

GIDEON AND NATIONAL DELIVERANCE

Text: Judges 7:7

The parallels of the condition of Israel and America are strikingly similar. The Bible's relevancy is quite remarkable and up to date. Many books will tell people how to make a living, but the Word of God tells us how to live! If America as a nation ever needed to know how to live, it is now. It looks like the odds are against us. It is also looking like we are out-numbered, but Jonathan reminds us *"...there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few"* (I Samuel 14:6). The combined forces of the Midianites, Amalekites and other soldiers from the East numbered 135,000. Gideon had 300. To say Israel was outnumbered is quite an understatement. To be specific, Israel was outnumbered by a force 450 times larger than their own!

When Hezekiah and Judah were surrounded by wicked King Sennacherib and the Assyrians, a powerful word from the Lord was given through King Hezekiah: *"Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah"* (II Chronicles 32:7,8). Let's examine this Bible story:

I. CONSIDER THE PREVALENT APOSTASY

Judges 6:1-6a

A. DIVINE RETRIBUTION IS TRIGGERED

Judges 6:1

We cannot do wrong and get a way with it. God told Israel, *"...Behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out"* (Numbers 32:23).

B. LIVING IN THE GRIP OF FEAR

Judges 6:2

Hiding is no way to live, but this is what the Israelites were doing; they were hiding in fear. Sin is bondage and one of the chief manifestations of this bondage is fear. God's word says, *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear..."* (Romans 8:15). Right relationship with God brings deliverance from fear: *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (II Timothy 1:7).

C. REELING UNDER ECONOMIC CHAOS

Judges 6:3-6a

Israeli exports were destroyed and foreign imports were mandated and forced. This sounds close to where America may soon be going.

2. CONSIDER THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE

Judges 6:6b-10

A. PRAYER EVOKES GOD'S RESPONSE

Judges 6:6b

The best thing to do when crisis comes is to pray. Even better than waiting for crisis to hit is to pray before hand. *"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me"* (Psalm 50:15). *"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you"* (Hosea 10:12).

B. PRAISE INVOKES GOD'S GOODNESS

Judges 6:8,9

The Lord's first line of offense that seeks us out when we are wayward is the extension of His goodness. *"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"* (Romans 2:4).

C. OBEDIENCE PROMOTES GOD'S BLESSINGS

Judges 6:10

Saul tried to explain away his disobedience but was told by the mighty Samuel, *"...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."* (I Samuel 15:22c).

3. CONSIDER THE PATH OF PEACE

Judges 6:11-24

A. THE PATIENT LORD

Judges 6:11a

If theologians are correct and this is a visit from the Pre-incarnate Christ, we are deeply touched that He would wait on this reluctant servant, Gideon to make himself available to be used.

B. THE POTENTIAL SERVANT

Judges 6:11b-12, 14,16

These verses show us that God does not use us because of whom we are, but what we shall become for Him.

C. THE PLIGHT OF AMBIGUITY

Judges 6:13,15, 17, 36-40; Judges 7:10-15

If you wonder if you have to be perfect before God will use you, examine these verses and you will see that God uses us even with all our shortcomings.

D. THE POWERFUL CONFRONTATION

Judges 7:1-6; 16-22

Gideon starts out with 32,000. God says it's too many. So, He tells everyone who is fearful and afraid to go home – and 22,000 go home! Fear is the display of a lack of trust. The Lord also knows it is contagious. This is confirmed by Joshua 14:8, *“Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.”* Next, God tells Gideon to take the men to the water; He wanted to examine how they would drink. Whoever would take the water up in their hand and lap it up could stay. All who dropped to their knees and buried their faces in the water had to go. The Lord did not want men who were consumed by their own appetites, who would fall down on their knees just to slake their physical thirst. So, 9,700 more left, leaving General Gideon with only 300.

But they were God's choice.

Human nature wants to count the odds and only operate within our comfort zone. God loves to be out numbered by man's opinions. There is a great truth that will become life changing for you if you believe and receive it.

The truth of which I speak is that God has angels in heaven, a host of warriors that await our Lord of Hosts' command to go into battle for us to even the odds. Elisha was surrounded by doubters, so he prayed that God would open their eyes: *"And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha"* (II Kings 6:16,17).

CONCLUSION:

1. God is not limited to man's statistics.
2. For great tasks, God requires total dedication, thus the winnowing of the troops.
3. The Lord is on your side when the enemies of the Lord are against you. *"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day"* (Psalm 7:11).
4. God does His most thorough work when human explanation is removed.

"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" (Judges 7:2).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.