

Series: Lessons From the Lives of the Judges

THE FINAL DAYS OF GIDEON

JUDGES 8:22-35

Text: Judges 8:22-35

Introduction:

Thomas Huxley stated in 1902, "A man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes."

The battle was over. Gideon and the 300 were triumphant. The enemies of Israel were subdued and they were free to work as they pleased. They could do as they liked.

Note the Final Days of Gideon:

1. A CALL TO BECOME THE KING

Judges 8:22-23

²² Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. ²³

And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.

The Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule over us—you, your son and your grandson—because you have saved us out of the hand of Midian.”

The Israelites wanted Gideon to king. They wanted someone to rule over them. Gideon made the perfect choice. He had just delivered them in a miraculous battle ending in the defeat of the enemy. He had the Lord’s ear. They would have a king just like all the other nations around them. It was reasonable and made perfect sense but it was not a godly choice.

But Gideon told them, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you.”

Gideon refused to rule over them. He would not be their king. He would be their judge. He goes further and states that his sons would not rule over them either.

Gideon pointed them in the right direction by saying, "The Lord will rule over you." Scripture tells us that the Lord allowed Saul to be king over Israel only because they rejected their God.

1 Samuel 10:17-19 says:

1 Samuel 10:17-19

¹⁷ And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; ¹⁸ And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: ¹⁹ And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

The truth Gideon spoke was an eternal truth. The nation of Israel was always intended to be a theocracy, rule by God. The Lord was to be their King and their Redeemer forever, but they rejected God eventually.

Notice not only the “Call To Become the King” but also:

2. A CALL FOR GOLD (VS. 24-26)

Judges 8:24-26

²⁴ And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) ²⁵ And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. ²⁶ And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested

was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks.

Gideon did have one request of the people, gold. He asked for an earring from each man from their share of the plunder. The Ismaelites and Midianites wore gold earrings, necklace, and other fine jewelry. Gideon wanted a piece from each man.

The men responded with a resounding yes. It was the least they could do for the warrior Gideon. I would imagine the men thought of it as money earned. He had risked everything in his defeat of the enemy.

So they spread out a garment, and each man threw a ring from his plunder onto it. The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels, not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels' necks.

The collection for Gideon was piling up. Gold earrings, chains, ornament, etc. was piling up on the garment. The total weight was seventeen hundred shekels which is approximately 50 lbs.

Gideon rejected being their king but he was going to live like one. Unfortunately the payment in gold was the beginning of Gideon's critical mistake in life.

Notice not only the "Call To Become the King" and the "Call For Gold" but also:

3. A CRITICAL MISTAKE (VS. 27)

Judges 8:27

²⁷ And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town.

Remember Exodus 32:

Exodus 32:2

² And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

Remember, the altar to Baal was there originally but it had been replaced with the altar to the LORD as it had been instructed. It is the altar Gideon had sacrificed the seven year old bull to the LORD. Gideon's first act of

obedience was in this spot. It is where Gideon's faith in God was strengthened.

Gideon made an ephod. It was not an image of God nor was it a golden calf idol like that of Aaron. An ephod is an outer garment generally worn by the high priest when making an inquiry of the Lord. It rests upon the shoulders of the priest. It was a shoulder dress much like that worn by generals and ranking officers or kings.

The reason he made is not certain but Gideon may have wanted to remind the people that he was the one who led them in the defeat of the enemy.

Gideon should not have made the ephod as we will see in just a moment.

Notice not only the "Call To Become the King" the "Call For Gold" and the "Critical Mistake" but lastly:

3. THE CYCLE OF SIN (VS. 27)

Judges 8:27

²⁷ And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

All Israel prostituted themselves by worshipping the ephod there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

What was Israel worshipping? They were worshipping the golden ephod instead of the Lord.

Israel's faithfulness to the LORD was short lived. They willingly went right back into their old ways of worshipping idols. Unfortunately it was the one built by Gideon.

Gideon's triumph over the Midianites was complete. Their army was so decimated that they could no longer bother Israel. There would be 40 years of peace for Israel. But the peace they had was only with the other nations, not with God.

Close:

Judges 8:28-32

²⁸ Thus was Midian subdued before the children of

Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon. ²⁹ And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. ³⁰ And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. ³¹ And his concubine that *was* in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. ³² And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Gideon had fulfilled the prophecy of being the "mighty warrior". He had heard the Lord's commands. He had his doubts and fears. He asked for signs, had believed and acted. He was a mighty warrior just as the angel of the LORD had said in the well.

Now, the war was over. He had his day and decided to build an ephod to remember the battle and the victory over the enemy. He went home to live but not lead. The people had gone back to idol worship only instead of Baal, it was the golden ephod.

Though Gideon was used by God to secure the victory over the enemy, but the Gideon enabled the children of Israel to become a worse enemy; worshipping an object instead of God.