

Judges 7:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host.

Analysis

Gideon and Phurah descend to the 'armed men that were in the host'—literally the 'extremity of the armed men' (qetseh hachamushim, קֶצֶה הַחֲמֻשִּׁים), suggesting they approached the outer perimeter where guards were posted. This was the most dangerous position—nearest to sentries and fighting men. Their willingness to approach this close demonstrates growing courage despite fear. The positioning sets up the providentially-timed dream conversation they're about to overhear.

Historical Context

Military camps in the ancient Near East arranged forces with elite troops or guards on the perimeter for security. The 'armed men' were likely the professional warriors or best-equipped soldiers rather than the general mass of raiders. Camp perimeters posted watches through the night in shifts, with guards responsible for detecting approaching enemies. That Gideon could approach close enough to overhear conversation suggests either inadequate security or divine blinding of the guards.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Gideon's obedience despite fear demonstrate that courage isn't absence of fear but action despite it?
2. What does approaching the enemy's strongest position teach about confronting spiritual battles at their source rather than peripherally?
3. How does having a faithful companion (Phurah) parallel the principle of going two-by-two in ministry (Luke 10:1, Mark 6:7)?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁמַעְתָּ	מֶה	יֹדְבֵי רוּ	וְאַחֵר	תִּתְּחוּ קֹזֶה		
And thou shalt hear	H4100	what they say	and afterward	be strengthened		
H8085		H1696	H310	H2388		
יָדְךָ	וַיֵּרֶד	בַּמַּחֲנֶה:	וַיֵּרֶד			
shall thine hands	Then went he down	that were in the host	Then went he down			
H3027	H3381	H4264	H3381			
הוא	וּפְכָה	נַעֲרֹ	אֶל	קִצֵּה הַ	הַחֲמִשָּׁה יָם	אֲשֶׁר ר
H1931	with Phurah	his servant	H413	unto the outside	of the armed men	H834
	H6513	H5288		H7097	H2571	
בַּמַּחֲנֶה:						
that were in the host						
H4264						

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 6:10 (Parallel theme): Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Exodus 13:18 (Parallel theme): But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

Genesis 24:14 (Parallel theme): And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

1 Samuel 23:16 (Parallel theme): And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

Ezra 6:22 (Parallel theme): And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

Philippians 4:13 (Parallel theme): I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.