

“On the Heels of Victory”

Judges 8:1-21

INTRODUCTION

1. Gideon’s army of 300 defeated the Midianites—outnumbered 400 to 1.

- “...for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few.” 1 Samuel 14:6
- Psalm 20:7: “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.”

2. Some of the biggest letdowns can come immediately after the greatest victories.

- Elijah defeated the false prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel in 1 Kings 18. In the next chapter he battles fear, loneliness, exhaustion... and asks the LORD to take his life.
- In Mark 1, Jesus’s baptism was followed by temptation in the wilderness

→ The realities which accompany following the lead of the Lord God Almighty.

CRITICISM FROM EPHRAIM. v.1-3

1. The men of Ephraim were upset they were not included in the battle against Midian. v.1

- “And they accused him fiercely.”

2. Gideon appeased them. v.2-3

APATHY FROM SUCCOTH AND PENUEL. v.4-9

1. Gideon and the 300 pursued the last of the Midian troops. v.4

“exhausted yet pursuing”

2. The men of Succoth refused to feed the exhausted warriors. v.5-7

- The princes of Midian, Oreb & Zeeb were killed in the attack (7:25). He now pursued the 2 kings of Midian.
- The men of Succoth were afraid of consequences from Z & Z if Gideon failed.

3. The same thing happened with the men of Penuel. v.8-9

GIDEON COMPLETED HIS TASK. v.10-21

1. He captured Zebah and Zalmunna and defeated the rest of the Midian army. v.10-12

2. He punished Succoth and Penuel for their lack of support and hospitality. v.13-17

3. He killed Zebah and Zalmunna in retribution for the murder of his brothers in Tabor. v.18-21

OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

1. Persecution and suffering is an essential element of following and obeying the LORD.

- 1 Peter 4:12: Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
- 1 John 3:3: Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.
- 2 Timothy 3:12: Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

2. Our perspective of value, reality, and reward must come from the Bible, not ourselves or others.

- Matthew 5:11-12; Luke 6:22-26; 7:31-35; John 6:68

3. The follower of Jesus is called to closeness with Him especially in times of suffering, criticism, and abandonment.

- Jesus in the garden – ALONE but obedient.
- Hymn: *Crown Him With Many Crowns*
 Crown Him the Son of God before the worlds began,
 And ye, who tread where He hath trod, crown Him the Son of man;
 Who every grief hath known that wrings the human breast,
 And takes and bears them for His own, that all in Him may rest.
- Jesus’ command to every believer: Take up your cross and follow me.