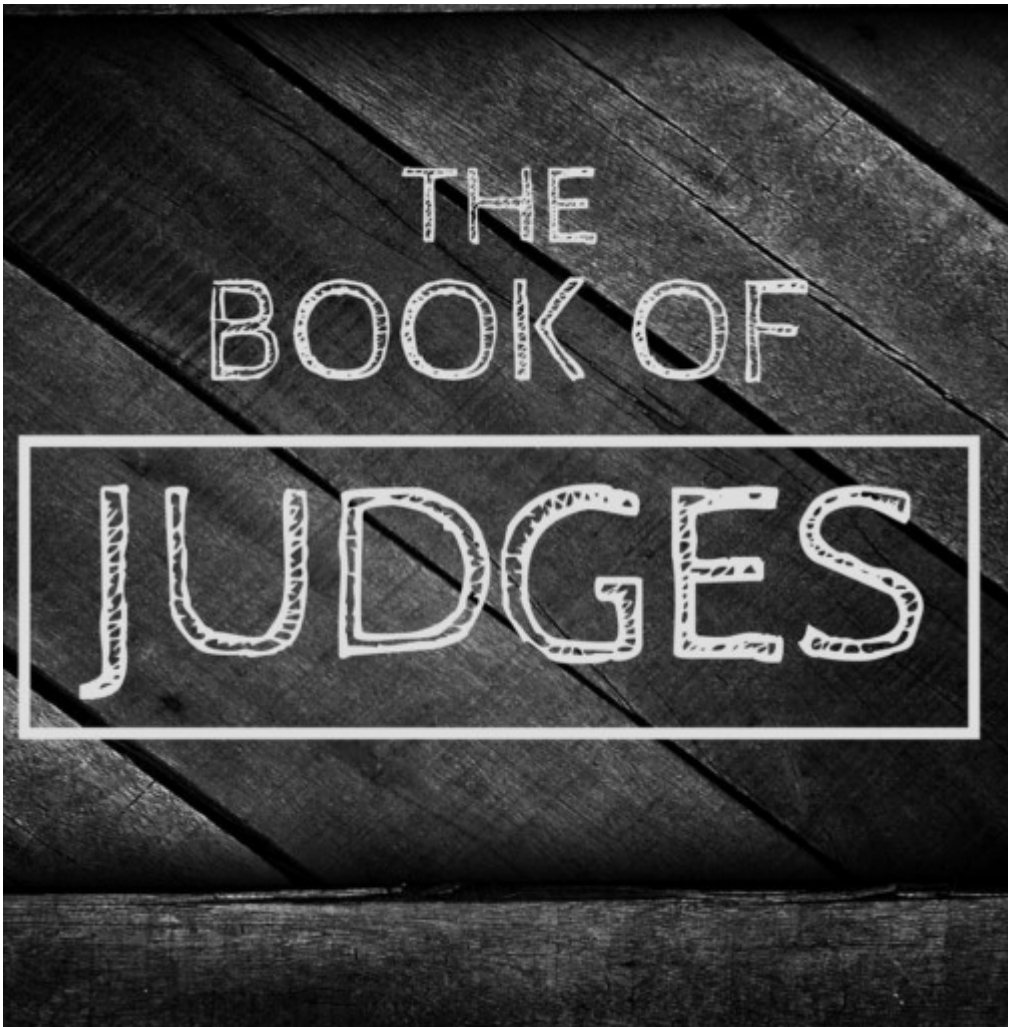


# Let's Worship God

14th-19th March 2022  
Judges



# JUDGES

## **Monday - Judges 8:4-10 - Dissent Among the Israelites**

Last week we read of the defeat of the Midianites and their allied forces west of the Jordan. Involved in the crushing of the Midianite might was the tribe of Ephraim, who held the fords of the Jordan against the fleeing foe and captured two Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. We also saw some stirrings of discontent among the Israelites, as the Ephraimites complained that Gideon had not called them to the first battle.

Today, we find more dissent among the Israelites. As verse ten will tell us, one-hundred twenty thousand of the enemy have fallen, but a force of fifteen thousand under the leadership of Midianite kings named Zebah and Zalmunna has escaped across the Jordan. Although the major battle has been won, this much-reduced army is still a threat to Israel. Therefore, Gideon pursues them into the land of the tribe of Gad east of the Jordan River. When Gideon requests provisions for his men from the people of the towns of Succoth and Penuel, the towns refuse to give him aid. They fear reprisal from Zebah and Zalmunna, should Gideon not be successful. Gideon vows to visit his vengeance on these towns when he returns from the pursuit of the enemy. Meanwhile, the enemy is able to regroup at Karkor in eastern Gilead.

Like the men of Succoth and Penuel, we may fail to support our brothers in Christ for fear of what the world may do to us. Like Gideon, we may react rashly to what we perceive as the failings of our brethren. In either case, our enemy's cause is supported by our dissent.

## **Questions**

1. What excuse did the men of Succoth and Penuel give for not helping Gideon?
2. How did Gideon react?
3. Who profited from this dissent?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the unity of Christ's Church.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

"And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side." Judges 8:34

**Praise: Psalm 43 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# JUDGES

## Tuesday - Judges 8:10-12 - The Completion of the Victory

As we noted yesterday, the Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, have regrouped their remaining fifteen thousand men at Karkor in eastern Gilead (the land east of the Jordan River settled by the tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh). Despite the lack of aid from the men of Succoth and Penuel during the pursuit, Gideon and his three-hundred men catch up to Zebah and Zalmunna. The Midianites feel secure at Karkor, but God is about to prove them wrong.

Once again, we see the LORD's strength displayed in human weakness. Gideon's three-hundred have put to flight an army of one-hundred thirty-five thousand. Roughly thirty-thousand Israelites have destroyed one-hundred twenty-thousand Midianites and their allies. Now three-hundred men defeat fifteen-thousand and capture their kings. The defeat is so thorough that it will be remembered hereafter as an image of total victory for God's people, as we find, for example, in Psalm 83.

We find ourselves in a position not unlike that of Gideon in today's reading. The great victory has been won by our Lord Jesus Christ. As we labor to advance His Kingdom in the world, we are simply pursuing a fleeing enemy, and Christ, who has already given us victory, will empower us to prevail. Do you feel weak and small? Do you question whether God can use you for the advancement of His Kingdom? Think of what He did with Gideon and a mere three-hundred men in the face of an overwhelming enemy.

### Questions

1. How does God again show His strength in human weakness in this passage?
2. Who has already won the victory for us?
3. Whom can we trust to give us the final victory over His and our enemies?

### Prayer Points

1. Pray that Christ will continue to show His strength in our weakness.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

"And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side." Judges 8:34

**Praise: Psalm 44 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# JUDGES

## **Wednesday - Judges 8:13-21 - Gideon's Vengeance**

On Monday, we saw the sad exchange of words between the men of Succoth and Penuel, on the one hand, and Gideon, on the other. Gideon's men needed food as they pursued the Midianites, but the men of these towns, fearing the Midianite's revenge, refused to help. Gideon vowed he would flail the flesh of the leaders of Succoth with thorns and that he would break down the tower of Penuel. Capturing a young man of Succoth, he obtains a list of the town officials and elders. He then takes these men and visits his vengeance on them. Verse 16 tells us he "took thorns of the wilderness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth a lesson". This probably refers to a painful punishment practiced in that time of laying a man on top of thorns and briers, placing weights on top of him and then dragging him across the thorns. He also destroys the tower of Penuel as he vowed and kills the men of the town.

Next, Gideon puts Zebah and Zalmunna to death. We might think of this as fulfilling his role as the deliverer of God's people. After all, the Angel of the LORD commissioned him to destroy the invaders of Israel. However, we see that Gideon was willing to have mercy on these men, except that they had killed his brothers. As with the men of Succoth and Penuel, Gideon is practicing personal vengeance. This is an abuse of his power and disobedience to God who says, "Vengeance is mine" (Deuteronomy 32:35). While the LORD was pleased to use Gideon as His instrument of vengeance upon the enemies of Israel, it was not for Gideon to decide when such vengeance was to be meted out.

God has given civil governments the power of the sword (as Romans 13:3-4 informs us). This is a power men are all too prone to abuse. It is the Church's responsibility to be the conscience of the State, warning leaders that they are accountable to God, in order to help keep this power in appropriate bounds. Had Gideon heeded the Word of God, his behavior would likely have been quite different. May our leaders heed God's Word.

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that God will give us leaders who will heed His Word.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side." Judges 8:34

**Praise: Psalm 45 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# JUDGES

## Thursday - Judges 8:22-23 - An Inappropriate Offer

In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, the LORD tells the people of Israel that there will come a time when they desire to set a king over themselves. His answer to this is "You may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose." Key to understanding this statement is that such a king must be one God, Himself, has chosen. Elated at the complete victory the LORD has given them under Gideon's leadership, the Israelites get ahead of themselves and invite Gideon to rule over them, not as a mere judge, but as a king with a hereditary title that will be passed on to his son and grandson after him. Commendably, Gideon answers "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you."

It will be several generations before the LORD chooses a king for Israel. First, He will choose Saul, who is the kind of king the Israelites think they want. Then, He will give them David, a king after His own heart. However, Gideon is correct to say "The LORD will rule over you." The LORD, alone, was the ultimate true King of Israel. We may be tempted to think there is a contradiction here. Is the LORD King or is Saul or David or the heirs of David's line? Of course, even when a mere man rules as king in Israel, God is the great King above him. Ultimately, the dilemma is resolved in the Person of Jesus Christ, who is God's chosen King of David's line and, at the same time, is the LORD God, Himself. The LORD, indeed, rules over Israel.

## Questions

1. Why did the people want Gideon to be their king?
2. Why did Gideon refuse their request?
3. Who is the King of Israel?

## Prayer Points

1. Pray that Christ be honored as the only King and Head of the Church.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

"And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side." Judges 8:34

**Praise: Psalm 46 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# JUDGES

## Friday - Judges 8:22-28 - Gideon's Idolatry

Yesterday, we read of the commendable way that Gideon refused to be made king over Israel. Sadly, what follows is far from commendable. As they defeated the Midianites, the men of Israel had plundered the treasures of the enemy, including the earrings they wore. We are told they wore these earrings because "they were Ishmaelites." In Genesis 16 we read that Abraham has a son named Ishmael and in Genesis 21 Ishmael is sent away. In Genesis 25, we learn that after Sarah dies, Abraham remarries and has other sons, including Midian. Like Ishmael, these other sons were sent away. The descendants of these other sons of Abraham were sometimes called "Ishmaelites" collectively, after the first son of Abraham who was sent away. Thus, in Genesis 37, the Midianites who take Joseph into slavery are also called Ishmaelites. Likewise, here we find the Midianites referred to as Ishmaelites. It seems a common trait of this general Ishmaelite culture was the wearing of earrings by men.

Gideon now requests these earrings with which he makes a golden ephod, a breastplate like that belonging to the high priest. Whatever Gideon's intent, this golden ephod becomes an idol and even Gideon and his family are ensnared into false worship.

Despite this unfaithfulness, the LORD gives Israel rest from their enemies for forty years. God promised that He would deliver Israel by means of Gideon, and He keeps His promise. Midian was never a great threat to Israel again.

None of us is infallible. Just because God uses a man mightily for the service of His Kingdom does not make that man right about everything. We must be careful not to put our trust in mere men as the standard for what we do or believe, but always be gauging our actions and beliefs by God's Word.

### Questions

1. Why were Midianites also sometimes called Ishmaelites?
2. Did Gideon remain faithful to the LORD?
3. Why did God still give Israel rest for forty years?

### Prayer Points

1. Praise God that He keeps His promises.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

"And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side." Judges 8:34

**Praise: Psalm 47 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# JUDGES

## **Saturday - Judges 8:29-35 - Gideon's Final Years**

In Genesis 2 we learn that when God created the institution of marriage, He established that marriage was to be between one man and one woman. That He blesses people like Jacob or David who violate this creation principle is a sign of His grace, not of His endorsement of polygamy or any other human attempt to redefine marriage. When men and women fail to honor marriage as God created it, they dishonor the Creator, Himself.

Here we see the downward spiral of Gideon's behavior. First, as we saw yesterday, he makes the ephod which becomes a snare to him and his family. Now we find that he dishonors marriage as God created it. He takes so many wives that he is able to have seventy sons in the forty years of peace that follow the LORD's defeat of Midian. As if that were not enough, he keeps a concubine - a secondary wife who is more a slave than a bride - at the city of Shechem, who bears him a son called Abimelech. As Judges 9 reveals, this will have disastrous consequences for Israel.

In Gideon's life, the people have committed idolatry. As soon as Gideon dies, they completely abandon the LORD, turning back to the worship of Baal that had led to their oppression under the Midianites in the first place. Having turned from God, they also quickly turn against Gideon's family, as well.

The Protestant Reformer John Calvin is noted for having described the human heart as an idol factory. Gideon's final years reveal the truth of that statement. After all the LORD has done, it takes no time at all for the people to turn to false worship during Gideon's life. After his death, they abandon the LORD altogether. We must be on constant guard against the tendency to idolatry in our own hearts.

### **Questions**

1. How did Gideon violate God's creation principle for marriage?
2. Was this the first way in which he dishonored God?
3. Why did John Calvin say the human heart is an idol factory?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters

### **Memory Verse**

"And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side." Judges 8:34

**Praise: Psalm 48 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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