

JUDGES 8-9

REVIEW...

- **CHAPTER 1-2 - THE CYCLE OF SIN...**
 - The cycle of sin - God let them be conquered by their enemies - they would repent...
 - God would raise up a Judge to save them - they would follow God - for a while...
- **CHAPTER 6-7 - GIDEON - THE 5TH JUDGE OF ISRAEL...**
 - 1st - Israel rebelled again - and were conquered by Midian for 7 years...
 - Thought it was the shortest of period - it was the by far the worst up to that point...
 - They children of Israel were forced to hide in caves and the mountains out of fear...
 - 2nd - The making of a mighty warrior - God sent an Angel to Gideon...
 - He was hiding in a wine press threshing wheat - 'mighty man of valor'...
 - God sent him just as he was to redeem Israel from captivity...
 - But before he could judge a nation - he first he had to tear down his father's idols
 - 3rd - Choosing an army - Gideon called 32,000 men to go to war - it was too many...
 - God had him send home any who were scared - 22,000 left - still too many...
 - They all took a drink from the spring - only 300 old guys were chosen to go to war!
 - Gideon surrounded the enemy - with horns and pots - defeated them and freed Israel!

THE FALL OF A NATION... (4 THINGS)

- **1ST - CHASING AFTER THE REMNANT OF MIDIAN... VS. 1-21 READ: JUDGES 8:1-7**
 - 1st - The challenge from the men of Ephraim...vs. 1-3
 - After the initial defeat of Midian - Gideon called for reinforcements to 'clean up'...
 - Included was the tribe of Ephraim - who finally entered the battle...
 - They chased down and killed two of the princes of Midian - Oreb and Zeeb...
 - The men of Ephraim rebuked Gideon for not 'calling them into the battle sooner'...
 - What Gideon was doing was no secret - there was an invading army of 135,000!
 - But now that God had given the victory - Ephraim wanted to 'look good'...
 - Gideon certainly could have turned it back on the men of Ephraim...
 - 'Where were YOU when we faced off against an army 400 times our size!'
 - But if he had done so - it could have erupted into a civil war...
 - If we react with our emotions when others accuse us – we only do more damage...
 - We escalate the problem rather than solving it – anger causes more anger...
 - Instead Gideon wisely noted Ephraim had done 'more than him' - killing the princes!
 - A compliment that quickly diffused Ephraim's anger towards Gideon...
 - Proverbs 15:1 – "A soft answer turns away wrath, a harsh word stirs up anger."
 - When people make accusation against us - we want to defend ourselves...
 - We need to pick our fights - not react every time someone says something...
 - Especially if it is a brother - better to be wronged - and keep peace in Christ...
 - 2nd - Taking sides... vs. 4-9, 14-17...
 - Gideon arrived at the Jordan with the 300 *old* men - tired but still in pursuit...
 - They asked the city of Succoth to give them some bread - but they refused...
 - They asked the nearby city of Penuel for some bread - but they also refused...
 - Gideon had not conquered the two remaining kings of Midian - Zebah / Zalmunna
 - The kings might defeat Gideon - then come back and destroy Succoth / Penuel...

- When Jesus asks us to stand up for him in front of the world - what do we say...
- For sure if we stand for Jesus we will be made fun of by those who do not believe...
- But the reward of standing up for Jesus is beyond imagination...
- One day when we get to heaven we will hear the words...
- **Matthew 25:23** - "Well done, good and faithful servant enter into the joy of the lord."
- At that point any difficulty we ever had to endure - becomes more than worth it!
- Gideon came back to these cities after he captured the two kings...
 - He caught a young man from Succoth and had him list all 77 leaders of that city...
 - Then Gideon taught the leaders a lesson by having them run through a field of thorns...
 - Gideon went to Penuel and torn down their tower - killing all the men in the town...
 - There is a consequence if we deny Jesus before men - He will deny us before God...
 - There is always a temptation to want to blend into the crowd - to be accepted...
 - If we are not willing to take a stand for Jesus today...
 - He will not stand up for us before the 'Judgment seat of God'...
 - **Luke 12:9** - "Anyone who denies me here on earth will be denied before God..."
- o 3rd - The final defeat of Midian... vs. 10-13...
 - Gideon and Israel had killed 120,000 men in the valley of Jezreel...
 - But there was still 15,000 men left under the command of the kings of Midian...
 - Gideon and the 300 *old* men came upon the remnant while they were resting...
 - And they defeated them all - capturing the two Midianite kings!
 - 300 hundred *old* men against 15,000 - would seem to be impossible odds...
 - But Gideon had already seen God wipe out 120,000 men - 15,000 was easy...
 - He was not looking at the odds - He was looking at the power of God!
 - The hardest step to take in following Jesus - is the first - never seen the power of God...
 - But once we take a step of faith - and see what God can do - the rest is easy!
 - If we saw God raise the dead - no problem believing He could heal a cold...
 - The longer we walk with Jesus - the more we see - the more confident we become...
 - Till like Gideon we realize there really is 'nothing impossible for God!'
- o 4th - Gideon questioned the kings about the 'men at Tabor'... vs. 18-21
 - Apparently Zebah and Zalmunna had attacked and killed some men at Mt. Tabor...
 - Gideon had family there - and wondered if they were still alive...
 - Zebah and Zalmunna boldly confirmed they killed men who looked just like Gideon...
 - Gideon would have let the kings live - but in reprisal he also killed the kings...
 - Gideon backed down before Ephraim - but he executed judgment on the kings...
 - There is a time to 'turn the other cheek' - but there is a time to stand up...
 - While we are called to try to live in peace with others - **Romans 12:18**
 - We are not to back down from sin - we are to confront it - **Matthew 18:15-20**
- 2ND - LOOKING FOR A NEW KING... vs. 22-35 **READ: JUDGES 8:22-27**
 - o 1st - The men of Israel asked for Gideon / his sons / grandsons - to become their king... vs. 22-23
 - But Gideon refused be their king - because God was already their king...
 - And Gideon understood that Israel already had the best ruler they could ever get...
 - Many people try to take the 'drivers seat' in their lives - they want to be their own boss...
 - Or others are content to follow the world - letting other people guide their lives...
 - But God has the BEST plan for our lives - we just need to let Him reign in our lives!
 - **Jeremiah 29:11** - "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you..."
 - o 2nd - The gold earrings... vs. 24-27

- Gideon did ask his soldiers for the gold earrings of the enemy soldiers...
 - They threw them in a pile - and collected over 43lbs of gold and gave it to Gideon...
 - Gideon made an ephod/robe out of the gold - and placed it in his hometown...
- But Gideon and the people began to worship the gold clothing - rather than the Lord...
 - Perhaps Gideon thought the gold was a guarantee of financial security for him...
 - So he and his family began to trust in the gold - rather than in God...
 - **I Timothy 6:9-10** – “Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare... For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith...”
 - So many people strive their whole life to find - ‘financial security’....
 - Thinking if I can only have enough in the bank / land / possessions - I will be OK...
 - But money is here today and gone tomorrow - economies rise and fall in a day...
 - The only real guarantee we have in life - is found in trusting in God...
- o 3rd - Israel had peace during Gideon’s life... vs. 28-35
 - Gideon had 70 sons - he had many wives - and lived to a very old age...
 - But as soon as he died - Israel again began to worship pagan gods...
 - They forgot all about the God who had saved them - and how God had used Gideon!
 - No matter how much the Lord has done for us - how much He has blessed us...
 - It is easy to try and hold onto the past - ‘what God did in my life’...
 - But our relationship with God is not about what God did yesterday...
 - We need to make sure God is the King of our lives today...
 - If we are not careful - we will get caught up in the world - and forget about God!
- 3RD - AN EVIL LEADER FOR AN EVIL NATION... VS. 1-21 READ: JUDGES 9:1-6
 - o 1st - Abimelech - *my father is king* - was one of the sons of Gideon...vs. 1-6
 - He was the son of a slave (*not a wife of Gideon*) from the city of Shechem...
 - Shechem was the capitol of Israel at this point - **Joshua 24:1**
 - Immediately after the death of Gideon - he went to his ‘home town’...
 - Better to be ruled by one man from their town - than 70 strangers (*sons of Gideon*)...
 - They agreed to let him rule - gave him money to hire a small army of troublemakers
 - Abimelech went to his father’s house - and killed all 70 of his brothers on a stone...
 - Only the youngest son of Gideon escaped alive - and hid from Abimelech...
 - Then all the leaders of the city of Shechem made Abimelech their King...
 - If you want to know what kind of people are in a nation - look at who leads them...
 - The leader of a nation is a reflection of the people who are willing to follow him...
 - I know many ‘Christians’ who voted for Barak Obama in 2008...
 - A man who supports abortion / gay rights / who does not believe in Jesus...
 - The reason was because they thought he would make the nation wealthier...
 - The reason they voted for a Godless leader - because THEIR god was money!
 - o 2nd - The warning of Jotham... vs. 7-21
 - When Jotham heard - he climbed Mt. Gerizim - overlooking the city of Shechem...
 - He told a story of the ‘trees’ - they wanted ONE tree to rule over them all...
 - The ‘olive tree’ refused - why stop making olive oil just to wave my branches over you
 - The ‘fig tree’ refused - why stop making figs just to wave my braches over you...
 - The ‘grape vine’ refused - why stop making grapes just to rule over you...
 - Finally the ‘thorn-bush’ accepted - because he produced no good fruit....
 - His only condition was he would only rule so long as the ‘trees’ stayed in his shade...
 - Jotham was talking about Abimelech...
 - Gideon and his sons refused to rule over Israel - the Olive / Fig tree / grape vine...

- Instead the people grabbed the son of a slave - the thorn bush - to be their king...
- He would rule over them with an iron fist - making them stay 'in his shadow'...
- They would try and revolt - but Abimelech would 'send out fire' and destroy them...
- The history of the world is full of nations - who fell victim to 'evil kings'...
 - In 1917 a man named Lenin promised the poor and abused of Russia equality...
 - It seemed like a dream come true - the wealth of the rich given to the poor...
 - What Russia ended up with was a murdering tyrant who terrorized them for years...
 - The successor of Lenin - Joseph Stalin - starved and killed 20 million Russians!
 - Any nation that chooses a leader they know is not a Godly man...
 - Is doomed to suffer at the hand of the very man they choose to follow!
 - Proverbs 29:2 - "When a wicked man rules, the people groan."
- 4TH - THE FALL OF A KING... vs. 22-57 READ: JUDGES 9:22-24
 - o 1st - The rebellion of Gaal... vs. 22-41
 - After only ruling over Israel for 3 years - God began to stir up trouble...
 - A man called Gaal moved to Shechem - began speaking out against Abimelech...
 - During one of their fiestas - everyone was drunk - and began to curse Abimelech...
 - Abimelech came at night hiding out around the city - and attacked at dawn...
 - Gaal went to fight against Abimelech - but was defeated and chased out of Shechem...
 - God was punishing Abimelech and the people of Shechem for killing Gideon's sons...
 - The United States over the past 40 years - 50 million children were aborted legally!
 - The United States has passed laws now recognizing gay marriage in several states!
 - Also in it worst depression since the 1930s - highest unemployment rate in 50 years!
 - When a nation turns its back on God - God will turn his back on a nation...
 - It can be tempting to base our vote on things other than a politician walk with God...
 - We might base our decision on their financial policy - or their work against corruption...
 - But all of those things pale in comparison to their relationship with Jesus...
 - o 2nd - The fall of Shechem... vs. 42-49
 - The next day - the people of Shechem went out to attack Abimelech...
 - The battle lasted all day - but in the end Abimelech captured Shechem...
 - The leaders (*who had made him king 3 years earlier*) hid out in a pagan temple...
 - They looked for protection from their 'gods' – against the leader they asked for!
 - Abimelech cut down trees and used them to set fire to the temple - killing 1000 people
 - I know a lot of people who look to politics to save them from politicians...
 - When we trust in things other than the Lord to save us - they will always fail...
 - o 3rd - The death of Abimelech... vs. 50-57
 - Abimelech moved on to the town of Thebez near Shechem and captured it...
 - Many of the people ran for refuge in the city tower - hiding up on the roof...
 - Abimelech meant to set fire to it - but a women dropped a mill stone on his head...
 - His armor bearer kill him so that it would not be said 'a woman killed Abimelech!'
 - There are some people who consider Abimelech to be one of the judges of Israel...
 - He was not - because He did not teach the people to follow the Lord...
 - But ultimately God did use him to teach Israel an important lesson...
 - Make sure you choose to follow a leader - who also follows God!