And that's what we'll talk about as soon as we come back from the break.