



# Lesson 81

## Gideon Defeats the Midianites – Part 2

### Story Elements

- **Text:** Judges 7:24 - 8:28
- **Setting:** circa 1250 B.C. in various locales throughout Israel
- **Main Characters:** God and Gideon (Jerubbaal)
- **Plot:** Gideon neutralizes the Midianite threat and deals with Hebrew infighting.

- **Key word(s):** “the \_\_\_\_\_ shall rule over you” (8:23)
- **Climax:** *Judges 8:22* Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.

### Review

1. (7:8-23) Gideon and his band of 300 Hebrew soldiers put to flight the Midianite horde by blowing trumpets and breaking pitchers that contained burning torches. With divinely sent fear in their hearts, the enemies of Israel attacked their confederates while retreating in disarray.

### Disgruntled Allies

2. (7:24-25) As the Midianites retreated, Gideon sent messengers throughout Ephraim to pursue the enemy and cut them off before they crossed the Jordan river.
  - a. The Ephraimites successfully intercepted the fleeing Midianites and captured and killed two princes, Oreb and Zeeb.
  - b. Oreb was slain at what became know as the \_\_\_\_\_ of Oreb, and Zeeb was killed at a \_\_\_\_\_ that was later given his name.
3. (8:1) The victorious Ephraimites brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon and presented them to him as trophies of battle, but they also aired a grievance that they were not summoned sooner to battle the Midianites.

APPLICATION → Gideon’s strategy was divinely directed. As such, the Ephraimites did not fit into God’s plan in the way they had wished. Here’s a lesson for us: when we follow God’s will, we might find that others are offended by our course of action. Can you think of another example in Scripture where someone found fault when another did right? \_\_\_\_\_

4. (8:2-3) Gideon diffused the Ephraimites’ anger by extolling their accomplishment and saying their “leftovers” were better than his full harvest.

APPLICATION → Gideon acted wisely here. He didn’t need to prove anything, he only wanted to finish the mission. His careful words recall Proverbs 15:1, “A soft answer turneth away \_\_\_\_\_: But grievous words stir up anger.”

### Denied Assistance

5. (8:4-5) Hot in pursuit of the remnant Midianites, including their kings Zeba and Zalmunna, Gideon stopped at Succoth and asked the men of the city for \_\_\_\_\_ for his band of 300.
  - a. (8:6) The men of Succoth answered Gideon’s request with taunting rudeness. Their words betray the fear they had of the Midianites and the lack of faith they had in God’s power. Matthew Henry comments

on their reaction, saying, “The bowels of their compassion were shut up against their brethren; they were as destitute of \_\_\_\_\_ as they were of faith...”<sup>1</sup>

- b. (8:7) Gideon left Succoth with a warning, “when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the \_\_\_\_\_ of the wilderness and with briers.”
6. (8:8-9) Gideon stopped at another city named Penuel, and there he was treated the same way (and for the same motivations) as he received from Succoth. Gideon promised, “When I come again in peace, I will break down this \_\_\_\_\_.”<sup>2</sup>
7. (8:10-12) Gideon continued his pursuit and eventually captured Zeba and Zalmunna. With the Midianite kings in tow, Gideon returned to the cities of Penuel and Succoth and made good on his promises:
  - a. (8:13-16) The leaders of Succoth were “\_\_\_\_\_” with thorns and briers.
  - b. (8:17) The tower of Penuel was beaten down and the leaders \_\_\_\_\_.

**APPLICATION** → At first reading, modern western minds are shocked at Gideon’s severity of punishment. We often miss that the leaders of the city, by their taunting rudeness and refusal to help their countrymen, showed their cowardly, traitorous defection to the Midianite cause.

We also overlook Gideon’s growing \_\_\_\_\_ as he, without help from his fellow Hebrews and in the face of continual hardship, faithfully pursued his mission to drive the Midianites out of the land – yea, *to chase them out of the world*. (Job 18:18)

8. (8:18-21) Before executing the kings of Midian, we learn that Gideon’s \_\_\_\_\_ were killed by these same men in a battle not previously mentioned.
  - a. Jether, Gideon’s young son, was called upon as a \_\_\_\_\_ relative to the fallen men of Tabor, to dispatch Zeba and Zalmunna. But the youth shrank from the violence and could not bring the sword against the enemy kings.
  - b. Gideon then kills the kings of Midian and fulfills his calling to deliver Israel from the Midianites.

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## Dangerous Affinity

9. (8:22-23) The men of Israel asked Gideon to be their king, but Gideon refused, saying, “I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.”
  - a. (8:24-26) Though he refused a throne, he did request a reward in the form of golden plunder taken in battle. The Hebrews gladly gave him what amounted to over \_\_\_\_\_ pounds of gold.
  - b. (8:27-28) Sadly, Gideon took the plunder and fashioned it into an ephod, which became an \_\_\_\_\_ to Israel and Gideon’s family.

**APPLICATION** → Gideon’s mighty victory brought glory to God, but the story’s aftermath brings light to Israel’s spiritual condition: they trusted in the flesh instead of God by so easily wanting a man as king, and they were easily seduced into \_\_\_\_\_. This is the repeated plot of the book Judges.

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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): LORD • 2. b. rock; winepress • 3. → Judas was offended by Mary’s offering to Jesus; cf John 12:1-8 • 4. → wrath • 5. bread; a. love; b. thorns • 6. tower • 7. a. taught; b. killed; → faith • 8. brothers; a. blood • 9. a. 40; b. idol; → idolatry

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 346.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently, a tower within the city was a point of pride and fleshly confidence.