

AN UNLIKELY HERO (Judges 6-7)

I. **Israel's Distress (6:1-10).**

- A. Israel had been in subjection to the Canaanites for several years until God raised up Deborah.
- B. Deborah had defeated Sisera the captain of the hosts of Canaan, and Israel had rest.
- C. Unfortunately, the Israelites turned back to idols and left God again
 - 1. This is the case throughout the book of Judges.
 - 2. It is the case today that many Christians turn from God until things get tough in their lives. (Go into detail)
- D. This time God allowed the Midianites to dominate God's people.
 - 1. They so dominated Israel that the people were left to live in caves.
 - 2. There was little food and almost no cattle, oxen or donkeys.
 - 3. The Midianites took much of the food that was grown by the Israelites.
- E. All this suffering caused the people to cry out to God.
- F. God heard them and to drive home why this was happening to them he sent them a prophet to remind them what all God had done for them and how they had treated Him.

II. **Gideon's Doubting (6:11-40).**

- A. Gideon asked why?
 - 1. This is not a bad question to ask when troubles arise.
 - 2. Many today ask God why bad things happen.
 - 3. There are several reasons for suffering:
 - a. Natural events bring suffering;
 - b. Other people's sin brings suffering (drunk driving, abuse, etc.);
 - c. Consequences of our sins (this was the case of Israel's suffering);
 - d. And God's chastening (Proverbs 3:11-12)
- B. That night he was told to tear down the altar of Baal.
 - 1. It is important to note here that until sin and error are uprooted, righteousness cannot flourish.
 - 2. Each Christian must make sure that the things that cause us to falter are removed or we will go back to them.
- C. Gideon asked for a sign from God.
 - 1. He asked for dew on the fleece only and God did it.
 - 2. He asked for dew on the fleece only and God did it.
 - 3. Many of us ridicule Gideon for a seeming lack of faith.
 - a. I don't know if it was so much a lack of faith in God as a lack of faith in himself.
 - b. God being in His life was new to him.
 - c. His father had not set a godly example and Gideon did not know God well.

- d. He did not know how much he believed in God and he knew to lead God's people into battle his faith had to be sure.
- 4. This should also encourage us to be patient with those snared in sin, especially the sin of denominationalism.
 - a. It's all they have known in that instance.
 - b. Patience is required when teaching them (2 Timothy 2:24-26).
- 5. We should also use this as an example to investigate things before we believe them.
- D. Interestingly enough, we don't read of Gideon questioning God ever again.
 - 1. His doubts and fears were removed.
 - 2. Sadly, many still question God and His word.

III. **God's Directives (7:1-14).**

- A. At the end of chapter 6 we are told that Gideon had sent for men from the neighboring tribes.
 - 1. A number of men came totaling 32,000 (7:3).
 - 2. But they were facing a force of 135,000 (8:12).
- B. God wanted Israel to know that it was He who would save Israel and not Gideon and the army so he told Gideon that there were too many.
 - 1. He told Gideon to tell all the fearful to go home and 22,000 men left.
 - a. God does not want cowards serving him.
 - b. The first person to be cast into hell in Rev. 21:8 is the person who is fearful.
 - c. God wants people who will stand up for Him no matter what the situation.
 - 2. There were still too many so he was told to march them to water and those that put their faces into the water were told to go home.
 - 3. God said with 300 men I will save Israel.
 - a. This shows God wants right attitudes not necessarily great multitudes.
 - b. God can do great things with few people.
- C. God then allowed Gideon to be strengthened by hearing the interpretation of a Midianite soldier's dream.
 - 1. Gideon got to hear he wins, which gave him courage.
 - 2. As we read through the New Testament, we ought to get the message that Christians win.
 - 3. This should give us great courage to face the enemies of God and to do His will in all things.
- D. Gideon then worshiped God.
 - 1. He realized God was with him and he praised God for it.
 - 2. Knowing that we win and that God is with us ought to cause us to serve and worship God with the best of our abilities.

IV. **Midian's Destruction (7:16-25).**

- A. Gideon came back to the camp and divided the soldiers into 3 groups.
- B. Gideon told them "look on me and do likewise."

1. Gideon led by example.
 2. We need elders to stand up and lead this way.
- C. Gideon gives them the plan and they go out and defeat the Midianites.
1. What if they had changed God's plan?
 2. God has given us a plan and it works as long as we don't tamper with it.