

Lesson IX.

GIDEON AND THE THREE HUNDRED

November 30, 1902

Judges 7: 1-8. Study Judges 7: 1-8; 16-21. Commit to memory vs. 19-21.

Read Judges, chs. 6-8.

1 Then Jerubba'al, who is Gid'eon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And the Lord said unto Gid'eon, 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 Gil'ead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4 And the Lord said unto Gid'eon, 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

Revised Version—1 Spring; 2 Camp; 3 Midian.

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 Gid'eon, Every one that lappedeth 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 Gid'eon, 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.

8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

EXPLANATION

Connection—This lesson is nearly 200 years after the death of Joshua. For seven years the Midianites had been sweeping everything before them, and Gideon was called of God as deliverer, ch. 6: 1-16. He cut down the grove of Baal, summoned an army, received a sign of victory from God (6: 25-40), and then he was ready to begin the great fight.

1. **Jerubba'al**; a name given to Gideon in connection with the incident of 6: 25-32. It means let Baal plead. **Gideon**; that is, "Cutter-down." Read 6: 11-16. **All the people**; whom he had summoned to fight the Midianites (6: 34, 35), 32,000 in all, ch. 7: 3. **The well of Harod**; at the foot of Mount Gilboa. It is rather a fountain than a well, and is said to be 150 feet in circumference, and with a stream strong enough to turn a mill. The name means "Place-of-terror" and may have been derived from the events of the lesson. **The Midianites**; descendants of Midian, the son of Abraham and Keturah, Gen. 25: 1, 2. They crossed the Jordan in great numbers (ch. 7: 12), sweeping the rich valleys of flocks, herds and grain, while the Hebrews sought refuge in the hills, 6: 1-6. **The hill of Moreh**; perhaps little Hermon, two or three miles north of Gilboa. **The valley**; of Jezreel. The armies faced each other two or three miles apart.

2. **The Lord said**. It was He who was directing the battle. **The people are too many**; 32,000 (v. 3) to face 135,000 (ch. 8: 10). We would not have said so; but God said so, and He knew. **Vaunt themselves**; as having gained the victory by their own power.

3, 4 **Whosoever is fearful**. The timid might discourage others, Numt. 20: 8. The small number, too, would prevent all boasting. **Mount Gil'ead**; perhaps a slip of the pen in transcribing Mount Gilboa. **Yet too many**; a strong test of Gideon's faith. **The water**; the fountain of Harod. (See on v. 1.) **Try them**; test them. The word is that used for refining metals by separating the dross from the pure ore.

5, 6 **Everyone that lappeth**; snatching a little

water with his hand and throwing it into his mouth as he hurried on, like a thirsty dog. **That boweth down**; stooping to drink and thereby losing time. The former showed alertness, activity, eager determination to reach the foe; the latter showed a lack of these qualities.

7, 8 **The Lord said unto Gideon**; to strengthen his faith (v. 10) which was sorely tried. **By the**



Trumpet, Pitcher and Lamp

three hundred, etc. God can save by few, but they must be of the stuff that makes heroes. **So the people took victuals, etc.** The meaning seems to be that they took the victuals, trumpets and torches (v. 16) of those who went home; so that each man was fully provided.

16-21 The same night (v. 9) they surrounded the camp, each one bearing a light concealed in his pitcher, a sort of dark lantern. At a given signal the pitchers were broken. Then the blast of the trumpets and the flashing of the lights on all sides of the camp, led the Midianites to believe that a great host was upon them, and they fled in confusion, each one, in panic, turning his sword against his fellow.