

Judges Chapter 7:16 – 8

Review of last Session

Judges we have looked at so far:

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| • Othniel | Victory over King of Mesopotamia | 40 years peace |
| • Ehud | Defeats Moab | 80 years peace |
| • Shamgar | Defeats Philistines | No record. |
| • Deborah and Barak | Defeats Canaanites | 40 years peace |

Judges Chapter 6

- Again, Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.
- They did not learn from the past mistakes.
- Unless our suffering leads to “repentance” (true change of heart). It is only remorse.
- Israel hiding in dens and caves.
- Midianites are a coalition of nations.
- They came at harvest time to steal all the food.
- 135,000 gathered against Israel.
- Israel cries unto the Lord.

Judges Chapter 7:1-15

- Gideon amasses an army of 32,000.
- Gideon's fleece – Colossians 3:15
- Gideon's army is reduced to 10,000.
- Gideon's army is reduced to 300.
- Why? – so only God can get the glory, not a man.
- God tells Gideon he is now ready, so go and I will deliver them into your hands.

Judges 7: 15 - 25

1. God gave Gideon wisdom to prepare the army (vs. 15-18)
2. God gave Gideon courage to lead the army (vs. 19-22)
3. God gave him opportunity to enlarge the army (vs. 23-25)

Preparing the Army

- Torch
- Jar
- Trump (shofar)
- Shout – “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.
- Follow my example

Leading the Army

- They executed the battle plan successfully
- Intertribal warfare
- Confusion
- Fear
- Flee

Enlarging the Army

- Naphtali, Asher, Manasseh joined the pursuit
- Ephriam joins in as well – captures Oreb and Zeeb the princes of Midian
- Beth-Barah was where Joshua crossed the Jordan and where John the Baptist was baptizing.
- Story begins at a winepress and Zeeb was captured at a winepress.
- Psalm 83: 9-11
 - *Do to them as you did to Midian, as to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, who were destroyed at En-dor, who became dung for the ground. Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, who said, “Let us take possession for ourselves of the pastures of God.”*

It was the “spirit of the Lord that clothed Gideon” which gave Gideon faith in God to accomplish what was spoken to him.

Chapter 8 – Winning the War but Losing the Victory

VS 1 – 3

- Contention with Ephraim
- Remember Ephriam and Manasseh were brothers, both sons of Joseph and were adapted by Jacob.
- Ephriam also helped against Ehud and with Deborah and Barak.
- Gideon used Proverbs 15:1 “a soft answer turns away wrath.”
- Gideon pointed out their supreme accomplishment is capturing Oreb and Zeeb

VS 4 –9

- The men of Succoth
- The men of Penuel
- Both refused to assist Gideon in the pursuit of the two kings, Zebah and Zalmunna.
- Gideon's response of retaliations once he was victorious VS 10 – 17
- The Midianites lost 120,000 soldiers
- Only 15,000 left.
- Gideon is successful and subdues them.
- Gideon disciplines Succoth and destroys Penuel.
- In essence Succoth and Penuel were traitors, aiding and abetting the enemy of Israel.

VS 18 –21

- Gideon executes the two kings.
- Takes the ornaments of the camel's neck.
- The ornament was a crescent moon – moon God.
- The crescent moon is the universal symbol of Islam and Allah, like the Christian cross.
- The crescent moon is above every mosque in the Islamic world.

VS 22 – 23

- Gideon asked to rule over the people, with his sons and create a dynasty.
- Gideon refuses to accept the offer.
- The Lord shall rule over you – this was appropriate.
- The people wanted a man not the Lord.
- This is highlighted in 1 Samuel 8 – the whole chapter is about rejecting God for a King.
- What other nation had the CREATOR, the Lord of heaven and earth as their ruler?

VS 24 – 28

- Golden earrings for his reward.
- The weight was 43 pounds of gold, plus additional gifts and offerings.
- Gideon created an Ephod. The High Priest wore an Ephod as part of the ceremonial garb.
- Midian was subdued and there was rest in the land for 40 years.
- Gideon's great failure was not taking the victory for God's glory but took personal gain.

Note – from here on in the Book of Judges we have a litany of leaders whose impact is minimal and local with no lasting impact or true reform. The nation continues a downward cycle of brokenness and darkness with no lasting peace. Jephthah and Samson provide a brief respite but only delay the inevitable decline of the nation.

VS 29 -35

- Gideon has 70 sons
- Gideon dies and Israel turns away from God and worships Baal.
- Israel forgets God and forgets Gideon.
- Abimelech was born.

Abraham's victory in comparison to Gideon: Genesis 14

- Abraham took nothing for himself.
- The men received their fair share of the spoils.
- Abraham refused to take anything from the King of Sodom.
- Abraham worships with Melchizedek, King of Salem.
- Abraham gave glory to the Lord of heaven and earth.