

Judges 8 Zebah and Zalmunna Routed

Then the men of Ephraim said to Gideon, "What is this thing that you have done to us, not calling upon us when you went to fight against Midian?" And they quarreled with him vehemently. 2 But he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? Is the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim not better than the vintage of Abiezer? 3 God has handed over to you the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

4 Then Gideon and the three hundred men who were with him came to the Jordan and crossed over, exhausted yet still pursuing. 5 And he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who are following me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian." 6 But the leaders 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, "For this answer, when the LORD has handed over to me Zebah and Zalmunna, I will thrash your bodies with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers." 8 Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke similarly to them; and the men of Penuel answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered. 9 So he said also to the men of Penuel, "When I return safely, I will tear down this tower."

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand men, all who were left of the entire army of the people of the east; for the fallen were 120,000 swordsmen. 11 Gideon went up by the way of those who lived in tents to the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and he attacked the camp when the camp was unsuspecting. 12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the entire army.

13 Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle by the ascent of Heres. 14 And he captured a youth from Succoth and questioned him. Then the youth wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, 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 weary?'" 16 Then he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and he disciplined the men of Succoth with them. 17 And he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

18 Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "Where were the men whom you killed at Tabor?" But they said, "You and they were alike, each one resembling the son of a king." 19 And he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As the LORD lives, if

only you had let them live, I would not kill you.” 20 So he said to Jether his firstborn, “Rise, kill them.” But the youth did not draw his sword, for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. 21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Rise up yourself, and attack us; for as the man, so is his strength.” So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent amulets which were on their camels’ necks.

22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, both you and your son, your son’s son as well, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian!” 23 But Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.” 24 Yet Gideon said to them, “I would request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his plunder.” (For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)

25 And they said, “We will certainly give them to you.” So they spread out a garment, and every one of them tossed an earring there from his plunder. 26 The weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, apart from the crescent amulets, the ear pendants, and the purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and apart from the neck chains that were on their camels’ necks. 27 Gideon made it into an ephod, and placed it in his city, Ophrah; but all Israel committed infidelity with it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his household.

Forty Years of Peace

So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads anymore. And the land was undisturbed for forty years in the days of Gideon. 29 Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house. 30 Now Gideon had seventy sons who were his direct descendants, for he had many wives. 31 And his concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech. 32 And Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again committed infidelity with the Baals, and made Baal-berith their god. 34 So the sons of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had saved them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; 35 nor did they show kindness to the household of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in accordance with all the good that he had done for Israel.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God’s character?

Pauls helpful insights

1. The people of Ephraim were upset for not being asked to join in the destruction of the Midianite army. Why?
2. Gideon's leadership and diplomacy came into operation, his wisdom and insight appeased Ephraim to accept Gideon's words. What makes a good diplomat?
3. Gideon asked for his soldiers to be fed so as to become strong to destroy a joint enemy, but the request was disregarded.
4. Without the help of food Gideon continued the conquest of destruction but promised to return and address the lack of kindness.
5. The situation happened a second time with another army, so Gideon promised to tear down their tower on his return.
6. One hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen were killed from the Midianite army, only fifteen thousand remained who fled.
7. Gideon attacked the Midianite camp when they least expected it, when might this have been?
8. Gideon extracts information from a youth regarding vital, strategic insight.
9. The mocking question presented to Gideon, he had been asked, 'have you already defeated the Midianite army?'
10. Knowing full well that he hadn't, which was their reasoning not to help Gideon destroy the common enemy.
11. Gideon having returned, the answer changed from no to yes, so he would now deal with the unhelpfulness.
12. The men were disciplined, by Gideon, with briars and thorns. Was this right?
13. He also took down the tower and killed the men of the city.
14. What is it to be known as the son of a king?
15. Gideon offered no mercy, because no mercy had been offered. Was this right?
16. Why did Gideon ask the youth to take responsibility and kill and avenge the kings.
17. Fear had stopped this youth, because fear debilitates. What do you do with fear?
18. Having been taunted by the kings, Gideon kills them, but made the mistake of plundering their belongings.
19. After this victory Israel requests of Gideon to become their leader and chief, their deliverer, but he declines, why?
20. At this time Gideon redirects the people of Israel to follow the ways of the Lord.
21. Unfortunately Gideon made the mistake of requesting from the soldiers, gold, from the booty of the Midianites.
22. Having collected the gold Gideon made an ephod a god, and sadly became the focus for Israel to stray from the Lord.
23. It became a snare to Gideon and his family.
24. Midian's rule was finished and for forty years Israel knew peace.
25. Gideon had seventy sons and many wives, the key son was Abimelech

26. Gideon died and was buried with his father and at once Israel went astray from the Lord and after strange baals.

27. Israel forgot God and all that he did, deliverance from all of their enemies.

28. The people of Israel showed no kindness to the family of Gideon, despite him rescuing them.