

Judges 7:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

Analysis

God instructs Gideon to observe how soldiers drink from the water: 'every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.' The test distinguishes drinking methods—lapping water quickly with hands to mouth while standing alert versus kneeling to drink directly from the water. The dog comparison emphasizes the first group's alertness—maintaining surveillance while refreshing themselves. This test identifies warriors combining necessary rest with continuous vigilance.

Historical Context

Armies on campaign required regular water access, especially in Palestine's heat. How soldiers drank revealed their tactical awareness and discipline. Those who knelt to drink directly placed themselves in vulnerable positions—difficult to rise quickly if attacked, obscured vision, incapable of immediate defense. Those who scooped water to their mouths while standing maintained readiness to fight instantly. Ancient military leaders valued such tactical awareness in selecting elite troops.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the drinking test illustrate the importance of spiritual alertness even during necessary refreshment and rest?
2. What practices help Christians remain spiritually vigilant during legitimate recreation and relaxation?
3. Why does effective spiritual warfare require combining needful rest with sustained watchfulness?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּרֵד	אֶת	הָעָם	אֵל	הַמַּיִם	וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה
So he brought down	H853	the people	H413	of the water	said	and the LORD
H3381		H5971		H4325	H559	H3068
אֵל	גִּדְעוּ	כָּל	אֲשֶׁר	יֵלֵק	בְּלִשׁוֹנוֹ	מִן
H413	unto Gideon	H3605	H834	Every one that lappeth	with his tongue	H4480
	H1439			H3952	H3956	
הַמַּיִם	בְּאֶשֶׁר	יֵלֵק	הֵכָּל	תִּצָּג		
of the water	H834	Every one that lappeth	as a dog	him shalt thou set		
H4325		H3952	H3611	H3322		
אוֹתוֹ	לִבָּד	וְכָל	אֲשֶׁר	יִכְרַע		עַל
H853	H905	H3605	H834	by himself likewise every one that boweth down		H5921
				H3766		
בִּרְכָּיו	לִשְׁתּוֹת:					
upon his knees	to drink					
H1290	H8354					

