

JUDGES

Message Eight

**The Intrinsic Significance of Gideon
as God's Valiant Warrior**

Scripture Reading: Judg. 6—9

- I. Gideon was raised up by God as His valiant warrior and sent by God to save Israel (Judg. 6:12-14; cf. John 8:29) from the oppression of the Midianites (Judg. 6:1—8:32); we must see the intrinsic significance of Gideon's success:**
- A. Gideon listened carefully to the word of God, something that was rare among the children of Israel at that time:
 - 1. The Lord always wants to open our ears to hear His voice so that we may see things according to His economy—Rev. 1:10, 12; Job 33:14-16; Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6.
 - 2. As the Spirit is speaking to the churches (Rev. 2:7a), we all need an opened, circumcised (Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51), cleansed (Exo. 29:20; Lev. 8:23-24; 14:14), and anointed ear (vv. 17, 28) to hear the Spirit's speaking.
 - B. Gideon obeyed God's word and acted on it—cf. Heb. 11:32-33a:
 - 1. In the New Testament we have Christ's life of obedience and submission, and if we walk according to the spirit, we will spontaneously fulfill the righteous requirement of the law—Phil. 2:5-11; Rom. 8:4.
 - 2. If our attitude in coming to the law is to care only for the commandments in letters, we will have the law in the aspect of the killing letter; however, if we take every part of the law as the word breathed out by the God whom we love, we will have the law in the aspect of the life-giving Spirit; then the law will function to dispense God Himself as life into us as His loving seekers—Psa. 119:25, 116, 130; 2 Cor. 3:6; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
 - 3. To be vital is to be living and active by being filled with the Spirit inwardly and outwardly and by preaching the gospel and preaching the truths at any time and in any place by diving into the Word for the increase and propagation of the Lord—Dan. 11:32b; Acts 13:52; 4:8, 31; 13:9; 2:38; 5:32b; 2 Tim. 4:1-2.
 - C. Gideon tore down the altar of Baal (the chief male god of the Canaanites) and cut down the Asherah (the chief female goddess); this touched God's heart because God hated the idols, which He regarded as men with whom His wife Israel had committed harlotry; intrinsically, an idol is anything within us that we love more than the Lord and that replaces the Lord in our life—Judg. 6:25-28; Ezek. 14:1-3.

Message Eight (continuation)

- D. By tearing down the altar of Baal and cutting down the Asherah that belonged to his father, Gideon sacrificed his relationship with his father and his enjoyment of society to follow Jehovah; for Gideon to do such a thing required that he sacrifice his own interests, and his sacrifice was a strong factor of his success—Judg. 6:28-32.
- E. As a result of the above four factors, Gideon received a reward—the economical Spirit came upon him (v. 34); hence, he became powerful and with only three hundred men defeated two princes and two kings, who had people “like a locust swarm in number” and “camels...without number” (v. 5; 7:25; 8:10-12); with Gideon we have a picture of a man who lived in union with God, a God-man, to fulfill God’s word and to carry out God’s economy.

II. The selection of the overcomers is seen with God’s selection of Gideon and the three hundred men to fight with him to defeat the Midianites—6:1-6, 11-35; 7:1-8, 19-25; 8:1-4:

- A. The account of Gideon shows us how to be an overcomer:
 1. We must know the self, realizing ourselves to be the least—6:15; Eph. 3:8; Matt. 20:27-28; Gal. 6:3.
 2. We must see the heavenly vision of Christ as the centrality and universality of God’s eternal economy—Judg. 6:12; Acts 26:16-22; Col. 1:17b, 18b; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Phil. 3:8, 10.
 3. We must offer up ourselves to God as a living sacrifice according to His good, well-pleasing, and perfect will to have the reality and living of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:1-5; cf. Judg. 6:21-24); we must be those who hear and answer the Lord’s call in Revelation 2 and 3 for the overcomers—2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 20-21; *Hymns*, #894.
 4. We must tear down the idols in our heart, in our life, and in our work for the Lord’s testimony, realizing that on the one hand, God leads us into the enjoyment of Christ as life, light, and power, and on the other hand, God is faithful to allow us to have financial difficulties, emotional sufferings, physical sufferings, and the loss of natural goodness in order that we would take Christ as our satisfaction, be filled with Christ, and allow Him to have the first place in all things—Judg. 6:25-28; John 10:10; 8:12; 2 Tim. 2:1; Col. 1:17b, 18b; 1 John 5:21; Job 22:24-26; Matt. 10:35-39; 2 Cor. 12:7-9; Job 1:1, 22; 2:9-10; 3:1, 11; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 2:2.

JUDGES

Message Eight (continuation)

- B. How the overcomers are selected is seen with the selection of the three hundred; by telling Gideon that he had too many people, God was indicating that He would fight for Israel; the first selection resulted in twenty-two thousand leaving:
1. Those who left wanted to glorify themselves—Judg. 7:1-2; John 5:41, 44.
 2. Those who left were fearful and afraid—Judg. 7:3; Matt. 25:25; cf. Deut. 20:5-8.
- C. The second selection was determined by how the people drank; those who drank directly with their mouth were eliminated by God; those who drank by bringing water in their hand to their mouth were selected by God because they were self-denying persons; by drinking in this way, they were able to watch diligently for any attack by the enemy—Judg. 7:4-6:
1. Those who have the chance to indulge themselves but will not do so are self-denying persons who have been dealt with by the cross, sacrificing their personal rest and comfort for the sake of God's purpose in the day of His warfare—v. 7; Psa. 110:3.
 2. The overcomers are absolute for God's glory and are afraid of nothing except offending the Lord and losing His presence (Exo. 33:14-16); they allow the cross to deal with the self (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14; Rom. 6:23; Gal. 2:20).
- D. God gave Gideon three hundred men and made them one body, signified by a "round loaf of barley bread" tumbling through the camp of the Midianites for their defeat and God's victory—Judg. 7:9-25:
1. Gideon and his men moved and acted together in one accord as one man, signifying the oneness in the Spirit and the living in the Body; they were blended together in resurrection, signified by barley, the first-ripe grain (6:16; 2 Sam. 21:9; Lev. 23:10; 1 Cor. 15:20), to be one bread, signifying the church (10:17).
 2. Paul's thought of the church being one bread was taken from the Old Testament with the meal offering (Lev. 2:4-5); we are the many grains (John 12:24) so that we may be ground into fine flour mingled with oil for making the cake, the bread, of the church (1 Cor. 12:24-25).

Message Eight (continuation)

3. All the co-workers and elders should shepherd one another and love one another to be a model of the Body life, a model of those who are learning to be tempered, blended, and crossed out in order to do everything by the Spirit to dispense Christ into one another for the practical Body life—Rom. 12:1-5; cf. 2 Chron. 1:10.
- E. Gideon and his three hundred men fought the battle and labored, yet the whole congregation chased the enemy and reaped the harvest, signifying that when we overcome, the whole Body is revived until Jehovah as peace, Jehovah-shalom (Judg. 6:24), reigns on the earth—7:22-25; 8:1-4; Col. 1:24; Psa. 128:5; Isa. 32:17; 66:12.
- F. As Gideon and his men were pursuing the kings of Midian, they were “weary yet pursuing” (Judg. 8:4b); because we have received God’s mercy to minister and live in the reality of God’s eternal economy, we do not lose heart (2 Cor. 4:1, 16-18); we may labor to the point of exhaustion, but our labor is according to God’s operation, which operates in us in power (Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:58).

III. We must see the intrinsic significance of the secret of Gideon’s failure:

- A. First, Gideon was not kind; he killed those countrymen who did not support him (Judg. 8:16-17), breaking the sixth commandment of God (Exo. 20:13); Christ as the kindness of God led us to repentance (Rom. 2:4; Titus 3:4; Eph. 2:7).
- B. Second, he indulged in the lust of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:4), not exercising any restriction over his fleshly lust; this is indicated by Judges 8:30, which tells us that Gideon had seventy sons, “for he had many wives”; in addition, his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son (v. 31); by this Gideon broke the seventh commandment (Exo. 20:14).
- C. Third, although Gideon did a good thing in refusing to rule over the people (Judg. 8:22-23), he coveted the spoil of his people (their golden earrings), thereby breaking the tenth commandment, and they surrendered it to him; Gideon made an ephod with the gold he had taken from the people, and this ephod became an idol to the children of Israel (vv. 24-27; Exo. 32:1-4 and footnote 1 on v. 2); as a result, Gideon’s family and the entire society of Israel were corrupted.

JUDGES

Message Eight (continuation)

- D. Judges is a book concerning the enjoyment of the good land, which is a type of Christ; Gideon's success indicates the gaining of an excellent opportunity to enjoy Christ, but his failure indicates the losing of the opportunity to enjoy Christ.

IV. Gideon's indulgence in sex and his greediness for gold led to idolatry; greediness is idolatry (Col. 3:5), and both fornication and greediness are linked to idol worship (Eph. 5:5); his failure shows us that we need to exercise strict control in dealing with the matters of sex and wealth:

- A. Even King Solomon, who was glorified in the kingdom of Israel with the splendor of that kingdom at its highest peak (1 Kings 4:34; 8:10-11) and began as a God-fearing and God-loving person, eventually became an idol worshipper through his many foreign wives (11:1-13; see footnote 1 on v. 43).
- B. After Gideon died, Israel's degradation was initiated in their forsaking of Jehovah their God and their worshipping the idols of the Canaanites, which issued in their indulgence in fleshly lust; also, the son of Gideon's concubine, Abimelech, slew seventy of Gideon's other sons, whereas Jotham, another son, escaped—Judg. 8:33—9:57.
- C. Jotham boldly declared a parable of Abimelech's reign as the reign of the bramble versus those who are like olive trees, fig trees, and vine trees, who reject ambition and become a channel of supply to God's people (vv. 8-13); God repaid the evil of Abimelech (vv. 14-55), which he had done to his father by slaying his seventy brothers; and God brought all the evil of the men of Shechem back upon their own heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal (Gideon—6:32) came upon them (9:56-57).
- D. In Gideon's success he joined himself to God, but in his failure he joined himself to Satan; to forsake God and join with Satan is to enter into the intrinsic ambition within this evil one—Isa. 14:13-14.
- E. We have no right to divorce the Lord and no reason to forsake Him; we must take Him, love Him, honor Him, respect Him, regard Him, exalt Him, and cling to Him, rejecting Satan to the uttermost; then we will be blessed; blessed is everyone—nation, society, group, and individual—whose Lord, Head, King, and Husband is Jehovah—Psa. 33:12.