

Saturday, April 27

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Judges 7:1 - 8:17

7 1 So Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon) and his army got up early and went as far as the spring of Harod. The armies of Midian were camped north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. **2** The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many warriors with you. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved themselves by their own strength. **3** Therefore, tell the people, ‘Whoever is timid or afraid may leave this mountain and go home.’” So 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were willing to fight. **4** But the LORD told Gideon, “There are still too many! Bring them down to the spring, and I will test them to determine who will go with you and who will not.” **5** When Gideon took his warriors down to the water, the LORD told him, “Divide the men into two groups. In one group put all those who cup water in their hands and lap it up with their tongues like dogs. In the other group put all those who kneel down and drink with their mouths in the stream.” **6** Only 300 of the men drank from their hands. All the others got down on their knees and drank with their mouths in the stream. **7** The LORD told Gideon, “With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home.” **8** So Gideon collected the provisions and rams’ horns of the other warriors and sent them home. But he kept the 300 men with him. The Midianite camp was in the valley just below Gideon. **9** That night the LORD said, “Get up! Go down into the Midianite camp, for I have given you victory over them! **10** But if you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah. **11** Listen to what the Midianites are saying, and you will be greatly encouraged. Then you will be eager to attack.” So Gideon took Purah and went down to the edge of the enemy camp. **12** The armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east had settled in the valley like a swarm of locusts. Their camels were like grains of sand on the seashore—too many to count! **13** Gideon crept up just as a man was telling his companion about a dream. The man said, “I had this dream, and in my dream a loaf of barley bread came tumbling down into the Midianite camp. It hit a tent, turned it over, and knocked it flat!” **14** His companion answered, “Your dream can mean only one thing—God has given Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite, victory over Midian and all its allies!” **15** When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship before the LORD. Then he returned to the Israelite camp and shouted, “Get up! For the LORD has given you victory over the Midianite hordes!” **16** He divided the 300 men into three groups and gave each man a ram’s horn and a clay jar with a torch in it. **17** Then he said to them, “Keep your eyes on me. When I

come to the edge of the camp, do just as I do. **18** As soon as I and those with me blow the rams' horns, blow your horns, too, all around the entire camp, and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon!'" **19** It was just after midnight, after the changing of the guard, when Gideon and the 100 men with him reached the edge of the Midianite camp. Suddenly, they blew the rams' horns and broke their clay jars. **20** Then all three groups blew their horns and broke their jars. They held the blazing torches in their left hands and the horns in their right hands, and they all shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" **21** Each man stood at his position around the camp and watched as all the Midianites rushed around in a panic, shouting as they ran to escape. **22** When the 300 Israelites blew their rams' horns, the LORD caused the warriors in the camp to fight against each other with their swords. Those who were not killed fled to places as far away as Beth-shittah near Zererah and to the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath. **23** Then Gideon sent for the warriors of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, who joined in chasing the army of Midian. **24** Gideon also sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down to attack the Midianites. Cut them off at the shallow crossings of the Jordan River at Beth-barah." So all the men of Ephraim did as they were told. **25** They captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two Midianite commanders, killing Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. And they continued to chase the Midianites. Afterward the Israelites brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan River.

8 1 Then the people of Ephraim asked Gideon, "Why have you treated us this way? Why didn't you send for us when you first went out to fight the Midianites?" And they argued heatedly with Gideon. **2** But Gideon replied, "What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren't even the leftover grapes of Ephraim's harvest better than the entire crop of my little clan of Abiezer? **3** God gave you victory over Oreb and Zeeb, the commanders of the Midianite army. What have I accomplished compared to that?" When the men of Ephraim heard Gideon's answer, their anger subsided. **4** Gideon then crossed the Jordan River with his 300 men, and though exhausted, they continued to chase the enemy. **5** When they reached Succoth, Gideon asked the leaders of the town, "Please give my warriors some food. They are very tired. I am chasing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian." **6** But the officials of Succoth replied, "Catch Zebah and Zalmunna first, and then we will feed your army." **7** So Gideon said, "After the LORD gives me victory over Zebah and Zalmunna, I will return and tear your flesh with the thorns and briars from the wilderness." **8** From there Gideon went up to Peniel and again asked for food, but he got the same answer. **9** So he said to the people of Peniel, "After I return in victory, I will tear down this tower." **10** By this time Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with about 15,000 warriors—all that remained of the allied armies of the east, for 120,000 had already been killed. **11** Gideon circled around by the caravan route east of Nobah and Jogbehah, taking the

Midianite army by surprise. **12** Zebah and Zalmunna, the two Midianite kings, fled, but Gideon chased them down and captured all their warriors. **13** After this, Gideon returned from the battle by way of Heres Pass. **14** There he captured a young man from Succoth and demanded that he write down the names of all the seventy-seven officials and elders in the town. **15** Gideon then returned to Succoth and said to the leaders, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna. When we were here before, you taunted me, saying, 'Catch Zebah and Zalmunna first, and then we will feed your exhausted army.'" **16** Then Gideon took the elders of the town and taught them a lesson, punishing them with thorns and briers from the wilderness. **17** He also tore down the tower of Peniel and killed all the men in the town.

Luke 23:13 - 43

23 **13** Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, **14** and he announced his verdict. "You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. **15** Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. **16** So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him." **17** **18** Then a mighty roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted, "Kill him, and release Barabbas to us!" **19** (Barabbas was in prison for taking part in an insurrection in Jerusalem against the government, and for murder.) **20** Pilate argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. **21** But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" **22** For the third time he demanded, "Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him." **23** But the mob shouted louder and louder, demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their voices prevailed. **24** So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded. **25** As they had requested, he released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he turned Jesus over to them to do as they wished. **26** As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. **27** A large crowd trailed behind, including many grief-stricken women. **28** But Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. **29** For the days are coming when they will say, 'Fortunate indeed are the women who are childless, the wombs that have not borne a child and the breasts that have never nursed.' **30** People will beg the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and plead with the hills, 'Bury us.' **31** For if these things are done when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?" **32** Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. **33** When

they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. **34** Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. **35** The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” **36** The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. **37** They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” **38** A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.” **39** One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!” **40** But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? **41** We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” **42** Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” **43** And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Psalm 97:1 - 98:9

97 1 The LORD is king! Let the earth rejoice! Let the farthest coastlands be glad. **2** Dark clouds surround him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. **3** Fire spreads ahead of him and burns up all his foes. **4** His lightning flashes out across the world. The earth sees and trembles. **5** The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. **6** The heavens proclaim his righteousness; every nation sees his glory. **7** Those who worship idols are disgraced— all who brag about their worthless gods— for every god must bow to him. **8** Jerusalem has heard and rejoiced, and all the towns of Judah are glad because of your justice, O LORD ! **9** For you, O LORD, are supreme over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. **10** You who love the LORD, hate evil! He protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the power of the wicked. **11** Light shines on the godly, and joy on those whose hearts are right. **12** May all who are godly rejoice in the LORD and praise his holy name!

98 1 Sing a new song to the LORD, for he has done wonderful deeds. His right hand has won a mighty victory; his holy arm has shown his saving power! **2** The LORD has announced his victory and has revealed his righteousness to every nation! **3** He has remembered his promise to love and be faithful to Israel. The ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. **4** Shout to the LORD, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy! **5** Sing your praise to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and melodious song, **6** with trumpets and the sound of the ram’s horn. Make a joyful symphony before the LORD, the King! **7** Let the sea and everything in it

shout his praise! Let the earth and all living things join in. **8** Let the rivers clap their hands in glee! Let the hills sing out their songs of joy **9**before the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with fairness.

Proverbs 14:7 - 8

14 7 Stay away from fools, for you won't find knowledge on their lips. **8** The prudent understand where they are going, but fools deceive themselves.