

# **Elder Vernon Johnson**

## **Numbers**

### **Gideon and the Three Hundred**

Because of disobedience to the commandments of God and because of turning their back on the service of God, the children of Israel at times were delivered into bondage to other nations. At that time, they would cry unto the Lord for deliverance and the Lord would hearken unto their cry and deliver them. This was the setting in the days of Gideon, who became a judge over Israel.

Judg. 6:1 "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. 2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. 3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; 4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. 5 For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. 6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD."

The Midianites and the children of the east had come up and robbed Israel and destroyed the increase of the earth. Now, they were come up to destroy Israel. They came up in huge numbers. They were like grasshoppers and the number of them could not be numbered for multitude. This may have been the largest army ever assembled from the foundation of the world.

The Lord raised up Gideon to lead the children of Israel in their battle against this gigantic army. Gideon sent messengers to gather the children of Israel who were willing to fight in the battle and there came to him 32,000. My first thought was 32,000 against this army that cannot be numbered for multitude, they will really have to trust in the Lord for the Lord to deliver such a great army into the hands of so few. However, God seeth not as man seeth. Judg. 7:2 "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. 3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand."

With this, the Lord had trimmed the 32,000 to 10,000. Certainly, the Lord will receive all the glory and not man with only 10,000 to fight against the gigantic army of the Midianites and the children of the east. Yet God was not through trimming the army of Israel: Judg. 7:4 "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were **three hundred men**: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, **By the three hundred men** that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place."

The Lord was sending **300 men** to fight against the great host of the Midianites, Amelikites, and the children of the east. Numbers are not important to the Lord. The Lord can deliver with the few. The power of deliverance was not in the hands of the few but in the hands of the Lord. However, the Lord delivers by few when they trust in him.

Trusting in the Lord means doing things the Lord's way, even when we do not understand the Lord's way and it does not necessarily make sense to us. Judg. 7:16 "And he divided the **three hundred** men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. 17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. 18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the

lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. 22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath."

Each of the three hundred men had a trumpet in one hand and a pitcher in the other hand and a lamp inside the pitcher. At the appointed time, they broke the pitcher and the lamp shined forth and they blew with the trumpet saying, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." At this, the enemy began to destroy themselves down to the ground.

In the New Testament church, we have something similar to this. First, we are told to mortify the deeds of the flesh (break the pitcher):

1. Rom. 8:13 "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

2. Col. 3:5 "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:"

Next, we are to let our light shine: Mat. 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." By this, we are to live our lives to the praise, honor, and glory of God and in so doing others will see our good works and glorify the Father in heaven.

Furthermore, we are to blow the gospel trumpet of truth, saying, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The bible is the "sword of the Lord": Eph. 6:17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" Thus, the word of God is not only the Lord's sword, but it is our sword also, by which we war against our enemies: the devil, the flesh, and the world.

By following this pattern, we are able through the Lord's power to overcome the enemies that war against us. Let us remember only a few fights on the Lord's side in this battle. However, the Lord's few are mightier through the Lord than the multitude that stands against us.