

## **230222-4 Judges 8, The Ishmaelites Overthrown–CThurman**

In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter Gideon proved the authenticity of the angel, that he was truly sent of the LORD to bring him the word that he did.

*Jud.6.16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.*

*17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.*

Gideon also proved the authenticity of the message that the angel brought to him.

*Jud.6.36 And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said,*

*37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; [and] if the dew be on the fleece only, and [it be] dry upon all the earth [beside], then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.*

In the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter the LORD proved Gideon. The Midianites had a force of 135,000 men of war. Israel had gathered a force of 32,000 men to Gideon at Harod. But this was too many. The LORD commanded Gideon to dismiss from their ranks all that were fearful and afraid. So, 22,000 men were dismissed to return home. Then the LORD had Gideon bring the remaining 10,000 men down to the water to drink. Only those that lapped water out of their hands were to remain. 9,700 men were dismissed to return home. With 300 men the LORD would save Israel from the Midianites. And the reason for using so few men was so that Israel might know that the LORD delivered them from the Midianites (Ishmaelites, Jud.8.24) and not they themselves.

*Jud 7:2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that [are] with thee [are] too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.*

In the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter, vss. 1-3, there is first a complaint lodged against Gideon for failing to inform the tribe of Ephraim of this battle beforehand. Then vss. 4-21 gives the account of the conflict and overthrow of the Midianites on the other

side of the Jordan River. After the battle is won in vss. 22, 23 the people of Israel desire Gideon and his successors to rule over them. Vss. 24-27 concern the ephod Gideon makes. And vss. 28-35 records Gideon's death, Israel's apostasy, and sets the stage for the next two chapters, 10 and 11, result of Israel's unkindness to the house of Gideon.

## Chapter 8

**1 ¶ And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply.**

*rebuked or contended* with might, force, sharpness

*chide*, Qal fut. of the verb רָיַב, reev, tss. *to strive* (Jud.11.25), *to plead* (Jud.6.31, 32), *to chide* (Jud.8.1), *to complain*, *to contend*, *to debate*, *to rebuke*, *to be adversary*.

*sharply*, fem. noun חֲזָקָה, chez-qah, tss. *mightily* (Jud.4.3), *sharply* (Jud.8.1); translated like an adverb because of the prefixed preposition בְּ, b'.

כָּכֶם

**2 And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you?**  
like you

**Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?**  
grape gleanings

*gleaning [of the] grapes*, fem. pl. noun עֵלְלוֹת, [g]o-leh-loth, and tss. *gleaning of the grapes*, *gleaning grapes*, *grapes*, *grapegleanings*. In this case the *gleaning of the grapes* refers to what was left behind after the reapers had harvested the vineyard.

*vintage*, בָּצִיר, bah-tzeer, a masc. noun always tss. with the English *vintage*, and so 'harvest.' The verb בָּצַר, bah-tzar, *grape gatherer*.

Gideon in effect says, that what you have done in the end of the conflict was more than we did in the whole battle. And then he explains how that was so.

נָתַן

**3 God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb:**

Raven      Wolf

**and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated**

–      like      –      weakened

*abated*, Qal pret. of the verb רָפָה, rah-phah, tss. *to abate, to draw, to weaken, to consume, to faint, to slack, to become idle, to let down, to stay, to have respite, to cease, to be still, to forsake, to fail, to let alone, to become slothful.*

**toward him, when he had said that.**

**4 ¶ And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.**

*follow*, the verb רָדַף, also tss. *to pursue, to follow, to chase, to persecute, to put to flight.* (Jud. 1.6, *and they pursued*; 3.28, *follow*; 4.16, *pursued*; 4.22, *pursued*; 7.23, 25, *and pursued*; 8.4, *het pursuing*; 8.5, *am pursuing*; 8.12, *And ... he pursued*; 9.40, *And ... chased him*; 20.43, *chased them*)

From the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, the Israeli warriors were divided into three companies of 100 each having in their hands pitchers with lamps inside of them. And at the beginning of the middle watch of the night they broke the pitchers that were in their left hands, thus showing the lamps that were in them, blew the trumpets in their right hands and shouted ‘The sword of the LORD and of Gideon.’ The camp of the Midianites, mingled with Amalekites, Arab Bedouins, broke out into complete confusion and they began killing one another in the dark of night. And some made their way toward the Jordan River. He then sent word to Ephraim to come down and take the crossings of Jordan to prevent the Midianites’ escape. Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh also pursued after them.

**5 And he said unto the men of Succoth,**

Succoth (Booths, סִּכּוֹת,) is just about 4-5 miles across the Jordan River on the east side, located on the north side of the River Jabbok.

*Ge 33:17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.*

This area pertains to the tribe of Gad. (cf. Jos.13.27, 28

**Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that <sup>בְּרַגְלֵי</sup> follow me;**  
lit., [are] 'at my feet'

*follow me, בְּרַגְלֵי, בְּ, b', prefixed preposition at, with, by, and the fem. noun רַגְלַי, reh-gel, foot; and the pronominal suffix י, my. And the idea, 'under my charge.'*

**for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.**  
weary chasing

*faint, עָיִף, an adj. tss. faint, weary, thirsty.*

*pursuing, Qal part. Poel of the verb רָדַף, rah-daph, tss. to pursue, to follow, to follow after, to chase, to put to flight. (vss. Jud. 1.6; 3.28; 4.16, 22; 7.23, 25; 8.4, 5, 12; 9.40; 20.43).*

*kings, מְלִיכֵי, meh-lek, a masc. noun tss. king (oft), royal.*

כִּי

**6 And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in palms (of their power)**

said, **וַיֹּאמֶר**, is 3p<sub>s</sub>. masc. Qal fut. of the verb **אָמַר**, to say. The princes were represented by one man. See v.14, that a young man has to *describe* to Gideon who the princes of Succoth are.

Evidently the princes were represented by a single man of them.

**יָדְךָ**

***thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?***

*hands*, **יָדְךָ**, caph, a fem. noun, so *palms* (of the hand), *the hollow* (of the thigh), *the sole* (of the foot). Here meaning ‘are the power and Zebah and Zalmunna in your *power*.

*Hab 2:9 Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power (palm of the hand) of evil!*

**7 And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and**

**יָדְךָ**

***Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh***

thrash

[like wheat is stricken in order to separate the kernal from the husk]

*tear*, Qal pret. of the verb **דָּוַשׁ**, doosh, tss. *to tear, to thresh, to tread out, to tread down, to break; so to beat upon* their flesh.

Gideon is going to give the princes of Succoth a thrashin’ they’ll never forget.

***with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.***

Thorns and briers would be some strong chastisement. Recently while away and traveling I got caught in a *thicket* as Luanne and I were walking around

the parents' place. You could walk into it but not out. It took care to get loose from it in order not to be injured.

**8 And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise:**

*Ge 32:30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (meaning 'the face of God'): for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.*

*31 And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.*

Penuel is a little further east from Succoth on the River Jabbok, about 6 miles.

***and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him.***  
(*men, the princes there at Succoth*)

**9 And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.**

*break down, Qal pret. of the verb נָתַץ, nah-thatz, also tss. to break down, to throw down, to break out, to destroy, to overthrow, to beat down. (Jud.6.30, 31, 32; 8.17, Qal pret.; 2.2; 8.9; 9.45, Qal fut; 6.28, Pual pret.)*

*tower, מִגְדָּל, mig-dahl, a masc. noun tss. tower (oft), castle (1 [cf. 1Chr.27.25]).*

The term *tower* is once translated *castle*. It might be that this tower was a place for the princes to conduct their business.

**10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor,**

It appears that these two kings made their way south and east to what might be Moab's easternmost border.

**and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword.**

What was a large host of 135,000 men that drew the sword, of the Ishmaelites, Amalekites, and the children of the east fleeing (Arab bedouins) (cf. Jud.7.12) is now reduced to 15,000.

**11 And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents**

(Arab bedouins?)

**on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was secure.**

careless.

*secure*, בִּטְחָה, be-tach, a masc. noun tss. *boldly, safety, secure, securely, careless, in hope, without care, with confidence.*

So Gideon passed by on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, cities which the tribe of Gad built (Nu.32.35, 42) to come to Karkor and found the Ishmaelites had set up camp thinking themselves safe at this point.

**12 And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.**

frayed away                      camp

*discomfited*, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb חָרַד, chah-rad, tss. *to tremble, to be careful, to be afraid, to fray away (to scare or frighten away).*

**13 And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was up,**

How much time had passed until now is unknown, but at least from the end of the battle and the capture of these two kings Gideon and his men arrive back to Succoth before the sun was up the next day.

שָׁאַל (Qal fut.)

**14 And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him:**  
asked

כָּתַב (Qal fut.)

זָקֵן (adj.)

**and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof,**  
wrote

**even threescore and seventeen men.**

— 77 —

The princes had sent one man of them to represent them and the message they returned to Gideon in verse 6. Now he will have this young man describe all of the princes to him so that he might chastise them for failing to render aid to them in their time of need.

**15 And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying,**  
defy

*upbraided, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the verb חָרַף, chah-raph, tss. to reproach, to betroth, to jeopardy, to upbraid, to defy, to blaspheme, to rail.*

**Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?**

**16 And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.**  
acquainted

*taught, Qal fut. of the verb יָדַע, yah-da[g], tss. to know, to perceive, to be sure, to comprehend, to discern, to understand, to acquaint, to teach, to shew, etc.*

Gideon, by means thorns and briers, taught the men of the city. Whether it was the princes that were taught or the men of the city is difficult to say. In



either case they learned to do better should another occasion like this arise.

**17 And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.**

cast down

*beat down*, Qal pret. of the verb נָתַץ, nah-thatz, tss. *to break down, to cast down, to beat down, to break out, to pull down, to destroy, to overthrow.*

*and slew*, Qal fut. of the verb הָרַג, hah-rag, tss. *to slay, to kill.*

Men of the city probably refers to their princes. Gideon slew the princes of the city.

**18 ¶ Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna,**

Probably after they arrived back to Gideon's city, Ophrah.

***What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As***

***thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king.*** מֶלֶךְ  
[were] as the form of – a king's sons. –

*resembled*, תָּאַר, toh-ar, a masc. noun tss. *beautiful, favored, resembled, comely, countenance, form, visage.*

Prior to the LORD calling Gideon to be a judge Israel was in a desperate situation. Under the Midianites oppression Israel was forced to live in the mountains, dens and rocks crevasses. It was probably during this time that Gideon heard report of the deaths of his brethren at Tabor. Evidently their deaths were a direct result of the kings, Zebah and Zalmunna.

**19 And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.**



Instead of vaunting themselves against the LORD by saying that they had saved themselves by the power of their own hand they turn to the man that the LORD used to deliver them.

Behind their desire to have a king rule over them is very likely the idea that if they had a king perhaps these cycles of oppression would cease. But the problem was not that they had no king like the nations, but that they rejected the LORD to be their King. (cf. Jn.19.15)

**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 LORD shall have dominion over you.

שָׂאֵל שָׂאֵל

**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.)**

*earrings, םַזְּ, neh'-zem, tss. earring, jewel. This can be worn on the ear, at the forehead, on the nose. Wigram has at Ge.24.22, 'earring (marg. or, jewel for the forehead)'.*

*Pr 11:22 [As] a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, [so is] a fair woman which is without discretion.*

*Isa 3:21 The rings, and nose jewels ...*

*Eze 16:12 And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.*

Here the Midianites are further identified as Ishmaelites, and so sons or descendants of Ishmael. Ishmael was the firstborn son of Abraham through Hagar.

*Ge 25:12 Now these [are] the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham ...*

*Ge 16:11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou [art] with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.*

*12 And he will be a wild man; his hand [will be] against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.*

*Ge.25.18 And they (Ishmael's people) dwelt from Havilah unto Shur (which might be from the southern area of Arabia over to Egypt), that [is] before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: [and] he died in the presence of all his brethren.*

As was usually the case, the warriors took the spoils of war. (cf. Nu.31.48-54) The spoils of war for living things were supposed to be divided in a certain way to the warriors and the congregation so that Aaron and the Levites received a portion. (Nu.31.24-30) Here Gideon desired to have the rings of gold which the Ishmaelites wore.

— נָתַן נָתַן —

**25 And they answered, We will willingly give [them].**  
in giving we will give

**we will willingly give** – The Hebrew verb נָתַן, nah-than doubled emphasizes the act of giving. In giving we will give [them].

**And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey.**

*spread, Qal fut. of the verb פָּרַשׁ, pah-ras, tss. to spread, to spread forth, to spread abroad, to spread out, to stretch, to stretch forth, to chop in pieces, to lay open, to break, to scatter.*

and did cast, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb **שָׁלַךְ**, shah-lak, tss. to hurl, to throw, to cast, to pluck, to cast, to cast down, to cast away, to cast out.

**26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold;**

To put this into perspective, Gideon received 1,700 shekels weight of gold rings, or .56 of a talent of gold, or 34#, or the equivalent of the weight of 10,880 silver dollars.

Note at Ex.30.11-21 lesson:

The shekel of the sanctuary, sets the standard weight for the metals used in trade. There is a gerah, which is 1/20th of a shekel; a bekah is ½ a shekel, (Ex.38.26); a shekel; and a talent, which is 3,000 shekels (Ex.28.37).

...

talent	1	100 sockets weighing 1 talent
shekel	3,000	300,000
bekah	6,000	600,000
gerah	60,000	6,000,000

cf. Gill – 1 talent weights about 60 #. [could be 66#]

A talent of silver equals 3,000 shekels. 100 shekels = 1/30th of a talent. (see note at Ex.38.26) 1/30th of a talent is estimated to be about 2 pounds of silver or the equivalence of 640 silver dollars. (640 silver dollars weighing .05oz. each = 32oz. or two pounds of silver.)

**beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were about their camels' necks.**

collars, **נְטֵי יָפוֹת**, n'tee-photh, tss. chains (Is.3.19, marg. 'sweet balls.' Perhaps a chain worn around the neck that has locket attached that contains spices to give off a pleasant aroma.

chains, **עֲנָקִים**, [g]<sup>a</sup>-naq, a masc. noun always tss. with the English chain.

**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.** trap

*ephod*, אֶפֹד, eh-phōhd, a masc. noun. An Ephod is a kind of vest. The first mention of an ephod is with reference to that which the high priest would wear. It was worn over the coat and robe, and then fastened with a curious girdle or belt.

*Le.8.7 And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound [it] unto him therewith.*

*and put*, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb יָצַג, yah-tzag, tss. *to set, to make, to establish, to leave, to present, to put.*

*and ... went ... a whoring*, Qal fut. of the Hebrew verb זָנַח, zah-nah, tss. *to play the whore, to go whoring, to commit fornication, to commit whoredom, to fall to whoredom, to play the harlot, to be a harlot, to be whorish, to be a whore.* (Jud.2.17 (Qal pret.); Jud.8.27, 33; 19.2 (Qal fut.); Jud.11.1; 16.1 (Qal part.)

*snare*, מִוֶּקֶשׁ, moh-qehsh, a masc. noun, tss. *a snare, a trap, a gin.*

Gideon did not set out to do sinfully. But this thing that he did, the people began to idolize so much so that very likely Gideon found it more and more difficult to speak against them. He just let it go, and the longer he let it go the greater the problem until he could no longer do anything about it.

We must be watchful against things that we might do which could contribute to others getting caught up in superstitions, idolatry, superstitions, etc. Simply believe the word of God.

**28 Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more.**

was subdued, כָּנַע, kah-na[g], a verb also tss. to humble, to bring under, to bring into subjection, to bring low, to bring down. (Jud.3.30; 4.23; 8.28; 11.33)

Midian is never mentioned again except as a reference of the kind of destruction hoped for against other enemies of the nation of Israel. (Read Ps.83.1-12)

אָרַץ

**And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.**  
land had rest

quietness, Qal fut. of the verb שָׁקַט, shah-qat, tss. to rest, to be quiet, to be still, to be settled, to be idle, to appease.

**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.**

The name Abimelech means 'my father a king.'

**32 And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age,**  
with a good hoary head.

in a ... old age, שֵׁיבָה, she-vah, a fem. noun tss. old age, gray hairs, hoar head, hoary head, greyheaded.

**and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.**  
**33 And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god.**  
plural appointed

made, Qal fut. of the verb **אָשׂוּ** or **אָשַׁע**, tss. *to order, appoint, to ordain, to make, to put, etc.*

**34 And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side:**  
from

*delivered*, Hiphil (causative act.) part. of the verb **נָצַל**, nah-tzal, tss. *to deliver, to escape, to spoil, to take, to recover, to rescue, to save, etc.*

*your enemies, is a verb!*, **אָיַב**, ah-yav, also tss. *foes. (Jud.2.14 (twice), 18; 3.28; 5.31; 8.34; 11.36; 16.23, 24)*

**35 Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely,**  
did

*kindness*, **רַחֲמִים**, cheh-sed, a masc. noun tss. *mercy, kindly, good deeds, favour, pity, lovingkindness.*

**Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.**  
did with

Mesopotamian oppression (v.8)	8 years	(ch.3)
Othniel peace (v.11)	40	
Moab's oppression (v.14)	18	
Ehud's peace (v.30)	80	
Shamgar (unknown)	---	
Canaanite's oppression	20	(ch.4)
Deborah's peace	40	
Midian oppression	7	
<u>Gideon's peace (v.28)</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>(ch.8)</u>
Total	253 years	

Note: Caleb was 85 when he went to battle against Hebron and took it, killing the three sons of Anak, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai. (cf. Nu.13.22; Jos.14.10; 15.14; Jud.1.10)