

Lesson 6: Judges 7:9 to 8:35 The Defeat of Midian, Gideon's Triumph, Gideon's Ephod

Gideon was a man who was called to be a Judge of Israel, but he was full of doubt and fear. In the last lesson Gideon was preparing for battle with an army a fraction of its original size. In this lesson he faces the enemy in a very unconventional way.

1. Read Judges 7:9-15 and footnotes.

What does the Lord suggest Gideon should do to relieve his fear? Did it help?

Who is Purah?

What does Gideon find out about the Midianite army and its provisions?

2. Read Judges 7:16-22 and footnotes.

How was Gideon's army armed?

The Midianites go from powerful marauders to fleeing in terror. What caused this?

Read again Judges 7:21-22. Who is raising swords against the Midianites?

3. Read Judges 7:23-25 and footnotes.

Who was called to finish the battle?

Who are Oreb and Zeeb and what do their names mean?

What was their fate?

4. Read Judges 8:1-3 and footnotes.

Share any footnotes you find with your group.

What was the point of contention between Ephraim and Gideon here?

How does Gideon calm tempers in this instance?

5. Read Judges 8:4-9.

What does Gideon ask of Succoth and Penuel?

How do they respond?

How has Gideon's demeanor changed? Does he still seem full of doubt and fear?

6. Read Judges 8:10-17 and foot notes. Share any information you find in footnotes. Review again verses 8:5-7 and also look back at Judges 6:15, below.

Judges 6:15 But he answered him, "Please, my Lord, how can I save Israel? My family is the **poorest** in Manasseh, and I am the **most insignificant** in my father's house."

What opinion do the other tribes seem to have of Gideon and his tribe before he became Judge?

Reflection: Why did Gideon go back to Succoth and Penuel in 8:13-17?

What did he do in those cities?

7. Read Judges 8: 18-21 and footnotes.

Who are Zebah and Zalmun'na?

What accusations does Gideon make against these men?

What did Zebah and Zalmun'na do to taunt Gideon in their discussion? (8:18 and 8:21)

What was the fate of Zebah and Zalmun'na?

8. Read Judges 8:22-27 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with the group. Gideon rejects the offer to become king. Why?

What does he ask for instead?

What is an Ephod?

How did the Ephod affect the people in Ophra?

9. Read Judges 8:28-35 and footnotes.

Describe the lifestyle of Gideon.

What does his son's name, Abimelech, mean?

10. Reflection. How does, wealth, power, and success change Gideon?

How does Gideon differ from our ultimate Judge, Jesus Christ?

See Mark 10:44-45 and Matthew 6:24 below.

Mark 10:45 describes the ultimate Judge: whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; ⁴⁴ whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.