

Sunday Night Message

August 26, 2018

Judges 7

Series – *Judges*

Text – Judges 7

Introduction

In Judges six, we saw God's calling of Gideon to lead Israel against the Midianites who had been oppressing them for seven years. Though Gideon is insecure and reluctant, God assures him that he is the man that God has chosen, and the man that God will equip and bless to bring victory to Israel. God gives Gideon three assurances in chapter six:

He asks the Angel of the Lord to give him a sign (v. 17), which the Angel does by consuming with fire the sacrifice and the unleavened cakes that Gideon placed upon a rock.

He also asked God to make his fleece wet while the ground remained dry.

Finally, he asks God to keep the fleece dry while the ground around it is wet.

Here, in this chapter, we will see that God will once again encourage and assure Gideon that he is doing exactly what God wants him to do.

I The Lord Culls the Crowd (vs. 1 – 8)

God does not need a big crowd to win His battles or to fulfill His will. God wanted to be sure that the people knew that the victory came from Him.

The army of Israel started out with 32,000. Gideon invited the fearful to leave and they immediately lost 10,000 and were down to 22,000. By the way – it is an amazing thing that Gideon did not leave. Then the Lord set up a test at the watering hole, and there he lost almost the entire army, leaving only 300 left to fight against the huge numbers of Midianites.

This world is enamored with big numbers. Big churches, big businesses. Growth is good if God is in it, growth should not necessarily be the goal. We want to reach people, and we want to see people saved, for the Lord's sake and for their good, not just so we can inflate our egos. God should be our primary goal, not numeric growth. If we are faithful to the Lord, He will probably give the increase, but if He doesn't, we should still be content.

Illustrate – Bringham Farm – great little business, but they are in an area where they cannot expand. They can stay small and still be tremendously successful.

Little is much when God is in it. God does not need big numbers. God's people need a big God.

"And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?" (1 Chronicles 21:3)

"And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." (1 Samuel 14:6)

We will learn from Judges 8:10 that there were 135,000 Midianites that they were about to go up against.

God does not need gifted people.

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Corinthians 1:25-29)

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

But, be sure about this: the three hundred men that Gideon had left were all in. I would rather have 50 people who were sold out for the Lord than 5000 who were all about themselves. These 300 men that were left were being watched, and God liked what He saw in them.

"Make every occasion a great occasion, for you can never tell when somebody may be taking your measure for a larger place."¹

II The Lord Cheers Up Gideon and Causes the Midianites to Fear (vs. 7 – 15)

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1994). *Be available* (p. 60). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Dream was God's way of assuring Gideon that everything was OK; that he was doing exactly what God wanted him to do, and that all would be well. Gideon was a little bit insecure. This is now the fourth time that God reassures him.

III The Lord Conceives a Strange Attack Plan (vs. 16 – 22)

Note – “middle watch” in v. 19 is from 10 PM – 2 AM.

God does not do things our way.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33)

Notice also that Gideon leads by example (v. 17)

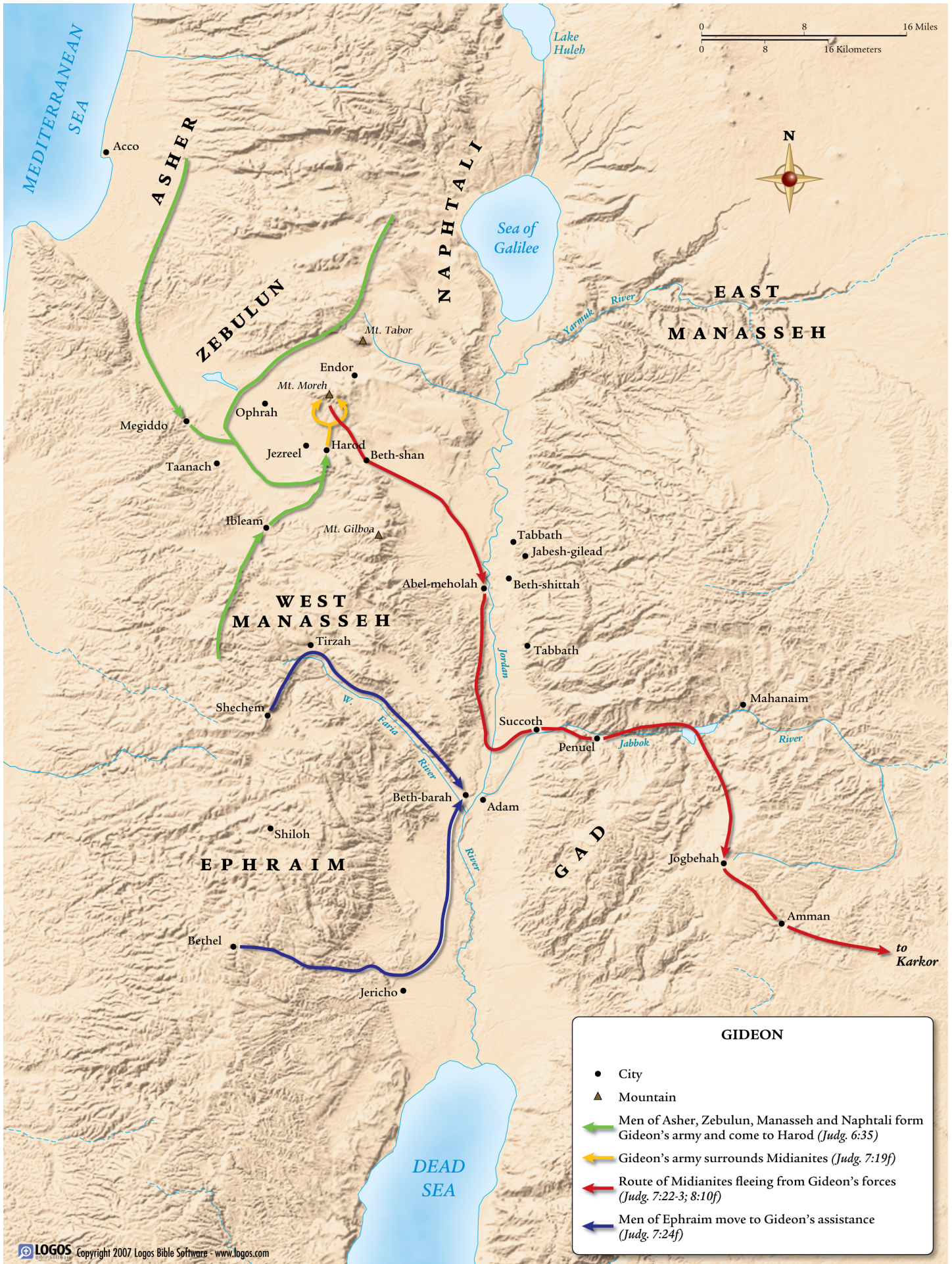
IV Israel Chases the Enemy (vs. 23 – 25)

Gideon chases the enemy completely to the other side of the Jordan River. Sometimes, we win the battle but we fail to drive the enemy completely out of our lives, which allows them to regain strength again.

Notice the story starts with Gideon hiding by a winepress, and ends with the enemies of Gideon being slain by a winepress.

Conclusion

The big problems that you have in your life are not big problems to God. The big enemies that you face are not big to God. God is well able to multiply your feeble efforts in order to fulfill His will. The widows mite was an awful lot of money in the hands of God. The little lad's lunch of loaves and fishes was multiplied to feed 5000 men, and possible 15,000 more women and children. Little is much when God is in it.



0 8 16 Miles
0 8 16 Kilometers



GIDEON

- City
- ▲ Mountain
- Men of Asher, Zebulun, Manasseh and Naphtali form Gideon's army and come to Harod (*Judg. 6:35*)
- Gideon's army surrounds Midianites (*Judg. 7:19f*)
- Route of Midianites fleeing from Gideon's forces (*Judg. 7:22-3; 8:10f*)
- Men of Ephraim move to Gideon's assistance (*Judg. 7:24f*)

