

Judges 7:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.

Analysis

Gideon divides the 300 into three companies and equips each man with a trumpet and an empty pitcher with torch inside. This unconventional armament—no swords, spears, or shields mentioned—reveals the coming strategy's psychological nature. Three companies allowed coordinated attacks from multiple directions, creating impression of encirclement. The empty pitchers concealing torches enabled simultaneous revelation of light—the breaking pitchers would create startling noise while revealing numerous lights, suggesting a massive attacking force. The trumpets added auditory chaos. This creative strategy demonstrates Spirit-guided wisdom.

Historical Context

Dividing forces into three companies was standard tactics for night attacks (Judges 9:43, 1 Samuel 11:11, Job 1:17), enabling multi-directional assault and confusion. Trumpet signals coordinated actions across separated units. Torches were made of oil-soaked rags on sticks or hollow reeds filled with combustible material. The pottery pitchers (earthenware jars) would shatter loudly when smashed, creating additional noise to complement the trumpet blasts. The strategy maximized psychological impact through coordinated sound and light.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Gideon's unconventional strategy demonstrate the importance of Spirit-guided creativity over conventional methods?
2. What does the empty pitcher concealing light symbolize about God's power hidden in humble vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7)?
3. When has God called you to use unexpected methods that seemed foolish by worldly standards?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּדְּחַ	אֶת	שְׁלֹשׁ הַ	מֵא	וְת	הָאִישׁ	שְׁלֹשׁ הַ	כָּאִשׁ יִם
And he divided	H853	into three	hundred	men	into three	companies	
H2673		H7969	H3967	H376	H7969	H7218	
וַיִּתֵּן	שׁוֹפָר	וְת	בְּיַד	כָּלֵם	הַכִּדִּים:	רִיק יִם	
and he put	a trumpet	in every man's hand		H3605	pitchers	with empty	
H5414	H7782	H3027			H3537	H7386	
וּלְפָדִים	בְּתוֹךְ	הַכִּדִּים:					
and lamps	within	pitchers					
H3940	H8432	H3537					

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 4:7 (Parallel theme): But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.