

## **HOLY VIOLENCE #8**

### **There Is An Army Rising Up**

#### **I. Introduction**

I may be the oldest person in the room and I have to say that there has never been a more difficult time than what we've all been walking through this past year.

Moving forward we need to be like the men of Issachar...

#### **1 Chronicles 12:32**

**The men of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel ought to do.**

As I asked the Lord what to share with you He said, "There's an army rising up" and that it would look like...

#### **Theme**

**The story of Gideon's army paints a powerful prophetic picture of the spiritual army that God is raising up in America today.**

The story is found in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> chapters of the Book of Judges and I want to show you 5 things that will earmark this army...

#### **There's An Army Rising Up**

**An army for such a time as this**

**An army with unlikely new leadership**

**A small army but qualified and selected by God Himself**

**An army equipped with supernatural weapons**

**An army destined for total victory!**

I want to look at each of these earmarks each in turn.

#### **I. 5 Earmarks of the Army Rising Up**

##### **A. First: It Will Be An Army 'For Such a Time As This'**

1. The story of Gideon's army is in the Book of Judges, one of the bloodiest, most violent books in the Bible.

2. Bible scholars agree that there is a clear spiritual cycle set forth in the Book regarding the nation of Israel:

### **CYCLES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES**

- God's people would Sin
  - God would judge them with Punishment-they would suffer at the hands of their enemies
    - The people would Repent and cry out to God
  - God would send Deliverance by the ministry of the Judges
    - There would be a season of Peace
    - Then the nation would slip back into Sin again
- THIS CYCLE IS REPEATED 6 TIMES!**

a. You might want to memorize this cycle because it is still the way that God deals with His people! (Corporately and Individually)

3. Make no mistake. When a nation founded by God turns away from God, God will allow that nation to suffer the consequences for a season-until they repent and cry out to Him. And He always answered them with deliverance.

b. But Israel did this *Six times*? Why could Israel not stay in peace and prosperity?

3. The answer is found in the last verse of the Book, which reveals the prevailing attitude in the nation and why they kept falling back into sin and coming under judgment.

### **Judges 21:25**

**In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did that which was right in his own eyes.**

a. 'No King' means there was no final authority; no objective truth; no place of appeal. The result of this kind of condition is moral anarchy.

b. "Everyone did that which was right in his own eyes". This means that when there is no authority, no final word, no objective truth-the result will be *moral anarchy*.

### **Matthew Henry**

**Though God was their King, every man decided to be his own master, as if there was no king.**

2. God judged Israel because they rejected His Holy Law Word and replaced it with their own opinion. Where a nation (or an individual) refuses to honor God's law he will become a law unto himself.

a. This is why the great Russian novelist said...

**Fyodor Dostoevsky**

**“If there is no God, everything is permissible.”**

b. If there is no king, no God, no objective truth, no higher law, everyone will do what is right in his own eyes.

3. This spiritual atmosphere of the Book of Judges is where we are today in America; God has been pushed aside and men are doing ‘what is right in their own eyes’.

a. And there may be more to come. Why?

4. **The latest elections have given our nation into the hands of those who are committed to the humanistic policies of Marxist socialism, which is an atheistic system by definition.**

a. History teaches us that in a pure socialist/Marxist political system, there is no God. To them, there is no God, so they will do what is right ‘in their own eyes.’ This has already arisen in our own country. Examples:

**Judges 21:25 in America**

- God says, “Abortion” is murder; but *in their eyes* it is a woman’s ‘right to choose (The new President fully supports abortion)
- God says, ‘Homosexuality’ is a sin; but *in their eyes* it is an acceptable alternate lifestyle. (The new Secretary of Transportation is a practicing homosexual married to a man)
- God says He ‘created’ us male and female; but *in their eyes* you may be trapped in the wrong body. (The new President says he is OK with giving 8-year-olds the legal right to decide which gender they are)
- Jesus said, ‘No man comes to the Father but by Me’; but *in their eyes* there are ‘many paths to God’.

5. The prophet Isaiah described what happens in a nation that turns away from God to ‘do what is right in its own eyes’. Does this sound familiar?

**Isaiah 59:14-15 NLT**

**Our courts oppose the righteous, and justice is nowhere to be found. Truth stumbles in the streets, and honesty has been outlawed.**

**Yes, truth is gone, and anyone who renounces evil is attacked.**

a. The prophet is telling us that when these conditions exist, anyone who speaks out against evil will come under attack.

b. The Apostle Paul said the same thing in the New Testament:

**2 Timothy 3:12-13**

**Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.**

6. It is describing a time when there is a suppression of free speech; when people who tell the truth about sin will become a target.

a. This is already happening on the Social Media platforms; where Christian posts are taken down.

b. But the real attack in the coming days will be against the Church; and this is how they will do it. They will seek to shut down churches who renounce evil as ‘hate speech’.

**Biblical Responses to These Questions**  
**Will Be Considered “Hate Speech”**

**Is abortion murder? Yes!**

**(They will say that is hate speech against women’s rights)**

**• Is homosexuality a sin? Yes!**

**(They will say that is homophobic hate speech against gay people)**

**• Is transgenderism a sin? Yes!**

**(Joe Biden says he is OK with an 8-year-old deciding to change their gender.)**

**• Is Christ the only way to salvation? Yes!**

**(This will be considered hate-speech toward other religious faiths)**

7. They used the China virus as an excuse to shut down the economy; they will use the label of ‘hate speech’ to shut down the Church.

**The bad news is that we are living in the days of Judges. The good news is that God raises up an army ‘for such a time as this’!**

8. The second thing to see is that...

**There's An Army Rising Up**

**An army for such a time as this  
An army with unlikely new leadership...**

**B. Gideon: An Unlikely Leader**

**Judges 6:11-12**

**Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!"**

1, The Midianites had overrun the land; they were oppressing Israel and stealing their harvests. Gideon is threshing wheat, not on the high places of the threshing floor but in the lowlands by the winepress. He's in hiding! (He's like a 'closet Christian'; hiding his light under a bushel)

2. But the Angel of the Lord appears to him and speaks a prophetic word, calling him a 'mighty man of valor'! God is with him.

**Judges 6:13**

**Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."**

a. It is fascinating that Gideon does not question that he is a 'mighty man of valor', even though up to now there is no record that he has done anything to earn the title! He is questioning why God is not working miracles.

b. This is a prophetic picture of what God will be doing soon with some of you who have been hiding in a closet; He is going to call you out to a place you've never been before!

**Judges 6:14-16**

**Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"**

**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."  
And the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."**

3. Here we have the secret of Gideon's might: God had sent him and God was with him. This is all he needed-and it is all we need! Amen.

Review

### **There Is An Army Rising Up**

- For such a time as this
- With unlikely new leadership
- Small, but qualified and chosen by God Himself

### **C. The Army Rising Up Will be Small But Qualified and Selected by God Himself**

1. The Bible tells us the Midianites were as numerous as locusts and had flooded the land to the point where God's people were greatly outnumbered.

2. Gideon went to war outnumbered more than 4 to 1; Gideon raised an army of 32,000 soldiers to face the Midianite army of 135,000. Then God says a most amazing thing...

### **Judges 7:2 GWT**

**The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many men with you for me to hand Midian over to you. Israel might brag and say, 'We saved ourselves.'**

**NKJV: 'My own hand has saved me.'**

**NASB-they saved themselves by their own strength.**

a. God was not concerned about the battle; He had already promised Gideon the victory!

b. But He was concerned that Gideon and his men would award the glory to themselves and fall into pride.

### **W.W. Duncan**

**Pride hurled Satan from heaven and turned angels into devils. Pride drove Adam out of paradise and barred its gates against his posterity. Pride of intellect, pride of family, pride of wealth, pride of power, are adamant chains, which bind men in fetters of sin. Boasting and vainglory are inherent to fallen nature.**

c. But God will keep Gideon from the sin of pride and retain all the glory for himself by reducing the size of the army.

d. Testimony: We would do well to remember this lesson in living for Jesus; the Lord will often deplete our resources to drive us to greater dependance upon Him!

3. Apply this principle to our own day: **We feel overwhelmed by what's happened in Washington;** the oppression of socialist system may come upon us from the Oval Office, both houses of Congress, the mainstream news media and the social platforms like Facebook and Twitter. We feel overwhelmed and outnumbered. Our natural minds think that we have to have superior numbers to win. But the Army God is raising up to defeat all this will be SMALL. It will be a REMNANT-those who believe God's word!

a. Moses said this to Israel:

**Leviticus 26:7-8**

**You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.**

b. Joshua said this to Israel about the great battles ahead:

**Joshua 23:9-10**

**For the Lord has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you.**

c. Later, Saul's army was vastly outnumbered; but his son Jonathan said this:

**1 Samuel 14:6**

**Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few."**

d. Do not be disheartened by being outnumbered!

**Joseph Parker in The Biblical Illustrator**

When did God ever complain of having too few people to work with? I have heard Him say, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I." I have heard Him say, "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight," But I never heard Him say, "You must get more men, or I cannot do this work; you must increase the human forces, or the Divine energy will not be equal to the occasion."

I hear Him say in the case before us, "Gideon, the people are too many by some thousands. If I were to fight the Midianites with so great a host, the people would say, after the victory had been won, 'My own hand hath saved me.'"

### **There Is An Army Rising Up**

- For such a time as this
- With unlikely new leadership
- Small, but qualified and selected by God Himself

#### **D. How God Qualifies the Army He is Raising Up**

1. The Midianites have 32,000; Gideon only has 32,000; and God tells him he has too many.

#### **Judges 7:2-3**

**And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'**

2. God is going to make the army smaller by means of a 2-step disqualification process. The first test is found in...

#### **Judges 7:3**

**Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.**

3. God says, "If you are fearful and afraid, I cannot use you!". And boom! Gideon loses 2/3 of his army!

#### **Matthew Henry**

**Fearful faint-hearted people are not fit to be employed for God; and, among those that are enlisted under the banner of Christ, there are more of the fearful and faint-hearted than we think there are.**

4. God is raising up an army. But over the past 12 months, God has been exposing and weeding out those He cannot use because they are afraid!

**a. It begins with Pastors and leaders** and the failure to preach the **truth**. In the face of the greatest political crisis in history, a George Barna survey revealed that 9 out of 10 American Christian pastors refuse to speak on political issues from their pulpits. Why? Fear of offending their people. Fear of losing finances. Fear of losing tax exemption. Thank God your Pastors are not afraid!

b. I live in Nashville—a “city of churches”—but many of them, some of our largest, shut down last spring and have still not reopened out of fear; fear of the virus; fear of the Mayor; fear of being seen as insensitive to public health. It is safe to say God will not include those churches in the army He’s raising up.

c. The fear of battle thinned out the army of Gideon...

**W.W. Duncan**

**This is a fitting occasion to consider the conduct of too many professed followers of Christ today, who are ready enough to cast in their lot with the Lord so long as there is no immediate appearance of suffering or of sacrifice for His name's sake, but who, the moment that real danger stares them in the face, take the earliest opportunity of slinking away and renouncing the principles to which they formerly said they upheld.**

**W.W. Duncan**

**Such disciples are totally unworthy of the name. They are not good soldiers of the Cross. They are devoid of the principles essential to success in the Christian warfare. They are mere "carpet knights," who "make a fair show in the flesh,". They flourish their trumpets and brandish their weapons when there is no foe with whom to contend but bate their breath and alter their whole tone and behavior whenever circumstances occur which put their sincerity to the proof.**

d. Let us not forget why it took Israel 40 years to make a 10 day trip from Egypt to the Promised Land; it was fear of a fight.

**Exodus 13:17-18 NLT**

**When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them along the main road that runs through Philistine territory, even though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land. God said, "If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." So God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness toward the Red Sea.**

4. The message is that the battle that is coming upon the church will not be won by those who are fearful and afraid!

- Fair-weather Christians
- Panty-waist pastors afraid of the government

5. God is going to separate the fearful from the faithful because those who are fearful make the faithful lose heart.

**Deuteronomy 20:8 NASB**

**"Then the officers shall speak further to the people, and they shall say, 'Who is the man that is afraid and fainthearted? Let him depart and return to his house, so that he might not make his brothers' hearts melt like his heart.'"**

**Deuteronomy 20:8-9 NLT**

**"Then the officers will also say, 'Is anyone here afraid or worried? If you are, you may go home before you frighten anyone else.'"**

6. Don't be disheartened in the days ahead to see many Christians shrink back from the battle ahead. It's part of the pattern.

b. We'll look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> test tomorrow...

### **III. Conclusion**

#### **A. Review**

1. We are living in a time so similar to the days of the Judges; there is no king and everyone is doing what is right in his own eyes.

2. God judged the backsliding of His people by allowing the Midianites to raid their fields and put them under oppression.

3. But for such a time as this, God raised up an army; and He will raise up a new expression of Gideon's army today. It will have unlikely leadership.

4. The fact we will feel to be outnumbered does not matter; in fact, it's part of God's plan...

#### **G.A. Rogers in The Biblical Illustrator**

**The reduction of external means may be God's way of giving success. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Be not discouraged, then, if God cut down numerical strength. What if 32,000 be reduced to 300? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" What are all the multitudes of Midian to the hosts of the Lord?**

5. As the modern Midianites begin to raid our fields and steal our crops every Christian will be tested for military service. God will choose those He can use. You may feel small and outnumbered. But I'll close with the words of Mark Twain...

#### **Mark Twain**

**"It's not the size of the dog in the fight; it's the size of the fight in the dog."**

#### **Closing Prayer**