

Next week:

Judges

“Israel’s ‘Dark Ages’”

*"Jephthah's vow; Ibzan; Elon;
Abdon"*

Text: Judges 10:6 – 12:15

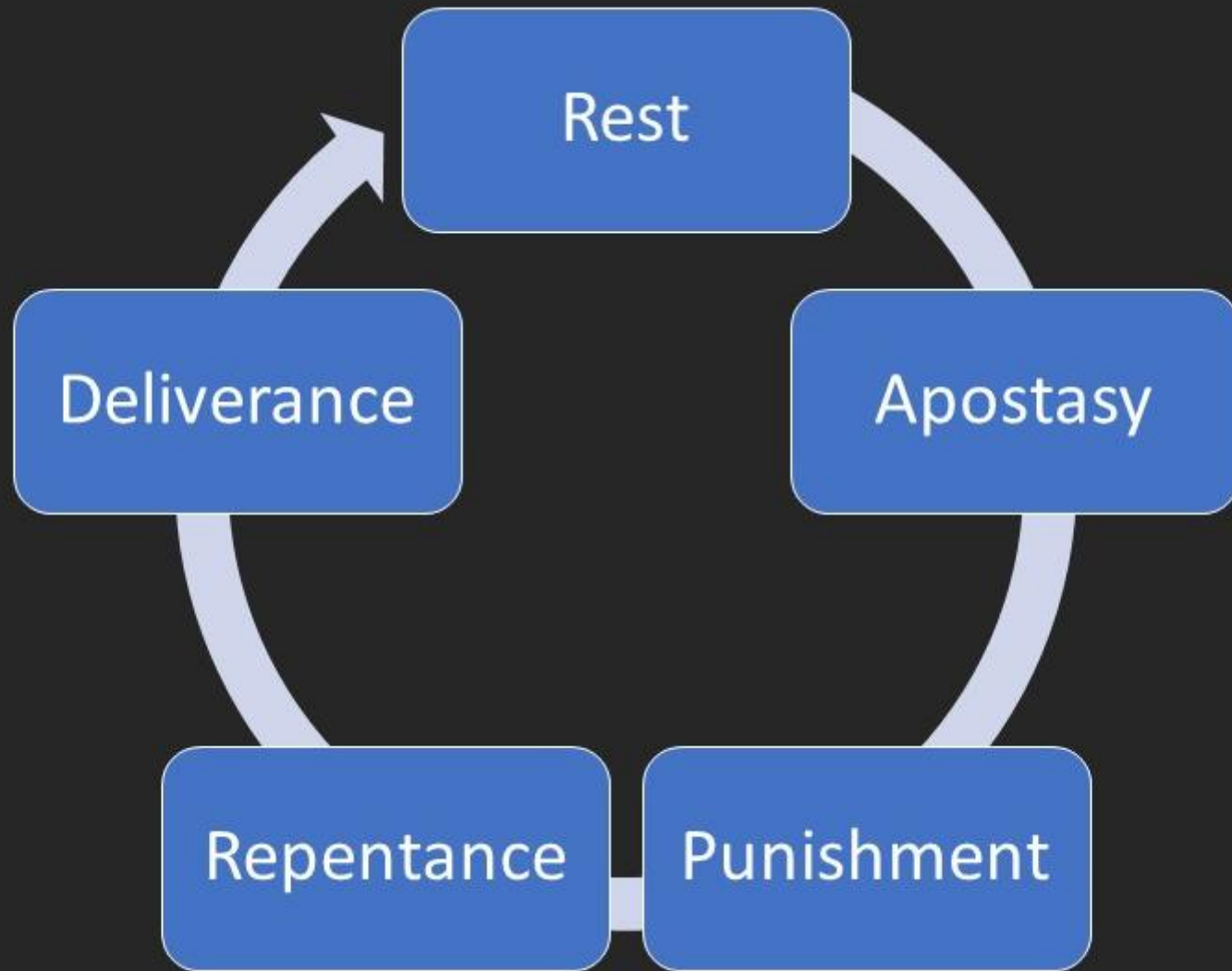
Judges

“Israel’s ‘Dark Ages’”

*"Gideon's Victories and
Lessons from his downfall"*

Text: Judges 7 – 8

The Cycle of the Judges



How does the lesson on blessings fit into this?

#4

Briefly describe how the LORD was able to defeat the Midianite army with only 300 Israelite soldiers (7:16-23).

A Trumpet to blow, a Jar to break, and a Torch to burn!

Faith sees the invisible and does the impossible!

When the 300 men broke their pitchers and sounded their trumpets, the Midianite army became confused to the point that they began killing each other. Thrown into such disarray, they began fleeing towards Midian. The remaining Israelite soldiers pursued them



What is the significance of the way God defeated the Midianite army?

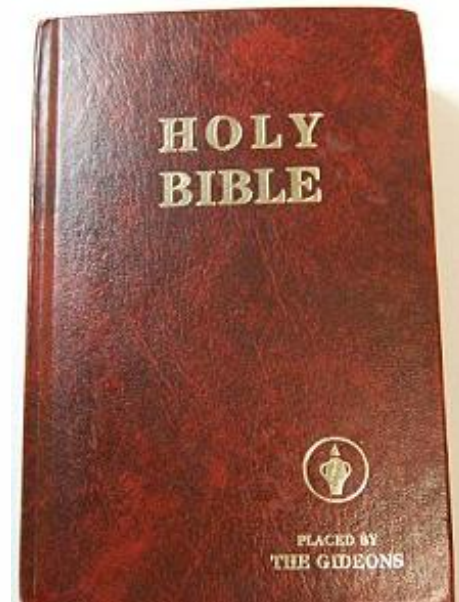
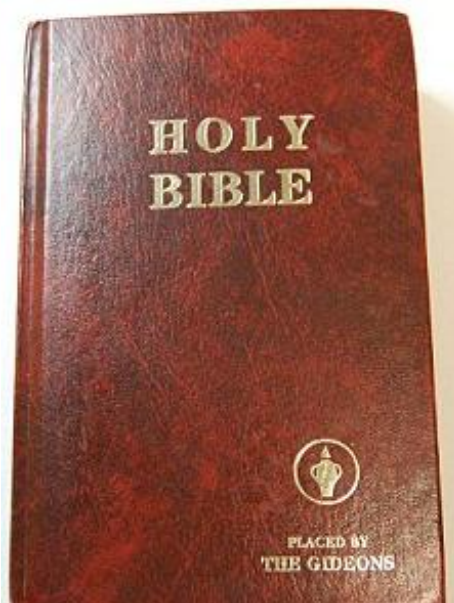
Through confusion
and self-destruction!

What happened when Israel rejected God and “every man did what was right in his own way?”

Sin in general always results in division and chaos!

God took chaos and in creation turned it into order.

Man sinned and created chaos!



The Gideons International

1908

2 Billion Bibles

#5

Once the Midianite army was on the run, what other tribes were requested to help? What did he ask the Ephraimites to do? (7:24-25).

*Help was requested from the tribes of **Naphtali, Asher, and “all of Manasseh”**. Since these tribes had already provided men (6:35), this may, in reality, have been Gideon employing his ‘reserves’.*

Gideon requested that the Ephraimites secure the fords across the Jordan.

#6

What was the complaint of the Ephraimites? What do you think was the meaning of Gideon's diplomatic response?

The Ephraimites complained that they had not been summoned to help in the beginning (8:1).

Gideon was suggesting that they had the better part of the battle (they certainly had some good spoils having captured 2 of the kings) compared to his part.

#7

What did Gideon request from the cities of Succoth and Penuel? What was their response? (8:4-12)

Gideon asked these 2 cities for food (bread) for his 300 men (8:5, 8).

They told Gideon that they would provide him food after he had defeated the Midianites (8:6, 8).

#8

Why do you think they gave the answer they did? What was Gideon's response?

Although they were Israelites, their response was totally devoid of any faith in God and in His ability to assist Gideon in his mission. Here was a man engaged in driving out invaders and they are not willing to help him. This was tantamount to treason!

Gideon told the men of Succoth that he would flail them with thorns (8:7). He told the men of Penuel he would tear down their tower (8:9).

#9

How did the Israelites respond to Gideon now that the Midianites had been overthrown? What was Gideon's answer? What do you conclude about the spiritual condition of the nation and Gideon from this exchange?

They wanted to make him king.

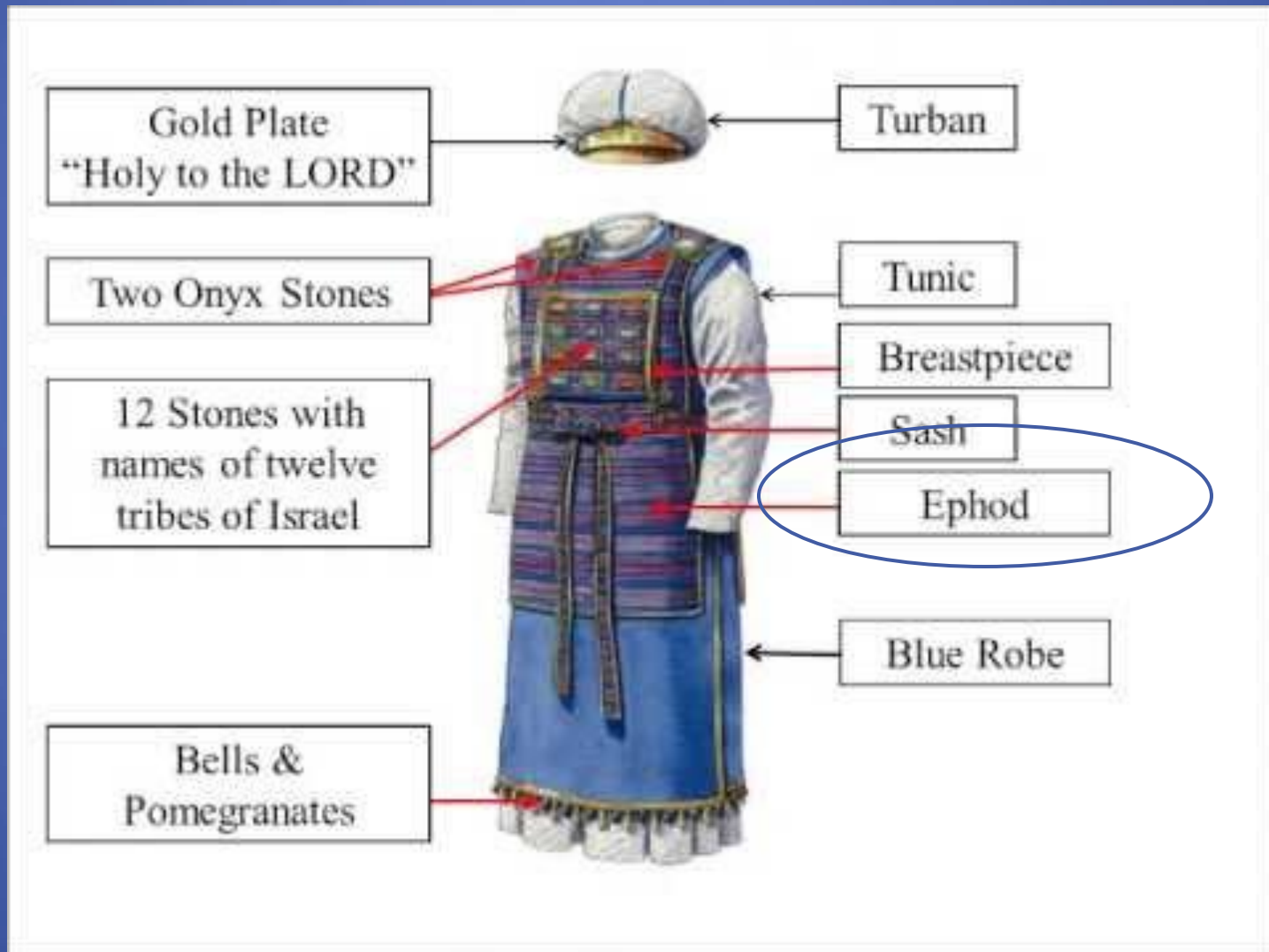
That neither he nor his son would rule over them, but that God would (8:23).



Gideon certainly seemed to have some knowledge of the Old Law and its precepts, but the nation, as a whole seemed to be devoid of any such knowledge or faith in God.

**What about the naming
of his son Abimelech?**

The garments of the HP



#10

What request did Gideon make of the Israelites? (8:22-28). How much in today's weight measurements can you find that this weighed? What did he do with it? How do you reconcile this with his answer in 8:23?

Gideon asked for the earrings from the spoil that the army had taken (8:24).

This would have been about 43 lbs (2/5 ounce per shekel).

688 ounces = \$1,238,400

Gideon made an ephod with the gold (8:27).

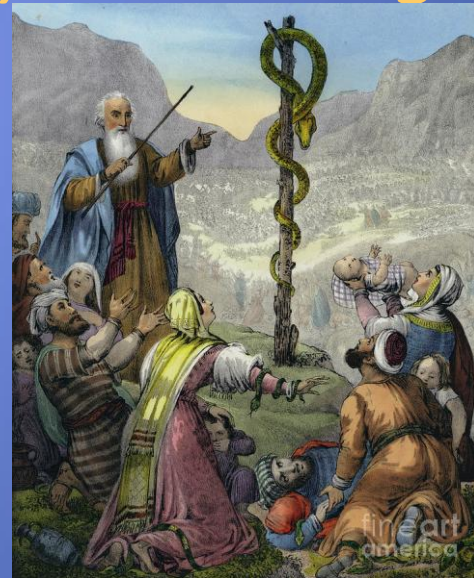
This action by Gideon is difficult to reconcile with his response to Israel wanting to make him king.



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On the one hand, he seemed to know that God had not authorized a king for Israel and that it would have been wrong to set one up. But he essentially is willing to have an idol built (for that is what it became, 8:27) with the gold.

What is another
example
of worshipping a
holy relic?



What about simony?

2 Kings 18:4

What was Gideon's downfall?

Pride

Depending on the spoils of war

Living like a king!

Not calling for a revival and a
commitment to the Lord like Josiah

Enabling the cycle to repeat itself

Who else had problems after victory?

David – how so?

Elijah – how so?

New converts?

Theological Lessons

“We must be as watchful after the victory as before the battle” A. Bonner

Wars may be over, but the dangers have not vanished.

56 nations – stuck with land mine issues

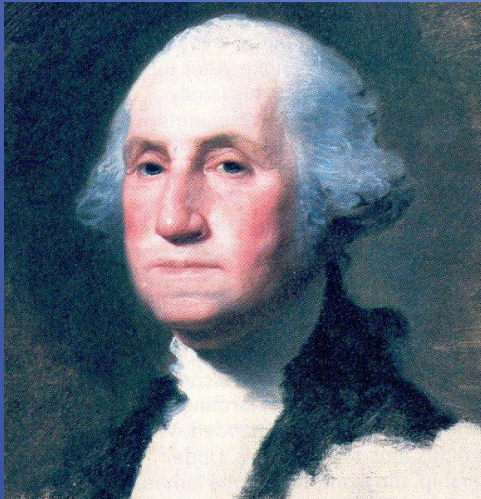
What are some of the pitfalls of victory?

Theological Lessons



“The real test of a man’s character is not adversity, but power.” A. Lincoln

Prov 24:10



What did he do after he won the war?

TRUE/FALSE

11. T F *Gideon was buried in the same tomb as his father. (8:32)*
12. T F *Gideon's concubine lived in Succoth. (8:31)*
13. T F *After the Midianites were defeated, Gideon went to live in his own house. (8:29)*
14. T F *Besides their purple robes, Gideon took the bands (or crescents) from the Midianite kings' horses. (8:21)*
15. T F *The name of Gideon's oldest son was Jether. (8:20)*