

William MacDonald:

“But God hath chosen...the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” (1 Cor. 1:27)

If a carpenter can take waste, scrap lumber and make a splendid piece of furniture out of it, it brings more credit to him than if he uses only the finest of materials. So when God uses things that are foolish, worthless and weak to accomplish glorious results, it magnifies His skill and power. People cannot attribute the success to the raw materials; they are forced to confess that it can only be the Lord who deserves the credit.

The book of Judges provides repeated illustrations of God using the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. Ehud, for example, was a lefthanded Benjamite. The left hand in Scripture speaks of weakness. Yet Ehud brought down Eglon, king of Moab and won rest for Israel for eighty years (Judg. 3:12-30).

Shamgar went into battle wielding an oxgoad, and yet with this unlikely weapon he slew 600 Philistines and delivered Israel (3:31). Deborah was a member of the “weaker sex,” yet by the power of God she won a smashing victory over the Canaanites (4:1; 5:31). Barak’s 10,000 foot soldiers were a poor match, humanly speaking, against Sisera’s 900 chariots of iron, yet Barak swept the field (4:10, 13). Jael, another member of the “weaker sex,” killed Sisera with such a non-weapon as a tent pin (4:21). According to the Septuagint, she held the pin with her left hand. Gideon marched against the Midianites with an army that the Lord had reduced from 32,000 to 300 (7:1-7). His army is pictured under the figure of a cake of barley bread. Since barley bread was the food of the poor, the picture is one of poverty and feebleness (7:13). The unconventional weapons of Gideon’s army were earthenware pitchers, torches and trumpets (7:10). And as if that were not enough to insure defeat, the pitchers had to be broken (7:19). Abimelech was felled by a woman’s hand hurling a piece of millstone (9:53). The name Tola means a worm, an inauspicious title for a military deliverer (10:1). When we first meet Samson’s mother, she is a nameless, barren woman (13:2). Finally, Samson killed 1000 Philistines with nothing more lethal than the jawbone of an ass (15:15).