

Judges 8:1-32 **Gideon vs. the men of Ephraim – Gideon Judge 40 years**

Jealousy of the men of Ephraim

¹ Now the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply.

Gideon's answer – Their anger subsided

² So 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? ³ God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

Gideon requested bread from the men of Succoth for himself and his 300 men

⁴ When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who were with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. ⁵ Then he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

Rejected by the men of Succoth

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

Gideon promised punishment for the men of Succoth

⁷ So Gideon said, "For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!"

Rejection from men of Penuel

⁸ Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered.

Gideon promised punishment for men of Penuel

⁹ So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!"

Zebah and Zalmunna and their armies – From 135,000 to 15,000

¹⁰ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen.

Gideon and his 300 attacked and routed their 15,000 man army

¹¹ Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. ¹² When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

Gideon fulfilled his promise to punish the men of Succoth

¹³ Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres. ¹⁴ And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. ¹⁵ Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here

are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?' " ¹⁶ And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taunted the men of Succoth.

Gideon fulfilled his promise to punish the men of Penuel

¹⁷ Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

Gideon questioned Zebah and Zalmunna – then killed them

¹⁸ And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?" So they answered, "As you are, so were they; each one resembled the son of a king."

¹⁹ Then he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you." ²⁰ And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise, kill them!" But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. ²¹ So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man is, so is his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

The men of Israel asked Gideon to rule over them – Gideon refused – God is your ruler

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

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 and his gold Ephod – Israeli idolatry

²⁴ Then Gideon said to them, "I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder." For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites. ²⁵ So they answered, "We will gladly give them." And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. ²⁶ Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were around their camels' necks. ²⁷ Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

Midianites subdued – 40 years of Peace

²⁸ Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.

Birth of Abimelech – Son of Gideon's concubine

²⁹ Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. ³⁰ Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. ³¹ And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

Death and burial of Gideon

³² Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Jealousy of the men of Ephraim [Judges 8:1]

✧ Now the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply.

✧ What a revelation into human nature. Instead of Praising Yehowah for the deliverance from the Midianite oppression, Ephraim feels left out because they were not summoned in the first call for a fight against the Midianites, even though the bulk of those who were first called 31,700 were sent home so Yehowah could give the victory to the 300 men He chose to go with Gideon.

Gideon's answer – Their anger subsided

✧ So 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? God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that. [Judges 8:2-3]

✧ Humility of Gideon disarmed the fury of the men of Ephraim. Though Gideon had accomplished such greater victories, Gideon acknowledged their part in the total battle and gave them credit for the greater accomplishment. Actually it was Yehowah Who had wrought such a magnificent victory, not men.

Gideon requested bread from the men of Succoth for himself and his 300 men

✧ When Gideon came to the Jordan, **he and the three hundred men who were with him** crossed over, **exhausted but still in pursuit**. Then he said to the men of Succoth, "**Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.**" [Judges 8:4-5]

✧ This is a reasonable request to ask of people you are delivering from severe oppression.

Rejected by the men of Succoth

✧ And the leaders of Succoth said, "**Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?**" [Judges 8:6]

✧ An arrogant response from people Gideon had just helped.

Gideon promised punishment for the men of Succoth

✧ So Gideon said, "**For this cause, when Yehowah (the LORD) has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars!**" [Judges 8:7]

✧ Gideon expresses great confidence that Yehowah will deliver the remnant of the Midianite armies with the two kings into his hand as Yehowah has already destroyed 120,000 of them.

Rejection from men of Penuel

✧ Then he went up from there to **Penuel** and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. [Judges 8:8]

✧ The people of Penuel are as arrogant as the people of Succoth.

Gideon promised punishment for men of Penuel

✧ So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "**When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!**" [Judges 8:9]

✧ Gideon is still confident that Yehowah will finish the task He began when the war started.

Zebah and Zalmunna and their armies – From 135,000 to 15,000

✧ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were at Karkor, and their armies with them, about **fifteen thousand**, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for **one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen**. [Judges 8:10]

- ✧ The Midianites lost 120,000 men in the flight from Gideon's army of 300 men, leaving only 15,000 still with the two kings of Midian.

Gideon and his 300 attacked and routed their 15,000 man army

- ✧ Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and **he attacked the army while the camp felt secure**. When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army. [Judges 8:11-12]
- ✧ The odds are still 50 Midianites to 1 Israeli.
- ✧ With confidence in Yehowah, Gideon and the 300 men with him made the attack and routed the whole army of the Midianites and captured the two kings of Midian, .

Gideon fulfilled his promise to punish the men of Succoth [Judges 8:13-16]

- ✧ Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres. And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the **leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men**.
- ✧ Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?' " And **he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briars, and with them he taunted the men of Succoth**.
- ✧ With Zebah and Zalmunna in tow, Gideon had proof of his victory over the Midianite armies and punished the leaders of Succoth as he had promised.

Gideon fulfilled his promise to punish the men of Penuel [Judges 8:17]

- ✧ **Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.**

Gideon questioned Zebah and Zalmunna – then killed them [Judges 8:18-21]

- ✧ And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "**What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?**" So they answered, "**As you are, so were they; each one resembled the son of a king.**"
- ✧ Then he said, "**They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you.**" And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise, kill them!" But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man is, so is his strength." **So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that were on their camels' necks.**

The men of Israel asked Gideon to rule over them – Gideon refused – God is your ruler

- ✧ Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "**Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.**" [Judges 8:22]
- ✧ But Gideon said to them, "**I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; Yehowah (the LORD) shall rule over you.**" [Judges 8:23]
- ✧ All credit for delivery from the oppression by the Midianites goes to **Yehowah**, for it was His doing, not Gideon's.

Gideon and his gold Ephod – Israeli idolatry [Judges 8:24-27]

- ✧ Then Gideon said to them, "**I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder.**" For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.
- ✧ So they answered, "We will gladly give them." And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was **one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold**, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were around their camels' necks.

- ✧ Then **Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city**, Ophrah. And **all Israel played the harlot with it there**. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.
- ✧ When Yehowah has blessed our efforts especially in defense of our nation, it is so very easy for humans to fall into idolatry.

Midianites subdued – 40 years of Peace

- ✧ Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon. [\[Judges 8:28\]](#)
- ✧ Yehowah delivered Israel from the hand of the Midianites and they were subdued.
- ✧ Gideon was judge of Israel for 40 years and the land had peace for that time.

Birth of Abimelech – Son of Gideon's concubine

- ✧ Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. **Gideon had seventy sons** who were his own offspring, for he had **many wives**. And his **concubine** who was in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. [\[Judges 8:29-31\]](#)
- ✧ Many wives and a concubine certainly did not foster family unity, but became a real problem for Gideon's family and the impact extended to the nation of Israel.

Death and burial of Gideon

- ✧ Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. [\[Judges 8:32\]](#)