

STUDY NUMBER FOUR - Judges 8:1-32

TEXT:

- v. 1 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, "What is this thing you have done to us, not calling us when you went to fight against Midian?" And they contended with him vigorously.
- v. 2 But he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?"
- v. 3 "God has given the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb into your hands; and what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.
- v. 4 Then Gideon and the 300 men who were with him came to the Jordan and crossed over, weary yet pursuing.
- v. 5 And he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who are following me, for they are weary, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."
- v. 6 And the leaders of Succoth said, "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hands, that we should give bread to your army?"
- v. 7 And Gideon said, "All right, when the Lord has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hands, then I will thrash your bodies with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers."
- v. 8 And he went up from there to Penuel, and spoke similarly to them; and the men of Penuel answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered.
- v. 9 So he spoke also to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I return safely, I will tear down this tower."
- v.10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their armies with them, about 15,000 men, all who were left of the entire army of the sons of the east; for the fallen were 120,000 swordsmen.
- v.11 And Gideon went up by the way of those who lived in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and attacked the camp, when the camp was unsuspecting.
- v.12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.
- v.13 Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres.
- v.14 And he captured a youth from Succoth and questioned him. Then the youth wrote down for him the princes of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.
- v.15 And he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning whom you taunted me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your men who are weary?'"
- v.16 And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and he disciplined the men of Succoth with them.
- v.17 And he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.
- v.18 Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?" And they said, "They were like you, each one resembling the son of a king."
- v.19 And he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the Lord lives, if only you had let them live, I would not kill you."

- v.20 So he said to Jether his first-born, "Rise, kill them." But the youth did not draw his sword, for he was afraid, because he was still a youth.
- v.21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise up yourself, and fall on us; for as the man, so is his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments which were on their camels' necks.
- v.22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son's son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian."
- v.23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."
- v.24 Yet Gideon said to them, "I would request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his spoil." (For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)
- v.25 And they said, "We will surely give them." So they spread out a garment, and every one of them threw an earring there from his spoil.
- v.26 And the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the neck bands that were on their camels' necks.
- v.27 And Gideon made it into an ephod, and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household.
- v.28 So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads any more. And the land was undisturbed for forty years in the days of Gideon.
- v.29 Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house.
- v.30 Now Gideon had seventy sons who were his direct descendants, for he had many wives.
- v.31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech.
- v.32 And Gideon the son of Joash died at a ripe old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

INTRODUCTION:

Thus far in our study of the life of Gideon we have seen the Lord call him out of Ophrah. And having called him, provided all that was necessary for him to carry out the mission of delivering the nation Israel from the Midianites. ① The first encounter in this deliverance involved the altars of Baal. ② The second encounter was the battle itself, which we considered in our last study.

Now that the Midianites have been put to flight, we have a continuation of the story in Judges chapter 8.

- v. 1 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, "What is this thing you have done to us, not calling us when you went to fight against Midian?" And they contended with him vigorously.

We noted that back in chapter 6 when Gideon began to formulate the army to go against the Midianites that he got some local folks first, and then

went throughout his own tribe of Manasseh, and then invited Asher, Zebulon and Naphtali to send warriors for the campaign.

This is actually only representation from four of the twelve tribes involved in the entire nation.

The tribe of Ephraim was one of the tribes that was overlooked in sending for warriors. As a result of being neglected, they are quite upset.

You will always notice how many want to be involved when the battles are being won and the victory enjoyed.

Ephraim resented the fact that they did not get to have some first-hand involvement in this overwhelming victory that was granted to the troops of Gideon.

The verse says that they contended with him vigorously. Many times the tragic story of the ongoing work of the church, as well as the children of Israel, is that a man is wounded in the house of his friends.

The Ephraimites, rather than enjoying the victory and liberation from Midian, have got to contend vigorously with the victorious forces over the fact that they were left out of the actual campaign itself.

v. 2 But he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?"

Response rather than Reaction.

Gideon meets beautifully this feeling of injured pride and jealousy by esteeming them better than himself when he says, "What have I now done like you? Is not the gleaning of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?" The gleaning of Ephraim is the victory gained over the flying Midianites. Gideon declares this to be better than the vintage of Abiezer, that is the victory obtained by him the Abiezerite with his 300 men, because the Ephraimites had slain 2 Midianitish princes. The victory gained by the Ephraimites must indeed have been a very important one, as it is mentioned by Isaiah in chapter 10:26 'as a great blow of the Lord upon Midianite.'

Phil. 2:3,4 "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. Do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interest of others."

v. 3 "God has given the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb into your hands; and what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

① Commendation at a moment of criticism can kill a conflict.

Had 33,000 to start with

Everybody likes A. Winner
Cowboys win - we won
Cowboys lost - they lost
Official Making A Questionable Call !!

You turkeys why Aren't you rearing in your Freedom.

Setting out up by His own Country-men

Hang it on your back. Thanks A lot guys

Joshua Tribes

As the Midianites began to flee from the valley of Jezreel in all directions during that night and the next day, they went off in the direction of the tribe of Ephraim. Ephraim had the privilege of capturing Oreb and Zeeb, the two leaders of the Midianites.

When Gideon reminded them of the important part they had played in the victory, then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

v. 4 Then Gideon and the 300 men who were with him came to the Jordan and crossed over, weary yet pursuing.

* Galatians 6:9 "Let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Gideon with his men of 300 valiant warriors, moves toward the Jordan River and cross over. They are very weary from fighting all night and pursuing them the next day. But the Lord is in the process, giving them the victory.

v. 5 And he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who are following me, for they are weary, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

These men of Succoth should have counted it a real privilege to have shared in the personal needs for Gideon and the 300 men by giving them bread and something to drink so that they could continue in the victorious campaign in which they were involved.

Let us learn with patient continuance in well-doing to wait for that time of retribution to the saint as well as to the sinner; though the world know nothing of our struggle with our spiritual foes, it is no less a real and arduous lifelong conflict. Let us persevere, however faint, yet pursuing, the hindrances from treacherous professors, Israelites in name, but Midianites in heart, are especially perilous. But all difficulty shall be surmounted at last, and the remembrance of the past conflict will enhance the bliss of the heavenly home, where conflict shall be unknown. After that we shall have been made more than conquerors through him that loved us.

After Gideon announces the purpose for the request, the men of Succoth certainly should have been very ready to cooperate with the campaign by doing their part in making provision for these weary warriors.

v. 6 And the leaders of Succoth said, "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hands, that we should give bread to your army?"

In these words of the leaders of Succoth, we notice there is a fear and cowardice in the fact that when these Midianites are victorious

Relieved
Contention
w/ Complement
Negative Antagonism
Positive Attitude

"weary yet pursuing"
wish it could
be said.

Israelite
in name
Midianite
in heart

① Anger
② Apathy

and they came back, they would deal out retribution upon all the supporters of Gideon. But there is also mocking derision over the smallness of the force which Gideon is using to pursue this host of Midianites. They are in essence chiding him over the impossibility to ever gain the victory over these foes.

In this denial of the request of Gideon, they are showing contempt, both toward Gideon and God, and His ability to deliver them into the hands of Gideon.

v. 7 And Gideon said, "All right, when the Lord has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will thrash your bodies with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers."

Gideon is very upset over their negative response to his request, and he speaks words of faith and confidence, knowing that the Lord is going to give him the victory even before it is accomplished, tells them that "when the Lord has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then he will return and deal out retribution upon them."

v. 8 And he went up from there to Penuel, and spoke similarly to them; and the men of Penuel answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered.

At Penuel he got the same song, second verse: "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hands, that we should give bread to your army?"

v. 9 So he spoke also to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I return safely, I will tear down this tower."

You will notice that Gideon again expresses confidence in the overwhelming victory that will be his, even as he said in verse 7: "when the Lord has given", here he says, "when I return safely, I will tear down this tower."

There must have been some castle or tower that they had built of which they were very proud, something similar to the Space Needle in Seattle or the World's Fair Tower in San Antonio, or the Reunion Tower in Dallas or something of this sort, of which they were quite proud. And Gideon tells them that the consequences of their standoffish attitude and uninvolvedness with him in the campaign will have some serious consequences.

v.10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their armies with them, about 15,000 men, all who were left of the entire army of the sons of the east; for the fallen were 120,000 swordsmen.

What we are now discerning in these next verses are the mop-up operation of the complete liberation from the Midianites. Through the battle of the night in the valley of Jezreel, and in the subsequent pursuit 120,000 had already fallen in battle. This left only 15,000 men with

"Come for the Lord has given the camp of midian into your hand" 7:15

Seen enough to know that God is really in all of this

Zebah and Zalmunna that Gideon is pursuing.

From a human point of view, this still seems like such an overwhelming impossibility, as he is pursuing with his 300 men such a vast army.

v.11 And Gideon went up by the way of those who lived in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and attacked the camp, when the camp was unsuspecting.

Gideon evidently took some circuitous route around the kings of Zebah and Zalmunna and the 15,000 men and worked out a similar situation to that which had happened in the valley of Jezreel.

The reason being that when the attack took place, they were not expecting it and were surprised. It could very well have been an attack at night due to the fact that the odds are so much against Gideon and his 300 men.

v.12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

Zebah and Zalmunna were still mystified over the battle that had taken place in the valley of Jezreel, and when this happened on a second occasion, fear was struck in their hearts because of the overwhelming victory that had already taken place. And with their residual force of 15,000 which seemed so small in comparison to what they had started out with, when Gideon attacked them unawares, they began to flee.

And Gideon and his 300 men pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, and also routed the whole army of 15,000.

v.13 Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres.

Once the battle had been fought and the army had been routed, Gideon now returned back toward Ophrah by the ascent of Heres.

v.14 And he captured a youth from Succoth and questioned him. Then the youth wrote down for him the princes of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.

Now that Gideon has won the overwhelming victory through the Lord's sovereign intervention against Israel's external foes, he must now deal with the internal opposition that is present.

The way he prepares to handle the situation is by capturing a young man from Succoth and then questioning him. He had the young men write down the princes of Succoth and its elders, a total of 77 men.

Lord, if I only had my 32,000 we could really go after them. Gideon guess you are still going to rust me!

Just like the first. Go with a winner

Riding his dirt bike

v.15 And he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning whom you taunted me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your men who are weary?'"

Behold, Zebah & Zalmunna

He now comes back and reminds them of what they had done, and shows them the evidences of his own victory.

v.16 And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and he disciplined the men of Succoth with them.

The chastening process which Gideon uses in disciplining these men for their lack of involvement in the Lord's liberation of his people from the Midianites is just as he had promised with the thorns and briers of the wilderness.

v.17 And he tore down the tower of Penue! and killed the men of the city.

The punishment that was inflicted by Gideon upon both of these cities was well deserved in all respects, and was righteously executed. The inhabitants of these cities had not only acted treacherously to Israel as far as they could from the most selfish interests in a holy conflict for the glory of the Lord and the freedom of his people, but in their contemptuous treatment of Gideon and his host they had poured contempt upon the Lord, who had shown them to be his own soldiers before the eyes of the whole nation by the victory which he had given to them over the innumerable army of the foe.

Having been called by the Lord to be the deliverer and judge of Israel, it was Gideon's duty to punish the faithless cities.

v.18 Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?" And they said, "They were like you, each one resembling the son of a king."

Now Gideon is preparing to deal with the kings who had fought against the Israelites at Tabor, and had killed many of them in prior battles, in submitting the land of Israel to bondage in the first place. And so he is calling to record their past performance, so that he can be just in the execution of the sentence that is about to take place.

Their response is: 'They were like you, each one resembling the son of a king.'

Evidently some of Gideon's brothers had been killed or murdered in a very unrighteous manner by these two kings, and now Gideon is dealing out retribution to them.

Fix your eyes on this Gentleman

Serious Results of uninvolved Ment.

Probably the leaders

v.19 And he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the Lord lives, if only you had let them live, I would not kill you."

* Deut. 19:6 "Lest the avenger of blood pursue the manslayer in the heat of his anger and overtake him because the way is long, and take his life, though he was not deserving of death since he had not hated him previously."

It was Gideon's responsibility in view of the Mosaic law to vindicate his brothers by taking the lives of those who had slain the members of his family.

This is the reason he says if they had let his brothers live, he would not now need to execute this sentence.

v.20 So he said to Jether his first-born, "Rise, kill them." But the youth did not draw his sword, for he was afraid, because he was still a youth.

Gideon is only attempting to add disgrace to Zebah and Zalmunna by letting them be slain by a youth, Gideon's first-born son. But verse 20 tells us he did not draw his sword because he was afraid, because he was still a young man.

v.21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise up yourself, and fall on us; for as the man, so is his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments which were on their camels' necks.

The two kings recognize the justice in the matter and invite Gideon to fall upon them and slay them in justice for what they had done. So Gideon accepts the invitation and inflicts the execution and takes the crescent ornaments which were on their camels' necks as a booty or memorial for the battle.

v.22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son's son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian."

The immediate response of the men of Israel is to show appreciation to Gideon by inviting him now to rule over them, and not only for him but his son and his son's sons because of what you have done to deliver us from the hand of Midian.

The people can only see Gideon in this situation as the one who is responsible, when if the proper response had been given, they would invite the God who strengthened and provided the victory for Gideon to be the One who would rule over them.

The people are looking to Gideon instead of Gideon's God.

How easy it would have been for Gideon to have accepted the glory in this situation for the triumph that had taken place.

v.23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."

Gideon will not share in the glory of this situation at all, but will give it to the Lord and remind the people as to where the victory had come from and who was responsible, and tells them that it would be right for them to return to the Lord, and to submit to his leadership and regulation of their lives.

Different than "Ike"
He turned down
A political career!!

This magnificent act of self-abnegation was the crowning glory of Gideon's career to have achieved a decisive victory and restored national independence, gained the loyalty and confidence of his people, and yet retain his simplicity and humility is evidence of true greatness. With prophetic insight, he saw that Israel's destiny was bound up with God's sovereignty and not with temporal kingship.

v.24 Yet Gideon said to them, "I would request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his spoil." (For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishamelites.)

Although Gideon refused to take the place of leadership over the people, he did have the desire to leave a monument which would perpetuate the memory of the miraculous deliverance of which he had been the divine instrument.

v.25 And they said, "We will surely give them." So they spread out a garment, and every one of them threw an earring there from his spoil.

The people want to do something special for Gideon so they fill this simple request by giving an earring from the things that they have retrieved from the victory over the Midianites.

v.26 And the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the neck bands that were on their camels' necks.

After cheerfully fulfilling the request of Gideon, he finds gold earrings weighing about 50 pounds, separate from the other things which Gideon had not asked, but which the Israelites gave to him.

It is interesting to note among the Arab people, even to this day, the desire for wearing jewelry, many rings, earrings, necklaces, and so forth.

Taking An offering because
People Are Grateful

Began reading His own press Clippings. Its no longer
for the team + whoever, its for whoever + the team.

-10-

In the process of the battle many of these gold pieces were secured by the warriors. And they, having fulfilled Gideon's request, go even beyond and give these additional trinkets into his hand.

v.27 And Gideon made it into an ephod, and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it here, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household.

Gideon had been successful in turning the desire for power and privilege. His thought was that the ephod would be a witness that he was in a peculiar nearness to God. You can refuse the kingship, but you want the priesthood.

I Cor. 1:29 "That no man should boast before God."

Gideon here fails in humility and faith. The oak, the winepress, the altar and rock in Ophrah, it should have been only glory to God, but instead we find it here going to Gideon. He is aspiring to the priesthood. It is important for us to notice that blessing is not maintained by human effort. Saul forces Himself

The ephod is no good without the priest and the church is of no value without the Christ.

All Gideon wanted was a memorial of his victory and to him the ephod typified this.

Deut. 17:17 "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he greatly increase silver or gold for himself."

An ephod was a vestment covering the shoulders and extending over the breast, somewhat like a coat without sleeves. There were two kinds of them. One, a rich garment peculiar to the highpriest, made of blue, purple, scarlet and plain linen, curiously wrought and also entwined with gold. In this was set the breastplate studded with precious stones and containing the Urim and Thummin by which the high priest consulted the will of Jehovah.

The other was made after the same model but of inferior materials, being composed simply of fine linen and worn not only by the priests but by the Levites and the others in divine ministrations, as we see from the case of Samuel and David, neither of whom belonged to the order of priests. The ephod made by Gideon was undoubtedly designed to be of the former kind, and was thus wrought with great splendor. His real motive in this transaction is not very easily determined. Some think the ephod was designed merely as a commemorative trophy of Israel's deliverance, but if so it was a very strange one, having no conceivable relation to such an event. The more probably opinion undoubtedly is

Hall of Fame
Article Made
Famous by

Tim.
2:26

D. L. Moody
Only monument
I want is a
two-legged one

Paul "you are
our joy & crown"

For Gideon

&
the Lord

that it was intended wholly for a religious use. Gideon had at his first calling been instructed to build an altar and offer sacrifice. This perhaps induced him to think himself authorized to officiate in some way occasionally at his own house; and as he knew that an ephod was a usual appendage to such an office, he might have had one formed and finished in sumptuous style for this purpose.

If this be the right conjecture, the worship performed was doubtless in honor of the true God, but it was still unauthorized and improper. However, he may have considered the first commission as constituting a good warrant for his continuing service.

To such disastrous consequences may one false step of a good man lead who fails to weigh well the issues of his best-meant conduct. The following suggestions naturally arise from the narrative:

1. In God's worship human inventions are to be most carefully avoided and the inspired word strictly adhered to.
2. What may be indifferent or innocent to one man may to a weaker brother be a dangerous snare.
3. The beginning of sin is as the letting out of water-- From small beginnings arose all the present horrid idolatry.

This became a snare unto Gideon and to his house. That is, it became not only a source of evil personally to Gideon, enticing his affections from their proper object and abating his zeal for the true worship of God in his old age, but proving the occasion of sin and ruin to his family, as appears in the ensuing chapter.

It is Watson who says there was another reason for his decision which may have even more weight. Like many men who have distinguished themselves in one way, his real ambition lay in a different direction. We think of him as a military genius. He, for his part, looked to the priestly office and the transmission of divine oracles as his proper calling. The enthusiasm with which he overthrew the altar of Baal, built the new altar of Jehovah and offered his first sacrifice upon it, survive when the wild delights of victory had passed away. The thrill of awe and strange excitement he had felt when divine messages came to him and signs were given in answer to his prayer affected him far more deeply and permanently than the sight of a enemy and the pride of knowing himself victor in a great campaign.

Neither did kingship appear much in comparison with access to God, converse with him and declaration of his will to men. Gideon appears already tired of war with no appetite certainly for more. However, successful and impatient to return to the mysterious rites and sacred privileges of the altar. He had good reason to acknowledge the power over Israel's destiny of the great Being whose spirit had come upon him,

whose promises had been fulfilled. He desired to cultivate that intercourse with heaven, which more than anything else gave him the sense of dignity and strength from the offer of a crown he turned, as if eager to don the robe of a priest and listen for the holy oracles that none beside him seemed able to receive.

It is easy to obtain gifts for the outward glory of religion and a golden image is soon to be seen within a house of Jehovah on the hill at Ophrah. Whatever form it had, this figure was to Gideon no idol, but a symbol or sign of Jehovah's presence among the people; by means of it, in one way or other, of the ways used at the time, as for example, by casting lots from within it, appeal was made to God with the utmost respect and confidence.

Gideon then made his ephod and placed it in Ophrah where he lived, and here all Israel went thither, a-whoring after it. The meaning is that Israelites of the area now came to accept this ephod as the authentic one for them, which really constituted Gideon as their recognized high priest. This of course was displeasing to God and constituted a serious sin on the part of both Gideon and the people. God has ordained one high priest only and he served in Shiloh and was to be a descendant of Aaron. Gideon did not qualify on either count. He was seriously wrong in having ordered the ephod made, thus presuming to act in the role of the high priest, and the people were wrong in accepting him or the ephod as approved of God.

In Gideon's defense, it may be said that the high priest at Shiloh probably was not functioning well at the time, and Gideon may have believed that the people should have better service than this. If so, this was to the detriment of the rightful high priest. But it gave no reason for Gideon to presume to take on his duties as a God-approved substitute. God had appointed him to be Israel's military leader of the day, not the high priest. Gideon rightly refuses ^{the} civil leadership offered but he did not do the same in respect to this unwarranted religious leadership.

v.28 So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads any more. And the land was undisturbed for forty years in the days of Gideon.

After this glorious victory, the Midianites now subdued, the sons of Israel have the freedom and prosperity of the next forty years to enjoy life, and this was enjoyed in the days of Gideon.

v.29 Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house.

After the battle was finished and the victory won, Gideon found himself a home.

Replaced
Baal w/
Ephod.

undid in
last what
he started
in first

v.30 Now Gideon had seventy sons who were his direct descendants, for he had many wives.

J. Vernon McGee points out that Gideon had many wives and a concubine, besides. He had a total of seventy-one sons. That is a real blot on this man's life. As someone will say, as they did about Solomon, how could God use a man like this, and why did he use him?

Well, Gideon took these many wives and had all of these children after the battle. The fact of the matter is that God used him in spite of this. God did not approve of what he did. The record makes it clear that his actions brought tragedy to the nation of Israel. The next chapter brings that out. God had forbidden intermarriage outside the nation. He had forbidden the Israelites to have more than one wife. God did not create several Eves for Adam. He created only one. God did not remove all of Adam's ribs, he took out only one rib.

v.31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech.

With the religious deterioration in his later years, also comes the moral deterioration.

v.32 And Gideon the son of Joash died at a ripe old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Evidently, Gideon spent these next forty years living there in the city of Ophrah, and relating to these people with whom he lived. He evidently became sort of a high priest to all of them, serving in disobedience to the prescribed divine order, and also becoming very immoral in his personal life.

What a tragedy to see a man filled with so much potential experience victory and usefulness by the Lord, only to finish his race poorly. The only words that can come to our minds at this time are the words, 'Watch yourselves. Take heed, lest you fall. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

CONCLUSION:

There are a number of lessons that we can learn from this particular study:

LESSON #1: Sometimes contention can be relieved by a compliment. Gideon faces the resentful host of Ephraim who are hurt by his neglect to call them to battle, and he compliments them upon the fact that the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, had been given into their hands, and not his.

*Commendation in a moment of criticism can
kill a conflict...*

*Heading forward
Jn. 21:*

*Idolatry
immorality
Monogamy was
the divine intention
& polygamy never
receives divine
Approval*

*Always Neg.
Results!!*

*Begay
Race
Didn't
Finish*

LESSON #2: 'Let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' Oh, if Gideon had only followed this pattern in his later years, and it could have been said of him throughout his life, 'He was weary, yet pursuing.' How differently the final chapters of his life would have been.

Marathon Verse

Isaiah 40:31 "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

*Antagonism
Apathy*

LESSON #3: How much we need the support of one another in the securing of the victory, and yet there are those who will refuse to help, like the residents of Succoth and Penueh.

LESSON #4: Gideon expressed his faith in knowing in advance that the Lord was going to give him the victory when he says, "When the Lord has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand" and then in verse 9, "When I return safely". So it is with us, knowing that He is constantly leading us in a pageant of triumph, the ultimate victory is secured.

II Cor. 2:14 "

LESSON #5: The chastening of Succoth and Penueh is a picture of the chastening hand of God upon us as his children, that is certainly not joyous but eventually yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

LESSON #6: Gideon was successful in rejecting the leadership which belonged to the Lord over his people, but he was not successful in the religious realm.

LESSON #7: In this last act of building an ephod, he undid everything he did in the first act of destroying the altars of Baal and tearing down the Asherah.

LESSON #8: Gideon's immoral personal life is a revelation of his empty religious life.

Gideon began well, ran well, but he didn't end well.