

**John Stott: 'Now you and I are very weak. I wish that sometimes we were weaker.'**  
**God's power made perfect in weakness.** Out-of-our-depth. Under pressure. Wits End!  
**I am with you.** God offer Himself. ***'To have God is to have all, though bereft of everything. To be destitute of God is to be bereft of everything, though having all.'***

(F.B.Meyer).

**Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.** 7:1 Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him, rose early and camped beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley."The LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.' 7:3 "Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.'" So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained.

Gideon's army was outmanned by his eastern enemies. The Midianites camped in the strategic Valley of Jezreel, expecting to execute mayhem and misery. **The number of Midianite led troops was 135 000 men (8:10-11)** compared to Gideon's mere 32,000 soldiers - a ratio of 4:1. Few battles are ever won against such overwhelming odds.

7:2 The LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.' 7: "Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.'" **"Is any man afraid or faint hearted. Let him go home so that his brothers will not become disheartened too."** Deuteronomy 20:3-8  
**Fear disables us and disheartens others. Two thirds return in fear to their families.**

**If Israel overcome overwhelming odds with a complete fighting force they  
 "would become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.'**

"Faith excludes boasting because it is a gift." John Piper, Life as A Vapor, pg 53-54)

4 Then the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there.. This was God's way of separating the soldiers. 300 men remain. \ A ratio of 450:1! Gideon must learn that the fight is God's work. 'I am content with weaknesses....for when I am weak, then I am strong.' (2 Corinthians 12:10).

**If we are not content in our weakness we will never count on God's strength. "**

**"I am not eager, bold or strong All that is past. I am ready not to do At last; at last."**

**God is bringing Gideon to the point where it was not about Gideon's being the youngest and the smallest but about God being the wisest and the strongest.**

9 Now the same night it came about that the LORD said to him,

**"Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hands.**

**Though his faith is still timid, having emptied him, God now encourages him.**

In fear, the Midianites began to kill each other and try to flee for safety with Israel in pursuit. By day's end the Midianite might was destroyed because "the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords." (7:22)

God fought for Israel. Two Midianite leaders were captured. “They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb.” (7:25) **For seven years Israel had hidden in rocks, now the Midianite prince Oreb is killed at a rock. Gideon had been hiding in a winepress but now the Midianite prince Zeeb is killed at a winepress.**

The places that symbolized Israel’s defeat become places of victory.

Jesus “is able to save completely those who come to God through him.” (Hebrews 7:25)

The God of Judges is Jesus whose name means: “Yahweh saves.”

John B. Gough was born to poor parents in Sandgate, England in 1817. Together with his mother and sister he immigrated to the United States when he was twelve years old. When his mother died of a stroke John Gough despondently began to drink. In 1838 he married but when both his wife and their first child died within days of each other he became suicidal. By age 25 John Gough was already an unemployed, homeless, destitute, drunkard old man. In his own words he wrote: “during those years I wandered over God’s beautiful earth like an unblessed spirit. It was like being driven by whips across a burning desert: I was forever digging wells to quench my maddening thirst, and for ever bringing up nothing but the hot, dry sand! Seven years of darkness! Seven years of slavery! Seven years of sin.” (F.W Boreham ‘Life Verses’ 99)

**Gough’s life was an exact mirror of Gideon’s seven years of suffering in Canaan.**

As he sat at a bare table in a cheerless, empty room, cold and hungry, Gough remembered a memory verse his saintly mother had taught him as a child. “All at once,” he wrote, “it seemed as if the very light she left had spanned the dark chasm of those seven dreadful years, struck my heart and opened it. The passages of Scripture she taught me, and that had been buried in my memory, came to me as if they were being whispered in my ears by my mother herself. He is able to save completely those who come to God through him.” (F.W Boreham ‘Life Verses’ pg 101) I am not able he cried but he is able! One day a hotel waiter named Joel Stratton reached out to John Gough when he was in the midst of a drunken binge. Touched by this kindness, Gough promised to take the abstinence pledge the next day. An agonizing week of withdrawal followed, but he emerged victorious – and a committed Christian.

He began to tell his story to eager audiences and became known as “**The Apostle of Cold Water**” delivering 9,600 lectures to more than nine million people in America, Canada, England, Scotland, and Ireland. He became a witnessing Christian, a personal friend of Charles Spurgeon, shared the pulpit in Boston (1877) with D. L. Moody. When he died in 1886, the New York Times wrote that he “was probably better known in the United States and in Great Britain than any other public speaker.” Gough discovered that gospel is ‘a revelation of a limitless ability to deliver.’ (Boreham ‘pg 107)

**With God “it is never a try; it is always a triumph.”**

**(F.W Boreham ibid’ pg 107)**