

VII. Biblical Biographies from the Bible
Biblical Biographies: Who? Why? How?
“Portrait #6: Gideon”

Judges 6–8

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November 3, 2019 • Evening Sermon

In the last study we did on Biblical biographies we looked at Deborah and our text was in Judges 4 and 5. It ended as the Lord blessed Deborah as judge and then the Lord gave the land rest for 40 years. Now comes the apostasy. One of the clear lessons that comes through time and time again in the book of Judges is the inevitable cycle of about every 40 to 80 years the people of God begin to move downward theologically, a death spiral culturally with a laxity of spiritual apathy, then God has to bring discipline in their life and He gives them over. So it is again in the life of Israel after Deborah and we now come to the fifth judge who is a man named Gideon that becomes an interesting lesson for us as to how the Lord uses His people and calls people to serve Him.

When you study the book of Judges you are reminded that not only do we have feet of clay but these are treasures entrusted in vessels of clay where the instruments God uses are not the key. The instruments magnify the key which is the Lord Himself. It's really interesting how Gideon fits this profile. There are some people in certain situations serve the Lord so effectively but once that situation passes all of a sudden their vitality, effectiveness and even their faithfulness begins to dissipate. There have been many great leaders who have stepped up in times of war and have done amazing feats in those times of adversity in war. Yet when the war is over they get into positions of leadership and there is just something missing.

An example of this comes to me as I remember reading about Ulysses S. Grant. I have studied him as a general and seen some of the amazing insights he had but yet the office of president for him seemed to be much too big of task or he wasn't matched to that task. We are about to find the same thing out about Gideon. Gideon doesn't start well, but then he runs well yet doesn't finish well. The question then comes, the fact that he doesn't finish well does that mean he was never a believer or is that just one of the ways that God shows us that even believers can't finish well unless they keep their eyes on the Lord?

So let's take a look at Gideon and the text on him will cover three chapters in Judges. Let's start by looking at Judges 6:1–10 which says [1] *The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Midian seven years. [2] And the hand of Midian overpowered Israel, and because of Midian the people of Israel made for themselves the dens that are in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. [3] For whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. [4] They would encamp against them and devour the produce of the land, as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel and no sheep or ox or donkey. [5] For they would come up with their livestock and their tents; they would come like locusts in number—both they and their camels could not be counted—so that they laid waste the land as they came in. [6] And Israel was brought very low because of Midian. And the people of Israel cried out for help to the LORD.*

[7] *When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD on account of the Midianites, [8] the LORD sent a prophet to the people of Israel. And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. [9] And I*

delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. [10] And I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.' But you have not obeyed my voice."

So who are the Midianites? Midian doesn't belong where you find them. Midian is a semi nomadic tribe that actually dwells much further south. In fact, Midianites are technically cousins to Israelites and we find this out from their origin given to us in the book of Genesis. After Sarah's death one of the wives Abraham took was a woman named Keturah and this woman bore Abraham sons. One of those sons was Midian and he then brought forth the Midianites. The people of Israel are then gone for 400 plus years into slavery in Egypt and God raises up a deliverer who becomes a type of Christ and the first author we have in the Scriptures which was Moses. When a death warrant is issued on Moses' life at the age of 40 he goes out into the wilderness arriving at a place called Midian. It is there a priest of the God most High named Jethro lives and Moses marries one of his daughters Zeporah.

Also when the Israelites are delivered out of slavery into the wilderness the Midianites give them a little bit of a pass on the way to the Promised Land. They settle in the Promised Land under Joshua and now we're at the year 1252 BC which is 1252 years before the birth of Christ. This passage we are looking at covers seven of those years from 1252 BC to 1245 BC. Here we are told that the people have abandoned the true worship of God and obeying God, even after God had done glorious things for them. They had gone into spiritual adultery and the language of this text in the original language says 'the people of Israel went whoring after other gods.' So God gave them over and no longer is there rest in the land.

Now there is oppression and the oppression of the Midianites supported by the Amalekites along with some other tribes, was so distinct and powerful that every time harvest time came around these tribes would take their livestock, whatever harvest would come in and everything from them. This happened so much that the people began to live in secret places like the caves and dens of mountains, just like wild animals, trying to avoid this oppression so they then cry out to the Lord.

In the Bible up to this point, every time the people cry out to the Lord God brings a deliverer, but not this time. This time when the people cry out to the Lord He doesn't send a deliverer immediately but sends a preacher, an unnamed Prophet. This Prophet does what Prophets in the Bible do when they are sent to God's people after they have abandoned the Lord. This Prophet becomes a preaching lawyer for he brings a covenantal lawsuit against God's people. He says 'This is what your covenant keeping God has done for you' and he recounts the blessings of God that were received by the people, undeserved, by the hand of God as He had sustained them. He brings every indictment to them and then brings the charge – 'you have abandoned the Lord and worshiped the gods of the pagans and that's why God has given you over to this present distress.'

Then God in His grace brings undeserved relief as He raises up a leader to deliver them. It is the fifth judge in the book of Judges. His name is Gideon and his name means 'threshing, cutter, hacker.' It's a clear military term. My guess is that Gideon was somewhat known for his military prowess even before God blessed him for his name indicates that. Now there is a Christophany – a pre incarnate appearance of Christ – to Gideon. We know this because it will say 'the' angel of the Lord and so the Lord will take on human appearance, a man like appearance to Gideon. Gideon is from the half tribe of Manasseh and his father is Joash who is

called the Abiezrite. Interestingly, Gideon's name means thresher and we will see him threshing wheat at a winepress.

Judges 6:11–18 says [11] Now **the** angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. [12] And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor." [13] And Gideon said to him, "Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian." [14] And **the LORD turned to him** and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" [15] And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." [16] And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." [17] And he said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. [18] Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you." And he said, "I will stay till you return."

So Gideon needed a sign/miracle that everything he was being told by the Lord was true. Gideon now goes to prepare an offering for Him. Let's continue in the text.

Judges 6:19–27 says [19] So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them. [20] And the angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them." And he did so. [21] Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. [22] Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face." [23] But the LORD said to him, "Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die." [24] Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, *The LORD Is Peace*. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

[25] That night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's bull, and the second bull seven years old, and pull down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it [26] and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of the stronghold here, with stones laid in due order. Then take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah that you shall cut down." [27] So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

So we see that even though Gideon is obeying the Lord, he is trying to do it the easiest way he can so that he doesn't expose himself to any danger. So he tore down this false god that was on the property of his father. So we see the apostasy of Israel in Manasseh in the house of Gideon's father Joash where Gideon is to tear it down and light it on fire as a sacrifice to God. So Gideon does it at night probably thinking they won't notice it the next morning but they do. Then what happens?

Judges 6:28–35 says [28] When the men of the town rose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah beside it was cut down, and the second bull was offered on the altar that had been built. [29] And they said to one another, "Who has done

this thing?" And after they had searched and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." [30] Then the men of the town said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, for he has broken down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it." [31] But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him? Whoever contends for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because his altar has been broken down." [32] Therefore on that day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he broke down his altar.

[33] Now all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the East came together, and they crossed the Jordan and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. [34] But the Spirit of the LORD clothed Gideon, and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him. [35] And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, and they too were called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they went up to meet them.

So God has told Gideon to tear down the altars of Baal and he is to start with his own father. Gideon obeys the Lord following proper protocol for building the altar and doing the sacrifice. When they see what he has done the people are ready to kill him for what Gideon has done. Interestingly, Joash who was the one who owned the altar, comes to his son's defense and basically tells them if they come against him they will die and he will see to it. Then his father tells the people why can't Baal contend for himself for what his son has done and let's find out what this god will do. I'm not sure Joash is getting converted for this just may be a father rising up to defend his son but it is positive what he does and says, not only to defend his son but to bring some theological accuracy to this god. From that day forward, Gideon's name around the town of Ophrah becomes Jerubbaal which meant 'let Baal contend against him.' They gave him that name because Gideon had the audacity to break down the altar and survived.

So word gets out and this stirring begins among the Israelites, the Midianites and the Amalakites and this coalition encamps in the valley of Jezreel. I want to give you a little geography here for you to get a better understanding of what is happening here. The valley of Jezreel is between Mount Gilboa and Mount Moreh at the south eastern end of what you would probably know as Megiddo. This is the same valley where Deborah had won her battle that we looked at in the last study. Here this large army of Amalakites and Midianites have gathered together. Gideon who now has been commissioned to do battle for the Lord begins to send out messengers to collect an army not only from Manasseh but from the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali. Then we see how Judges 6 comes to a conclusion.

Judges 6:36–40 says *[36] Then Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, [37] behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said." [38] And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. [39] Then Gideon said to God, "Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew." [40] And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.*

This is what is known as Gideon's fleece. How many of you have ever exercised Gideon's fleece? We do tend to put out fleeces and that's kind of like a spiritual badge but the reality is that the fleece is not a sign of faith. The fleece is a sign of unbelief. God has already told Gideon what to do and Gideon says 'God, I know You have said this in Your Word, and we

have this history of You being faithful to Your Word but God if You're really going to continue to be faithful to Your Word could You do a miracle for me?' God has already been gracious to do one because of his unbelief when He burned up cakes on the stone (Judges 6:21). Now Gideon is asking for another one wanting there to be dew only on the fleece. God very patiently does what Gideon asks but Gideon still doesn't trust Him and asks for yet another where the next morning the fleece is the only thing that doesn't have dew on it. God again in patience did the request of Gideon to encourage him.

Are you beginning to see some cracks in the foundation of Gideon? Here is a faith that rests, not upon God's Word, but upon whatever experiences that he asks for, a need for personal miracles to be assured of God's Word. So let's continue in the text. Judges 7:1 says *[1] Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the spring of Harod. And the camp of Midian was north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.*

When I take people to Israel I take them right to this very place. My wife has pictures of me lapping up the water from Harod Spring. Today it's also called Gideon's Spring. Here in this text they are significant armies around and how significant are these armies?

Judges 7:2–3 says *[2] The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' [3] Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.'" Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained.*

In other texts we know that the Midianite army was in excess of 200,000 and about one tenth of its size was the army that Gideon had. The Lord basically tells Gideon if he wins with his army of 32,000 they will give Gideon the credit and Gideon will take the credit. Israel will boast saying their own hand saved them and not the Lord. So in this text we see 22,000 went home with 10,000 remaining but the Lord's not through.

Judges 7:4–8 says *[4] And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' shall not go." [5] So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink." [6] And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. [7] And the LORD said to Gideon, "With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home." [8] So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.*

Gideon is still fearful. The miracles weren't enough so the Lord is going to give Gideon some more information. Let's continue.

Judges 7:9–25 says *[9] That same night the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand. [10] But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. [11] And you shall hear what they say, and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outposts of the armed men who were in the camp. [12] And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the people of the East lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their*

camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance. [13] When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, "Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat."

[14] And his comrade answered, "This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp."

[15] As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand." [16] And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. [17] And he said to them, "Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. [18] When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

[19] So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. [20] Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" [21] Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled. [22] When they blew the 300 trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. [23] And the men of Israel were called out from Naphtali and from Asher and from all Manasseh, and they pursued after Midian.

[24] Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and capture the waters against them, as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan." So all the men of Ephraim were called out, and they captured the waters as far as Beth-barah, and also the Jordan. [25] And they captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. Then they pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan. That's what the other tribes did in the follow up on this victory.

Something has just happened here. Gideon listens to the reconnaissance. He hears this dream and its interpretation where this military tent is utterly destroyed by a barley cake. The interpretation was the sword of Gideon, whom the Lord has called, will destroy the Midianites. After Gideon hears this he worships but we also find out that as he hears his name something is planted in his heart because he then gives what other pagan armies gave their armies to say. They would say the name of their god and then their general. Now Gideon has the name on the marquee with God.

What has been the whole point of reducing the size of this army? The whole point is that God alone would receive the glory. Time and time again, even with His patience, He has made this clear to Gideon, but while we admire Gideon's obedience we also see the cracks in the foundation. God's Word is not enough. Gideon needed a miracle. God's glory is not enough. Gideon needed the praise of men as well. So now let's look at Judges 8.

Judges 8:1-3 says [1] Then the men of Ephraim said to him, "What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight against Midian?" And they accused him fiercely. [2] And he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer? [3] God has given into your

hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. What have I been able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger against him subsided when he said this.

Oh my, now Gideon is being humble. Why? It is not because he is necessarily humble but he is managing those who are upset with him. He basically tells them they are much more famous than him because they are the ones who killed the enemy's kings and they have all this booty from the war yet we know who Gideon thinks he is in comparison to them. He is one that receives billing with the Lord but in order to stave off this insurrection he tells them they are greater than him. This political move Gideon does, quiets them down and it works.

At this moment in this text is a foreshadowing, for it's the first time the tribes have indicated division that will later be worked out with the separation after the death of Solomon, the divided kingdom. This is the first time that division is seen among them.

Judges 8:4 says [4] *And Gideon came to the Jordan and crossed over, he and the 300 men who were with him, **exhausted yet pursuing**.* This is the picture of the Christian life. It's like the burning bush where it's burning but the fire is not dependent upon the bush and our strength is not dependent upon ourselves but it comes from the Lord. I know there are time for vacation and rest but that's not what I'm saying. The promise is that when God has called us to something even when our flesh is failing the Lord will give us the strength to keep pursuing that which He has called us to. Let's continue.

Judges 8:5–12 says [5] *So he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."* [6] *And the officials of Succoth said, "Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?"* [7] *So Gideon said, "Well then, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers."* [8] *And from there he went up to Penuel, and spoke to them in the same way, and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered.* [9] *And he said to the men of Penuel, "When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower."* (In other words, they were going to pay for not supporting them.)

[10] *Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with their army, about 15,000 men, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East, for there had fallen 120,000 men who drew the sword.* [11] *And Gideon went up by the way of the tent dwellers east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the army, for the army felt secure.* [12] *And Zebah and Zalmunna fled, and he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and he threw all the army into a panic.* This is the second battle of Gideon and there is one difference. God commanded the first one and sent them but Gideon is doing this one on his own.

Judges 8:13–21 says [13] *Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres.* [14] *And he captured a young man of Succoth and questioned him. And he wrote down for him the officials and elders of Succoth, seventy-seven men.* [15] *And he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me, saying, 'Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hand, that we should give bread to your men who are exhausted?'"* [16] *And he took the elders of the city, and he took thorns of the wilderness and briers and with them taught the men of Succoth a lesson.* [17] *And he broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.*

[18] *Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "Where are the men whom you killed at Tabor?"* They answered, *"As you are, so were they. Every one of them resembled the **son of a king**."* (This is beginning to set in Gideon's heart.) [19] *And he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you."*

[20] So he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise and kill them!" But the young man did not draw his sword, for he was afraid, because he was still a young man. [21] Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself and fall upon us, for as the man is, so is his strength." And Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and he took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels. What does he do with all this booty?

Here are the men of Penuel and Succoth and when Gideon comes through he asks them for their assistance to fight the Midianites. They basically say to Gideon 'If you fail then they will come back and destroy us' and so Gideon tells them 'When I do destroy them I'll come back and destroy you.' Why does he say this to them? It is because they didn't believe Gideon when he said he would destroy the Midianites. Who else didn't believe what Someone had said? Three times Gideon didn't believe the Word of the Lord, yet the Lord treated him with patience and mercy. How is this now increasingly self-absorbed Gideon treating those who didn't believe him? He didn't treat them the way God treated him. Gideon comes back in judgment upon them instead of graciousness as he had experienced from the Lord. Let's continue.

Judges 8:22–35 says *[22] Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian." [23] Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you." (That is a right answer from Gideon.) [24] And Gideon said to them, "Let me make a request of you: every one of you give me the earrings from his spoil." (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.) [25] And they answered, "We will willingly give them." And they spread a cloak, and every man threw in it the earrings of his spoil. [26] And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian, and besides the collars that were around the necks of their camels. [27] And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel whored after it there (they began to worship Gideon's ephod – where Gideon had once destroyed a pagan altar, now he makes one of a pagan worship), and **it became a snare to Gideon and to his family.** [28] So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel, and they raised their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon. (How did it become a snare to Gideon? The ephod was worn by the priest and the king. Now Gideon wears it by putting it in his city and calling people to worship it.)*

[29] Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house. [30] Now Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, for he had many wives. [31] And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he called his name Abimelech. [32] And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, at Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

[33] As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and whored after the Baals and made Baal-berith their god. [34] And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side, [35] and they did not show steadfast love to the family of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good that he had done to Israel.

I would love to keep looking at what happens next but this is the end of Gideon and he doesn't finish well. In fact, his illegitimate son's name, who Gideon named Abimelech, means the son of a king. Abimelech will take this seriously which you will find if you keep reading in the book of Judges for he will attempt to press his father's opportunity to be king and bring more destruction in the lives of Israel.

Here are my takeaways from this. One is that God gets His purposes done even with sometimes unfit instruments. This is not an excuse for us not to be the best servants and leaders we can for the Lord, but God's hand is not shortened by the imperfections, sins and weaknesses of His people. Secondly, the sovereign God is very patient with His imperfect and sin-prone people when they have their entangling sins in life. Look at His patience with Gideon. Thirdly, when the press of time continues, over time we find out what is actually reigning in the heart.

Was Gideon a believer? I honestly don't know whether he just had an entangling sin so that he did not finish strong and the sin that was entangling was reproduced and brought to another level in his son Abimelech. I do know there elements of his life that led to the fact he didn't finish well. In the midst of the battle he did well but then in his pride he went and fought a battle God did not command. He gave us cries that pagan kings would give and not for giving glory only to the Lord. Inside of Gideon there was this need for glory. So let us get rid of this in our lives today. Let's ask God to give us heart where we don't need the credit and we want all the glory to go to the Lord.

God give us a life that stands in Your Word. I thank You for Your providence and miracles but we stand in the Word which is true. We don't need the miracles to believe it's true for we have the Word and His Word is truth. The lessons we can learn from Gideon are his courage in the battle by the grace of God, that we need God's grace, that God would get all the glory, that we would believe His Word and that we wouldn't lay actions and words that lead to the destruction of others. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the privilege to be in Your Word and for the opportunity to walk our way through the Scriptures. Lord, this man Gideon is an amazing individual and there is so much about him that begs for our study so that we can give glory to You for all that You are and all that You do and all that You do in our lives. So Father what You did in Gideon's life, do in ours. Where Gideon fell short grant us repentance. Lord, we long to see that all the glory is given to You and I pray this Father, in Jesus' strong Name, Amen.