

Too Much for God

We say that God is supremely powerful and sovereign. We say God can do all things. This is true. At the same time, this text of Judges indicates that there are some things that just might be too much for God. In this story of Gideon, the enemy was not too great for God, but Gideon's forces were too much from God's perspective.

Gideon found himself in a tight place with the rest of his nation. There were many people who had come to his land to take away all the agricultural produce. They were not fools, for they waited until the fields had been harvested, taking the fruit of the Hebrews' labor. When God's word came to Gideon, he thought that what he could do against a Midianite army of 130,000 waiting to steal the Hebrews harvest was insignificant.

When Gideon finally found the confidence to confront this army, God told him he was counting on too many warriors. From 33,000 initial soldiers, God left Gideon with only 300. One soldier against four would give the Hebrews too much advantage. But God was not satisfied. God also considered one against thirteen as too much advantage. On getting down to what we would consider an absurd ratio of one against over 430, God was satisfied. There would be no option now other than trusting in the action and power of God.

Gideon would not be the one to obtain victory over the Midianites. The victory would be solely Yahweh's, God of Israel. With risky numbers of one against four, it would be possible for the people to think the Hebrews warriors were very bold. Reduced to one against 430, they would have to recognize God's hand. It is in the difficulties like this that God is seen to be present. When life is easy and simply a little risky, it is too much for God. God likes us to truly trust in what God alone can accomplish. Anything else is just too much for God.

—*Christopher B. Harbin*

Judges 7:1-9

¹ Early the next morning, Gideon and his army got up and moved their camp to Fear Spring. The Midianite camp was to the north, in the valley at the foot of Moreh Hill. ²The LORD said, "Gideon, your army is too big. I can't let you win with this many soldiers. The Israelites would think that they had won the battle all by themselves and that I didn't have anything to do with it.

³So call your troops together and tell them that anyone who is really afraid can leave Mount Gilead and go home." Twenty-two thousand men returned home, leaving Gideon with only ten thousand soldiers.

⁴"Gideon," the LORD said, "you still have too many soldiers. Take them down to the spring and I'll test them. I'll tell you which ones can go along with you and which ones must go back home."

⁵When Gideon led his army down to the spring, the LORD told him, "Watch how each man gets a drink of water. Then divide them into two groups--those who lap the water like a dog and those who kneel down to drink."

⁶Three hundred men scooped up water in their hands and lapped it, and the rest knelt to get a drink. ⁷The LORD said, "Gideon, your army will be made up of everyone who lapped the water from their hands. Send the others home. I'm going to rescue Israel by helping you and your army of three hundred defeat the Midianites."

⁸Then Gideon gave these orders, "You three hundred men stay here. The rest of you may go home, but leave your food and trumpets with us." Gideon's army camp was on top of a hill overlooking the Midianite camp in the valley.

⁹That night, the LORD said to Gideon. "Get up! Attack the Midianite camp. I am going to let you defeat them. (CEV)