

Hello, it's me again, Gideon. I thought that you would be interested to know how I went on with those wretched Midianites. I was rather apprehensive when I last wrote, but I was certain that is what God had asked me to do. I blew my shofar (Ram's horn) and sent out messengers to some of the other Israelite tribes and was quite pleased that 32,000 men responded and joined me. The Midianites had more than four times that number, but still, as God had set me the task, I knew that He would help me.

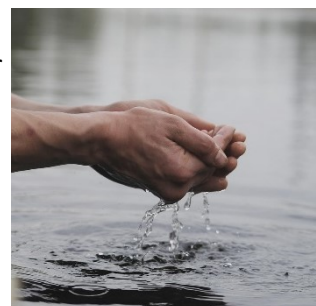



I set up camp with the men ready to set off against the Midianites, but then, God said the strangest thing to me. He said that I had too many men because when we defeated the Midianites the men would be proud and say, "**WE** beat them" instead of giving Him the glory for the victory. He told me to say to the men that if any of them were scared to fight, then they were to go back home.

Well, I ask you, what a thing to say to them! They did not need telling twice and 22,000 went back home and I was left with only 1,000 men. It seemed that I was left in an impossible situation, but, there was more to come.

Too Many!

When God spoke to me again He said that I still had too many men. Whatever did He expect me to do with only 1,000 against all those thousands of Midianites and then implying that I still had too many men? He told me to take them down to the water and tell them to have a drink. Some of them knelt down and drank the water directly into their mouths and some knelt down and cupped the water in their hands to drink. I was told to separate them into two groups. I had to send back home all those who had drunk the water directly into their mouths and keep those who had been more alert and cupped the water into their hands. How many was I left with? Just 300! From 32,000 down to 300. How crazy was that?



32,000  **300**

You can imagine what sort of turmoil was going on in my mind. It was as if God was deliberately preventing me from being successful, however, He continued to say that He would give me victory over the Midianites. He said that if I went and attacked them that night, He had **ALREADY** given them into my hands, however, alternately, if I was fearful about doing that, I was to take my servant with me, sneak into the enemy camp and listen to what was being said. What an odd instruction and what a challenge. It would mean entering the enemy camp unseen, with some of them armed and guarding the camp. Their army was so large that they were like locusts filling the valley and there were too many camels even to count.



We managed to sneak up to one of the tents to listen to what was being said. One of the men was telling his companion about a dream that he had had. He had dreamt that a cake of barley bread had fallen into their camp and had flattened the tent. His listener gave an interpretation of the dream and said that it meant that Gideon the Israelite would come with his army and they, the Midianites, would be defeated.



How about that for the marvellous way in which God works? When I heard the dream and the interpretation, I just worshipped God and was assured that He was with me. We went back to our own camp and told the men to get up. I divided them into three groups, giving each man a trumpet and a jar containing a light. They were to go and spread out around the enemy camp.

I instructed them that when I blew my trumpet they were all to blow their trumpets, smash the jars so that the lights could be seen and shout, **“A sword for the Lord and for Gideon.”** Well, when all that took place the Midianites thought that such a massive army had come against them that as we attacked they all got on their camels and fled with our small group of 300 chasing after them.

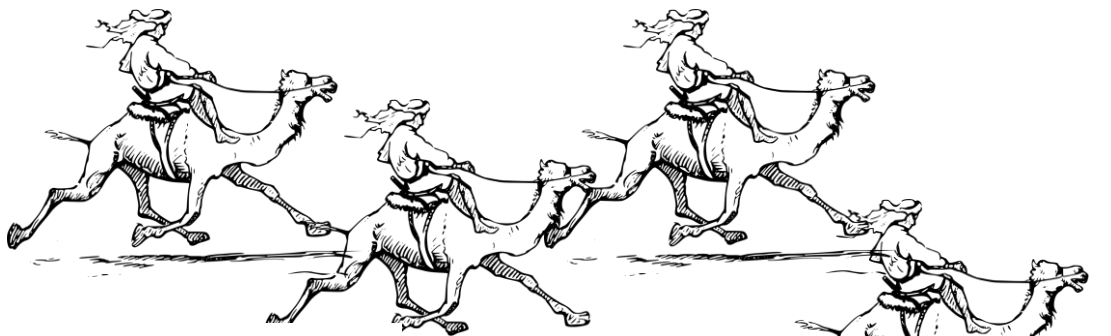


Isn't it amazing what God can do when we trust Him to be with us? After all of the fighting and ensuing battles the people asked me to be their ruler, but I said to them :-

“I will not rule over you, the Lord will rule over you.”

Since these events we have had peace for 40 years. No more Midianite invasions, thank goodness!

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