

BOOK OF JUDGES
THE CYCLE CONTINUES #4-GIDEON-PT 3
JUDGES 8:1-32

Introduction

We saw a great **VICTORY** in progress as we left last week! **GIDEON** and the **300 men** that the **LORD** chose surrounded the **MIDIANITE** camp in three companies. At **GIDEON'S** signal, they blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers that were in their hands, and shouted "*The sword of the LORD, and of GIDEON*"

SCRIPTURE says in *Judges 7:22* that "*...the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow...*" meaning the enemy turned on each other. 120,000 out of the 135,000 enemy army were slain in the chaos that ensued. The other 15,000 went on the run as **GIDEON** and some others from the tribes of **NAPHTHALI**, **ASHER**, and **MANASSEH** pursued after them. (These were the original tribes initially called to the battle by **GIDEON** before the **LORD** trimmed down his army to 300 men)

GIDEON also sent out messengers asking for help from the tribe of **EPHRAIM**. They came out and pursued the **MIDIANITES** and managed to kill two **MIDIANITE** princes in the process.

Everything appeared to be going fine until...!

I. WE SEE THAT EPHRAIM HAD A PROBLEM! Judges 8:1
Now understand that **GIDEON** had only done what the **LORD** told him to do! And the **LORD** had even whittled down **GIDEON'S** assault team (if you could call it that) to a paltry **300** men as it was.

Nevertheless, they *chided sharply* with **GIDEON**! But in reality their problem here was with the **LORD**, because **GIDEON** was doing the **LORD'S WILL** and taking directions from the **LORD** alone!

Sadly, many great **SPIRITUAL** leaders such as **GIDEON** have had to deal with **BRETHREN** of a similar nature as **EPHRAIM**, who have had a problem with **SOMETHING THAT THEY DID** or **DID NOT DO** or maybe with even **HOW SOMETHING WAS DONE** when they were only a **LEADER** who was trying to **OBEY THE LORD'S** leading!

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DAVID wrote in *Psalms 133:1*– "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*" **DAVID** faced his share of **CRITICISM** from others in doing what the **LORD** directed **HIM**!

May the **LORD** help us understand that **ENVYING**, **STRIFE**, and **DIVISIONS** are a sign of **CARNALITY** or walking after the **FLESH**, rather than of the **SPIRIT**! (e.g. *1 Corinth. 1:10-11; 3:1-9*)

May the **LORD** also help us to understand that **HE** has placed each of us in this **LOCAL BODY** of **HIS TOGETHER** to be lovingly **UNITED IN SPIRIT** and **STRIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL**. So many times even minor disagreements can escalate into huge problems in **CHRIST'S BODY**!

And when that happens, the **LORD'S NAME** is usually what suffers the most! The devil often attacks **GOD'S PEOPLE** by **SEEKING TO DIVIDE** and **DISCOURAGE** them just after they have had a **GREAT SPIRITUAL VICTORY**!

The **EPHRAIMITES** criticized **GIDEON** after his great **VICTORY** saying in *Judges 8:1* in so many words here (my paraphrase), "*Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?*"

The **EPHRAIMITES** appeared to think that they were **DISRESPECTED** by **GIDEON** here! After all they were one of the largest and most important of the tribes. The **TABERNACLE** was located in **SHILOH** in their territory.

They **COMPLAINED** to **GIDEON** (**SCRIPTURE** says "*they did chide with him sharply*") all because he did not include them up front in the fight for **VICTORY**. They became **EMBITTERED** because of their **PRIDE**! Now understand that none of them had stepped up or volunteered on the front end to take the lead into the battle, but they wanted to have a problem on the back end that they weren't asked to!

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II. WE SEE HOW GIDEON HANDLED THE PROBLEM!

Judges 8:2-3

GIDEON showed remarkable **TACT** and **DIPLOMACY** in appeasing the **ANGER** of the **EPHRAMITES** here.

Our **FLESH** doesn't handle **PERSONAL ATTACKS** against us too well, does it? Our tendency is to be as harsh to others as they are to us!

Proverbs 15:1—"A soft answer turneth away wrath: But grievous words stir up anger."

Proverbs 10:19-20—"19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: But he that refraineth his lips is wise. 20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver:..."

James 1:18-20—"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. 19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

III. WE SEE GIDEON'S NEXT PROBLEM CAME AT SUCCOTH AND PENUEL! *Judges 8:4-9*

A. They Were Denied Bread At SUCCOTH!

Maybe GIDEON had not expected to have to **PURSUE** the **MIDIANITES** very far. But more than likely he surmised that they could get what they needed from their **BRETHREN** along the route where they were **PURSUING** the **MIDIANITES**!

Understand that this was the possession where their **BRETHREN** from the **TRIBE OF GAD** had settled.

GIDEON sought loaves of bread to be given to them of their **BRETHREN** because he and the 300 men pursuing the **MIDIANITES** were getting faint, yet still pursuing the enemy.

The answer in so many words...**NO VICTORY, NO BREAD!**

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The men of **SUCCOTH** said **NO**, because **GIDEON** and his men weren't wholly victors in the sight of these **GADITES**! They feared that if they gave **GIDEON** and his small army of 300 bread and they ended up being defeated by the **MIDIANITES**, then they would have to answer to the **MIDIANITES** for helping their enemy!

No help, no encouragement...just criticism! "You think you've won, do you?" They didn't think **GIDEON** and his little army could do it. But **GIDEON** was operating under the **PROMISE OF GOD!** *Judges 7:14*

GIDEON'S promise to these BRETHREN. *Judges 8:7*

When **VICTORY** happened, they would pay the consequences of not having helped their **BRETHREN** in their time of need!

B. They Were Denied Bread At PENUEL!

This too was the possession of where their **BRETHREN** from the **TRIBE OF GAD** had settled! They received the same denial as they had at **SUCCOTH**!

GIDEON promised to come back after they had won and tear down a **TOWER** that had some significance to them.

IV. WE SEE GIDEON AND HIS MEN FULFILLED THEIR TASKS! *Judges 8:10-20*

A. The MIDIANITES Were Defeated!

First the army. *Vs 10-11*

Then the kings. *Vs 12*

B. GIDEON Returned From Battle To Deal With His BRETHREN Who Would Not Help Him And His Men! *Vs 13-17*

C. GIDEON Dealt With The Two MIDIANITE Kings. *Vs 18-21*

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V. WE SEE GIDEON WAS ASKED TO REIGN AS KING!

Judges 8:22-23

- A. They Wanted GIDEON And His Sons And Grandsons To Rule Over Them As King. Vs 22**

- B. It Is Recorded Here That He Refused Them Reminding Them That The LORD Was Their King! Vs 23**

VI. WE SEE GIDEON'S REQUEST! *Judges 8:24-27*

A collection was taken for **GIDEON** at his request. *Vs 25-26*

After they all chipped in it amounted to about **42-43 pounds of gold.**

We see that **GIDEON** made an **EPHOD** with the **GOLD.** *Vs 27*

An **EPHOD** was normally a linen garment worn by priests over their chests. It was considered **HOLY.** *Exo. 28:5-35; 39:2-24; Lev. 8:7-8*
It provided a way for the people to hear from the **LORD.**

GIDEON may have had good motives for making the **EPHOD.**

(Possibly as visual reminder of the **VICTORY** the **LORD** wrought.)

Unfortunately, the people began to worship the **EPHOD** as an **IDOL.**

There is no indication that **GIDEON** asked the **LORD** about making the **EPHOD.** Sadly, many decisions that may stem from good motives can produce negative results when not bathed with **PRAYER.**

The **EPHOD** became a snare to **GIDEON and his house.**

VII. WE SEE PEACE FOR A 40-YEAR PERIOD WHILE GIDEON LIVED! *Judges 8:28*

MIDIAN was subdued...the country was in quietness for the **40 year remainder of GIDEON'S LIFE!**

VIII. WE SEE THE BALANCE OF GIDEON'S LIFE, HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND HIS DEATH. *Judges 8:29-32*

GIDEON dwelt in his own house. He had 70 sons, one of which we will see caused tragedy for **GIDEON'S** family and the nation!

GIDEON died in a good old age.