

Rest Under Gideon (c. 1212 – c. 1172 BC)

Judges 7:16–8:28

God Gives Gideon and the 300 Men Victory

7:16 He divided the 300 men into three companies, and he put trumpets and empty pitchers into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the pitchers.

17 He said to them, “Look at me and do likewise. And behold, when I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do.

18 When I and all who are with me blow the trumpet, then you also blow the trumpets all around the camp and say, ‘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 posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and smashed the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 When the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing, and cried, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!”

21 Each stood in his place around the camp; and all the army ran, crying out as they fled.

22a When they blew 300 trumpets, the LORD set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army;

The Midianites Flee South Along the Jordan Toward Ephraimite Territory

22b and the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the edge of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.

23 The men of Israel were summoned from Naphtali and Asher and all Manasseh, and they pursued Midian.

Ephraim Captures Oreb and Zeeb

24 Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against Midian and take the waters before them, as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.” So all the men of Ephraim were summoned and they took the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.

25 They captured the two leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, and they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and they killed Zeeb at the wine press of Zeeb, while they pursued Midian; and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon from across the Jordan.

Ephraim Resents Being Excluded from Gideon’s Battle Plans

8:1 Then the men of Ephraim said to him, “What is this thing you have done to us, not calling us when you went to fight against Midian?” And they contended with him vigorously.

2 But 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 vintage of Abiezer?

3 God has given the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb into your hands; and what was I able to do in comparison with you?” Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

Gideon Continues His Pursuit of the Kings of Midian

4 Then Gideon and the 300 men who were with him came to the Jordan *and* crossed over, weary yet pursuing.

Succoth and Penuel Refuse Aid (Cities in the Transjordan Tribe of Gad, cf. Josh 13:27)

5 He said to the men of Succoth, “Please give loaves of bread to the people who are following me, for they are weary, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.”

6 The leaders of Succoth said, “Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hands, that we should give bread to your army?”

7 Gideon said, "All right, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will thrash your bodies with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers."

8 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 spoke also to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I return safely, I will tear down this tower."

Gideon Captures the Kings of Midian

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their armies with them, about 15,000 men, all who were left of the entire army of the sons of the east; for the fallen were 120,000 swordsmen.

11 Gideon went up by the way of those who lived in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and 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 whole army.

Gideon's Vengeance on Succoth and Penuel

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 princes of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.

15 He came to the men of Succoth and said, "Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning 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 He took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and he disciplined the men of Succoth with them.

17 He tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

Gideon Executes Zebah and Zalmunna

18 Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men *were* they whom you killed at Tabor?" And they said, "They were like you, each one resembling the son of a king."

19 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 fall on us; for as the man, so is his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments which were on their camels' necks.

Gideon Refuses to Rule Israel

22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son's son, for you have delivered 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 spoil." (For they had gold earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)

25 They said, "We will surely give *them*." So they spread out a garment, and every one of them threw an earring there from his spoil.

26 The weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 *shekels* of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple robes which *were* on the kings of Midian, and besides the neck bands that *were* on their camels' necks.

27 Gideon made it into an ephod, and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household.

28 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.

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