

INHOSPITABLE NEIGHBORS

Gideon's war strategy left 120,000 soldiers of the coalition army dead (8:10). Note Gideon's war strategy for success against 450 to 1 odds - "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hands." (7:9). "The Lord set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army." (7:22)

The Lord reduced the coalition army from 135,000 to 15,000 in this one battle. 120,000 coalition soldiers died while NOT ONE of Gideon's 300 died. The Lord reduced the battle odds to 50 to 1.

In today's lesson, Gideon's 300 are engaged in a mop-up of the remaining 15,000 soldiers who were mostly Sons of the East (8:10). Gideon's 300 chased them across the Jordan River and through the territory of the Tribe of Gad as the Sons of East headed back home.

Gideon's 300 were advancing so quickly that logistical support couldn't keep up with them. Gideon wasn't concerned about it because he felt confident that he would get logistical support from the HOSPITALITY of the tribe of Gad.

Gideon appealed to Succoth, the first city of Gad but they refused him HOSPITALITY. So he appealed to Penuel, the second city of Gad, who likewise refused him HOSPITALITY.

**We will study these two cities of Gad as INHOSPITABLE NEIGHBORS
Who refused to give Gideon's army logistical support to win a decisive victory over the coalition army.**

1. Gideon's army was moving so quickly against the coalition army that they were become weary from weariness.

Two Hebrew words reflect some logistical problems resulting from such a swift defeat of the enemy on the battlefield: weary (yaeph / dog-tired / 8:4,5,15) and pursue (radaph / mop-up campaign / 8:4,5,12). Note how these two words are connected in our lesson.

Gideon needed HOSPITABLE logistical support from the tribe of Gad to put the deathblow to the enemy.

2. Gideon's first appeal was to the city of Succoth (booth or shelter). This city had a famous place in patriarch history (Gen.33:17).

Jacob named it Succoth after finding emergency shelter when fleeing from Esau who had become his enemy (Gen.33). Certainly Succoth of all people would offer him emergency shelter hospitality.

Their famous brass foundries produced the brass used in the Temple (1 Kings 7:46; 2 Chron.4:17).

It is not to confused with the Succoth of the Exodus (Ex.12:37; 13:20; Num.33:5).

Gideon disciplined the city officials severely on his way home for refusing hospitality (Judges 8:5-7, 15-16).

3. Gideon's second appeal was to the city of Penuel (face of God). It too had a famous patriarch history associated with it (Gen.32:24-32).

Jacob also named it after wrestling with the Lord and His will after fleeing from Esau (Gen. 32:30). Certainly a city with this rich biblical history would offer hospitality and the logistical support Gideon and his weary army needed.

It was located about 5 miles east from Succoth on the Jabbor River.

Gideon killed the city officials and tore down their tower of defense on his return home (Judges 8:8-9, 17). This defense tower was rebuilt by King Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25).

4. Gideon's army of 300 wasn't equipped for such a swift and lengthy pursuit of a routed enemy 50 miles from the original battlefield.

However, he felt confident that he would be given hospitality by the tribe of Gad. "Gideon doubtless expected to obtain supplies from the Israelite tribes situated eastward of the Jordan. In this he was disappointed, for the citizens of Succoth and Penuel refused to assist him, considering it expedient not to lay themselves open to reprisals from the sons of the East." (Judges by A.E.Cundall, pg.116)

There was not only a lack of grace HOSPITALITY but also a lack of national PATRIOTISM. Israelite tribes east of the Jordan often felt disenfranchised from those on the west. But this wasn't their complaint and it should not have prevented grace HOSPITALITY. They stated their refusal as fear of reprisal – "**Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hands, that we should give bread to your army?**" (8:6)

Notice that Gideon had harsh words for them as INHOSPITABLE NEIGHBORS while he had gentle words to tribe of Ephraim who offered military support to the war (8:2-3, 7-9).

5. Patriarch period introduced the doctrine of grace hospitality (Gen.24: 23-27, 31-33).

"The alien has not lodged outside, for I have opened my doors to the traveler." (Job 31:32)

Grace hospitality was offered as a duty to the traveler. The host treated the traveler with a servant mentality because he never knew if he would entertain angels unaware (Gen.18:1-8).

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Heb.13:2) (Judges 6:12-24; 13:6-21)

6. Grace hospitality became a sacred duty of honor in the priest-nation of Israel because of their national freedom given to them by the grace of God in the Exodus (Ex.22:21; 23:9; Lev.19:34; 25:35).

It was and is felt to be a sacred duty to receive, feed, lodge, and protect any traveler who might stop at the door." (Unger, pg.502)

7. The church age believer is instructed to be hospitable in the name of Jesus (Matt.25:35; Mark 9:41).

- Rom.12: 3 – Practice hospitality (philoxenia / love of strangers).
- 1 Pet.4:9 – Be hospitable to one another without complaint.
- 2 John 10-11 – Don't extend it to those in reversionism.
- 1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:8 – Qualification of ordination of minister
- 1 Tim.5:9-10 – Qualification of supporting a widow (xenodocheo / receive stranger)