

# **Judges 7:9-15 - Encouragement from God**

Gill, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Handfuls, Henry, Pulpit, Geneva, Poole, Trapp, Delitzsch, Barnes, Clarke, JFB, INT  
Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Now you are a Christian. Praise God for that. But surely you are aware of your weaknesses, weaknesses that can hinder your ability to fulfil your tasks as a Christian, tasks like raising godly children when the world is consistently fighting against you...or tasks like promoting God's truth in an antagonistic world and with indifferent churches...or tasks like being a godly wife when you have a stubborn or a non-Christian husband?

One way that some respond when they face their inabilities to fulfill their God-given task is to hide and say, "It is too much for me." But that is not what God has called you to do. Your task is much bigger. You are called to bring glory to your Lord. So because the Lord knows your weaknesses, and because he desires his glory, he then equips you with everything you need for the task. One of the biggest needs you have is for encouragement. This was true with Gideon. Today you will hear how God encouraged Gideon for his task.

Our headings are:

**God Encouraged Gideon by Revelation**

**God Encouraged Gideon by his Friend**

**God Encouraged Gideon by Providence**

Our goals are: **That as you are strengthened by encouragement for your spiritual tasks, you will bring much glory to him, and you will be a great help for your Christian brothers.**

## **God Encouraged Gideon by his Revelation**

9 It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for **I have delivered it into your hand.**

**1. Gideon might have worried about the future - his future and Israel's future - with only a handful of men, so the Lord came and directly reassured him of victory and encouraged him to get ready for battle.** It seems that the Lord spoke to him in a dream. **And when God speaks, it gives confidence.** Who trusts when a politician speaks? History students might remember the President Nixon of the US saying on television that he was not a crook and then soon after he was proven to be a crook! But when his heavenly Father, with whom there is not a shadow of turning, spoke, Gideon gained confidence.

**2. Isn't this the kind of battle that is best, the kind in which you are assured of victory?** This assurance of victory doesn't make the Christian lazy or worried. The Christian knows he will win so he is ready to fight. He could focus where God assures victory. You have seen that that numbers didn't matter to God. God could use many or few. He blessed David with 600 men, but ignored Saul with his tens of thousands. So the outcome of the battle is determined by God – not men. Furthermore, victory is not determined by how men determine victory. God determines victory as whatever gives him the glory.

**And what is your greatest battle and how are you encouraged?** It is your battle with Devil, the world, and your flesh. And God has determined that you will win. And he assures you of this through revelation!

**1John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

**3. With the encouragement from his heavenly Father in his heart, the Lord then told Gideon to go down to the valley.**

Gideon could not win on the mountain top. Gideon had to go where the battle was, the valley. He had to claim God's promise. (You pray: Give us this day our daily bread, but you have to work for it.) There is an interesting point here. **It is always easy to trust God on the figurative mountain top – when things are going well, but to show he truly believe God, Gideon had to put his faith in to practice. God's encouragement had to move Gideon to trust and obedience.**

## **God Encouraged Gideon by his Friend**

10 "But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant,

**1. You would think that the direct command of God, accompanied with all the miracles God did before, would have been sufficient for Gideon to go down to battle the Midianites. But God was much kinder. God offered more encouragement to Gideon.** God offered Purah to go with him as a company. Purah was probably Gideon's armor bearer, a man he trusted dearly. **And what a comfort to go to into dangerous places with a friend!**

**Proverbs 17:17 A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.**

**And how greatly God rewarded Purah!** He was a servant, but kings and queens have had his name on their lips for over 3000 years! It was an honor for a servant!

## **2. Today, God continues to be a support for you in your tasks directly.**

Companionship.

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; **Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

Matthew 24:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and **lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**" Amen.

Comestibles (food).

Psalm 37:25 I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his **descendants begging bread.**

Confidence.

Acts 1:8 "But you shall **receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;** and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

## **3. Today, God continues to support you through his people.**

Galatians 6:2 **Bear one another's burdens,** and so fulfill the law of Christ.

1Thessalonians 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

a. Parents encourage you and support you.

b. Pastor and elders of the church encourage you for the task.

c. Members of the church promise help to each other and make a vow to assist you. And even if you help someone in a seemingly small way, God notices. No good work ever goes unnoticed.

d. Or you may have a mature Christian person on whom you call when you have challenges and need encouragement.

11 "and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be **strengthened** to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

## **4. Then God gave further evidence to strengthen Gideon faith in battle.** "Strengthened" means "armed." God would "arm" Gideon. Gideon would hear something that the Midianites would **say and be armed for battle. The words would be stronger than a sword!** So encouraged, Gideon went with his servant to the Midianite camp.

## **God Encouraged Gideon by his Providence**

12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.

### **1. Gideon looked down and saw that the Midianites, Amalekites, and Arabians were like locusts or grasshoppers.** And their camels which were transporting supplies and products of their robbery of Israel were like sand on the seashore. This was hyperbole of course, but you get the point: The enemy were many, and their supplies were much. So God graciously gave **them even more encouragement**...clear providential encouragement that even the blind could see.

13 And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a **loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian;** it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed." 14 Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the **sword of Gideon** the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

### **2. Providence 1. The Midianites had so much contempt for Israel, they don't even need to bother to have guards, so Gideon and Purah were able to come right next to their camp.** That allowed them to hear the people speak words that would assure them that God would turn over the Midianites to them.

### **3. Providence 2. As Gideon and his servant came near to the Midianite camp, they heard one Midianite talking to his companion about a dream he had.** There were 135,000 soldiers there, but they came next to the 2 who were talking.

### **4. Providence 3. And how remarkable that they were able to understand the language of these two Midianites. There were** many languages at the time and to come near and hear someone speaking the Jewish language was remarkable.

### **5. Providence 4. The Midianite man had a dream.** Men have many dreams, but this dream was sent and controlled by God. Look the dream and the interpretation! **In this dream the Midianite saw a loaf of barley bread tumble into the Midianite camp and completely destroyed the whole Midianite camp.** The man's companion identified Gideon as the barely loaf of bread. **The dreamer's friend interpreted the whole dream as evidence that God would deliver**

**the whole 135,000 Midianite army in to Gideon's hand.** This surely was the providential work of God. **Gideon knew he only made barley cakes when the Lord Jesus had appeared to him.** So can you imagine what this must have meant to Gideon? **He realized that the battle wasn't his but the Lord's.** After all, barely bread was the most ordinary – the cheapest kind of bread that was used to feed the poor, and yet, God was pleased to use a barley loaf of bread to destroy the mighty Midianite army. **The barley loaf of bread became a powerful sword.**

**Judges 6:15** So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."

The fact that he had 300 men while the opposition had 135,000 didn't matter. His faith was strengthened by the reminder that the Lord could save with many or by few.

**6. The Bible spoke of another Bread-the Bread of Life-who himself was not much to look at-wasn't remarkable-from the backward side of Israel-who would become a Sword.** That Sword would bring destruction to the wicked and life to the righteous. And wouldn't this same Sword use a few men – not even 300 – but 12 – who would turn the world upside down? And what did those men use? They used the **Sword of the Spirit, or the Word of God.**

**This same Bread of Life continues to use you with his Sword to accomplish great things for him.**

**1Corinthians 1:27** But God has chosen **the foolish things of the world** to put to shame the wise, and God has **chosen the weak things of the world** to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and **the base things of the world** and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the **things which are not,** to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. **31** that, as it is written, "**He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.**"

15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and **its interpretation,** that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "**Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.**"

**7. What was Gideon's response to his strengthened faith? ("Interpretation" means "the cracking open" as in a nut to expose the kernel.)**

**a. Worship!** Worship is your primary duty as Christians.

**b. Word!** He then announced with confidence that God would give the Midianites into his hand. (Purah would have been an eye-witness or an ear-witness.)

**c. Work!** And when the people of Israel saw their leader's faith in God's promises, they too got ready for battle.

**8. There is always the tendency to think that God has or will abandon you when you go through your rough and tough times...** times of weakness and doubts. Maybe you have been abandoned or you have abandoned someone and think God is like that. But that is not how it is with God.

**Philippians 1:6** being confident of this very thing, that **He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

## **Conclusion:**

God encouraged Gideon by revelation, speaking to him directly. God encouraged Gideon by his friend who accompanied him. God encouraged Gideon by providence, showing him that victory was his!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**Your Bread of Life who became the Sword of God conquered all your enemies – sin, death, and hell on the cross.**

Now **he leads you out to conquer the challenges you face today** for your good and his glory. *Luke 1:76* "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, 77 To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins..."

**What are some of those challenges?** You have a kingdom to build. You have to raise godly seed. You have to live as a light in this world. You have to face wickedness at work.

**So how do you fight?** You go out as the fed...not as weak starving children. You go out in faith, not with fear. You go with friends, not with foes. Your challenges don't stand a chance. That's what he has saved you to do.

Finally, if you are not a Christian you are trapped in sin and destined for hell. Only Jesus Christ can set you free. Will you call on him today to take away your sins and give you liberty from the tyranny of sin?