

11/24/13

**Gideon, The Entitled Vessel**  
**Judges 8:22-35**

God commissioned Gideon to defeat the Midianites with the absolute certainty of sure victory, as a “Weak Vessel”. Judges 6

God communicated to Gideon the conditions for the victory over the Midianites, being a “Broken Vessel”. Judges 7-8

God then recorded the grievous conduct of the people of God after God delivered them from the Medianites, described by:

- I. The foolishness of Gideon. vs. 22-28
- II. The slothfulness of Gideon. vs. 29-32
- III. The unfaithfulness of Israel to Gideon. vs. 33-35

**I. The foolishness of Gideon. vs. 22-28**

- A. The people expressed their indebtedness to Gideon. vs. 22-23
  - 1. The people requested for Gideon to be their king. vs. 22
    - a. The people were so impressed with Gideon, “Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us.” vs. 22a-b
    - b. The people were so impressed with Gideon that they were willing to

extend their commitment till the third generation, “both you and your son, and your grandson also.” vs. 22c-d

- 1) They said this knowing God had called, commissioned and clothed him with the Holy Spirit to enable him for the victory.
  - 2) They said this, knowing God reduced the army of Israel from 32,000 to 10,000, then to 300 men.
  - 3) They said this knowing God had done it with pitchers, lanterns and trumpets and turning the enemy’s sword on each other.
- c. The people were giving Gideon the honor and credit for the victory over the Midianites, “for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.” vs. 22e
- 1) The very reason God reduced the army from 32.000 to 300.
  - 2) “And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’” Judges 7:2
2. The judge Gideon denied the request of the people to be their king. vs. 23
- a. He rejected it for himself and his descendants, “But Gideon said to

- them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you.” vs. 23a-c
- b.** He reminded them the honor belonged to God, “the LORD shall rule over you.” vs. 23d
- 1) The convent LORD, Yahweh.
  - 2) Israel was to be ruled by a theocracy, God ruled.
- B.** The request of Gideon was that the people express their indebtedness to him. vs. 24-26
1. Gideon asked for a portion of the spoils of war. vs. 24
    - a.** Gideon was able to deny the honor of being their king, but was not able to resist the self-indulgence like a king, “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.” vs. 24a-c
      - 1) He passed the test of adversity.
      - 2) He failed the test of prosperity.
    - b.** Gideon requested the earrings knowing the wealth of the Midianites, “For they had gold earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites.” vs. 24d-e
      - 1) They were nomadic trading merchants of the Arabian desert.
      - 2) They were descendants from Hagar, the Midianites from Katurah. Gen. 25:2, 4, 12

- 3) It is interesting that Abraham would not take a shoestring from the king of Sodom and Gamorah, lest he say, he made him rich. Gen. 14:23
  - 4) David shared to booty equally with those who went to battle and those who stay by the supplies. 1Sam. 30:24-25
- 2.** Gideon was granted his request from the people. vs. 25-26
- a.** The giving was with great joy, “So they answered, “We will gladly give *them.*” vs. 25a-b
  - b.** The giving was done by all, “And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder.” vs. 25c-d
  - c.** The giving was a great amount of gold, “Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred *shekels* of gold”, about 42-70 pounds. vs. 26a
  - d.** The giving included the personal spoils of the kings, “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.?” vs. 26b-e

- C. The recklessness of Gideon was to plant the seeds of idolatry again. vs. 27-28
1. Gideon set up an altar in his city. vs. 27
    - a. He made a model of the ephod of the priest, “Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah.” vs. 27a-b
      - 1) His sincere intent did not matter, it would corrupt the people!
      - 2) The tabernacle was at Shiloh.
    - b. He and all the people bowed down to the ephod, “And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.” vs. 27c-d
      - 1) The ephod pertained to the priest, the breastpiece of judgment was attached to it with the Urim and Thummim, to know the will of God. Ex. 28:28-30; 39:2-5
      - 2) Gideon had no right to make an idol image, he had destroyed the altar of Baal and set up the altar of God in Ophrah. Judges 7:24-30
      - 3) Gideon went from a servant to a celebrity, he had now left the people of Israel worse than at the beginning, having removed the altar of Baal and the chastening hand of God, they were led back into idolatry by the very man who had been used to delivered them!

2. Gideon’s seeds of idolatry were germinating for forty years. vs. 28
  - a. After God delivered them, “Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more.” vs. 28a-b
    - 1) Not having to be concerned about an enemy from without, the Midia.
    - 2) Not recognizing the greater enemy was within, themselves.
  - b. After God gave them peace, “And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.” vs. 28c
    - 1) The forty years of quiet rest was a slow progressive polluting of themselves!
    - 2) Forty is the number of judgment throughout the Scriptures!

### **Illustration**

There was a time when every institution in America, from the President of the United States, public education, to the common citizen believed God had led the Pilgrims, who were oppressed by King James in their worship of Jesus, to establish this nation. Also that the founding Fathers clearly articulated the God of the Bible in every national document and monument, as well as in the Constitution. But from the removal of prayer for the public school and the Ten Commandment in 1962, it has only taken about 45 years for the President of the United States Barak Obama to say

“We are no longer a Christian nation” and to actively and legally prohibit the freedom of Christians to express their faith and share it with other, but not the other religions.

\* The Public education, Universities, the media and the political liberal progressives all agree!

### **Application**

1. The person who is called to be used of God must always guard himself against the praise of people.

- a. There will be people who are save, who are moral and ethical people, upright citizens.
- b. There will be other people, who have lived of the sinful life after the standards of society.
- c. There will be still other, who will of made a mess of their life, living a real depraved life.
- d. The sincere appreciation and praise by any of these, if not all is legitimate, the danger is in the man believing the praises to think he is different from them and worthy of the admiration.

\* Listen to Peter, “Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” Acts 3:11-12

2. The person that is used by God must forever guard himself against laying a stumbling block to the believers, as God does a great work through him.

- a. The way they live their lives.
- b. The way they handle the success of God’s work.
- c. They way they treat people throughout the years.
- d. The way they expose any and everything that would point people away from Christ, be it “Pastor worship”, “the worship of a movement”, “the praise of methods”.

\* “But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.” 1Cor. 8:9

***The foolishness of Gideon led them back to the bondage!***

### **II. The slothfulness of Gideon. vs. 29-32**

- A. Gideon became an entitled person that was self-serving. vs. 29-30
  1. Gideon was indifferent and self absorbed despite the condition of the nation.
    - a. He did not continue to be a God-directed influence for the people, but lived for self, “Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.” vs. 29

- 1) There is nothing wrong with resting or with enjoying your family.
  - 2) The problem in the context of Gideon is that as a judge he was to direct, guide and judge the people and he did not, he became indifferent and lazy about his responsibility.
- b.** He was concerned only about his own pleasure, “Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives.” vs. 30
- 1) He conceived a good number of children, seventy sons in the forty years, the girls are not given.  
\* The rivalry can only be imagined, as in the sons of Jacob and David!
  - 2) He had many wives, enjoying the benefit of a hero.  
\* The emotional and sexual completion between the wives had to have been intense, as Jacob and David!
  - 3) All in the midst of growing apostasy.

**B.** Gideon became a slave to his flesh. vs. 31-32

1. Gideon was not satisfied with the many wives to meet his sexual needs. vs. 31

- a. He had another woman in the city of Shechem, “And his concubine who *was* in Shechem also bore him a son.” vs. 31a
  - 1) She was his concubine “piylegesh”, a Canaanite woman probably, who did not hold the legal title of a wife and she bore him a son.
  - 2) She was living in Shechem in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Garizim, between Judea and the Galilee.
  - 3) Shechem is the city Sychar where Jesus went to speak to the woman of Samaria. Jn. 4
- b. He gave his son an interesting, “whose name he called Abimelech.” vs. 31b
  - 1) The name Abimelech “Abymelek”, means “my father is king”, the title for Philistine kings.
  - 2) Though Gideon had declined the offer of king, he considered himself king in his heart.
2. Gideon came to the end of his life. vs. 32
  - a. He lived long, “Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age.” vs. 32a
  - b. He was buried in his home town, “and was buried in the tomb of Joash his

father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.”  
vs. 32b-c

### Illustration

It is much like a man that begins a business, but he does not stay on top of the new products, the competition or the people that work for him, soon loose his business.

\* So the believer in his faith!

### Application

1. Every believer has to guard against becoming slothful in the work of God.

- a. Many are so excited when they first get saved and get involved in ministry, but then some just stop serving the body.
- b. Sometimes others are totally committed and faithful for years, then they are not involved at all.
- c. Then there are those who are ever fixed, they serve till the Lord takes them home.

\* “You therefore must endure hardship as a good **soldier** of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a **soldier**.” 2Tim. 2:3-4

2. The extent and way we served will vary as we move through life.

- a. When we are single, we have no responsibilities to other, so we can serve in a greater way.

- b. When we are first married and without children, we serve as with less limitations.
- c. Once children come, the involvement of the wife will vary, having the priority of the family and home, but you do not stop serving all-together.
- d. As the children grow, your service will change again, according to the needs of the family, but you do not stop serving.
- e. Once your children are grown up, you are free to serve in a greater way.

\* “The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing, To declare that the LORD is upright; *He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him*” Ps. 92:12-15

*The slothfulness of Gideon led him back to a life of self!*

### III. The unfaithfulness of Israel to Gideon. vs. 33-35

- A. The people of God had been liberated from idolatry, returned to idolatry. vs. 33
  - 1. The Israelites became unfaithful to God. vs. 33a-c

- a. The time was after the usual pattern, at the death of the judge, “So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead.” vs. 33a
  - 1) It took place with Otheniel.
  - 2) It took place with Ehud.
  - 3) It took place with Shamgar.
  - 4) It took place with Deborah.
- b. The sin was spiritual adultery, “that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals.” vs. 33b
  - 1) The death of Gideon, the fifth judge, unleashed the idolatrous heart of Israel to be unchecked.
  - 2) This was the sixth treacherous apostasy against their covenant God to serve the many Baals,” to play the harlot with the Baals.” vs. 33c
  - 3) This is the background for the sixth judge to come, Jephthah.
- 2. The Israelites became faithful to Baal. vs. 33d
  - a. The particular Baal is named, “and made Baal-Berith.”
    - 1) Baal-Berith means “lord of a covenant”.
    - 2) A god of the Canaanites and Philistines.
    - 3) There was a temple to him in Shechem. Judges 9:46
  - b. The utter deception was sad, “is their god.”

- 1) The word god is not capitalized, indicating he was not the true and living God.
  - 2) Worshipped through idols, accompanied with some of the vilest sexual practices imaginable.
    - \* Having eye they can not see, ears, they can not hear and mouth that can not speak and those that worship them become like their gods. Ps. 115:4-8
- B.** The people of God did not pass on their history about their God. vs. 34-35
- 1. The Israelites forgot to communicate with their children the covenant they made with God. vs. 34
    - a. They remembered him only when they were being oppressed, “Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God.” vs. 34a
      - 1) “And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites.” Judges 6:7
      - 2) The prophet of God rebuked them for their disobedience. Judges 6:8-10
    - b. They forgot their terrible bondage, “who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.” vs. 34b

- 1) They became free and prosperous over night.
  - 2) They did not cultivate their worship of Yahweh through the forty years.
2. The Israelites forgot to communicate with their children the courageous obedience of Gideon. vs. 35
- a. Therefore they became vicious and cruel to his children, “nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon).
    - 1) The word kindness “heced”, means loving kindness, it is a covenant word used of God, they became treacherous covenant breakers.
    - 2) The name Jerubbaal remember was given to him by his father when Gideon tore down the altar of Baal and means “let Baal contend”.  
Judges 6:32
    - 2) Abimelech would slay 69 of the sons of Gideon, leaving one, Jotham. Judges 9:4-5
    - 3) Abimelech remember means “my father is king”, he felt he had the right to reign all 70 legitimate sons of Gideon, the son of a concubine.
  - b. Even though God had used Gideon as His instrument,” in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.”

- 1) They treated the house of Gideon as rivals.
  - 2) They treated the house of Gideon as enemies.
- c. The cycle is repeated again.
- 1) Apostasy.
  - 2) Bondage.
  - 3) Cry for deliverance.
  - 4) Deliverance.
  - 5) Brief obedience.
  - 6) Apostasy again.

### **Illustration**

The level of immorality, violence, treachery, dishonesty and murder that goes on in our nation every day is staggering, not to mention the 56 million babies aborted, and it is all due to the humanistic world view that we evolved and their is no God. Therefore people are living just like animals, believing only the strong survive!

### **Application**

1. No person is responsible for the choices of others, be they family or friends, but if their choice to sin is due to a persons influence or example, then God will hold them responsible.
  - a. We are to be a light to those around us.
  - b. We are to be salt to those around us.
  - c. We are to encourage believers to walk with God.



d. We are to confront, reproof, rebuke those in sin and even ex-communicate those who do not repent.

\* “Open rebuke *is* better Than love carefully concealed. Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.” Prov. 27:5-6

2. It does not take long to forget the goodness and kindness of God, if we do not maintain our relationship with Him daily.

- a. Spending time with the Lord Jesus in prayer.
- b. Spending time in the word, reading, meditating on it.
- c. Spending time with the church body to study the word, worship the Lord and serve out of Gods agape love.

\* “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.”  
Col. 1:21-23

3. It does not take long for a person to revert to their old life-style if you keep catering to your flesh and don't cultivate the life of the Spirit.

\* “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2Pet. 1:5-11

***The unfaithfulness of Israel to Gideon led them to a life of self-preservation!***

### **Conclusion**

God recorded the grievous conduct of the people of God after He delivered them from the Midianites, described by:

- I. The foolishness of Gideon that led them back to bondage!
- II. The slothfulness of Gideon that led him back to a life of self!
- III. The unfaithfulness of Israel to Gideon that led them to a life of self-preservation!