

#13 Gideon | April 29, 2018

The Life and Times of Gideon | Judges 6-8

- During the days prior to Gideon's rule, the Midianites, Amalekites, and other enemies of the east would continually "bully" the Israelites, who were living in fear (not faith) - Jdgs 6:1-5.
- As was the pattern in the book of Judges, the people finally cried out unto the Lord – Jdgs 6:6-10.
- In a spectacular manner, the Lord called Gideon to lead the battle against the Midianites – Jdgs 6:11-24.
- In obedience to the Lord, Gideon removed his father's altar to Baal (under cover of night). The reaction of the people showed that their crying unto God was not convincing – Jdgs 6:25-32.
- Gideon set out his fleece, seeking a miraculous sign from God that he was to battle the Midianites – Jdgs 6:33-40.
- Gideon took an army of 32,000, narrowed it to 300, and (encouraged by the dream of a stranger), brought the Midianite army into mass confusion, defeating them with their own swords while Gideon's 300 shouted "The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon" – Jdgs 7:1-21.
- Gideon was offered a new monarchy over Israel, but refused – Jdgs 8:22-24.
- In sin, Gideon made an *ephod* which was sinful because it made him a self-appointed priest – Jdgs 8:25-27.
- The land had peace from the Midianites for 40 years – Jdgs 8:28-29.

Should we set out the fleece?

- Perhaps the best known story from Gideon's life is that of the fleece.
- Today, "putting out the fleece," is another way of saying, "I am looking for a sign from God."
- Why you shouldn't put out the fleece –
 - Historic passages are never meant to be the basis for Christian action.
 - Anytime you are seeking a sign, you are displaying weakness.
 - A lack of faith in God's Word.
 - A lack of trust that, in the Spirit, you are free to decide your own direction.

A Little Gideon in All of Us

- Like Gideon, we tend to display more doubt in ourselves and our God than we do faith.
- Like Gideon, a few victories go a long way...sometimes too far, to the point we become prideful and sinful.
- Like Gideon, our influence will wane quickly. Our focus should not be to leave a legacy, but to live a faithful life.

The Conclusion of the Period of the Judges

- The period of the Judges was a period in which **every man did that which was right in his own eyes** (Jdgs 21:25).
- There was no King because God was their King.
- The period of the Judges was a period of *theocracy* and foreshadows the Kingdom of God. While the period of the Judges was a failure in so many ways, it also shows the ideal society in many other ways.

Things You May Not Know

- There are 100 verses in the Biblical account of Gideon – more than any other Judge. Samson comes in second with 96 verses.
- Gideon had 70 children, from many wives (Jdgs 8:30), one of whom sought to establish himself as King (Jdgs 9).
- Gideon's own brothers had been killed (on Mt. Tabor) by the Kings of the Midianites – Jdgs 8:18-19.

Gideon: The Very Human "Savior"

- In the book of Judges (and throughout the Old Testament), the people were looking for a Messiah who would bring restoration of the Garden of Eden type of utopia. This expectation was valid and based on the revelation of God. The further the revelation progressed, the more the people knew about the future time of refreshing.
- Before the Messiah came, God was gracious to bring human *saviors* who would provide temporary reprieve.
- Gideon was used by God to bring 40 years of peace to Israel.
- Gideon was a very *human savior*:
 - Scared
 - Grieving
 - Morally and spiritually flawed
- In our day, we look forward to the coming King. Until then, we accept the grace of *human saviors* for our political and economic woes.