JUDGES 8-9

Review...

- Chapter 1-2 The cycle of sin...
 - o 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...
 - o 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...
 - o 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 to 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
 - o 1^{st} 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...
 - o 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 4^{th} 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 1^{st} 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!
- 3^{RD} 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 2^{nd} 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!