

A WALK THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT
TIME FRAME #4– THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND and LIFE UNDER THE JUDGES
READING NOTES
1406 BC TO 1050 BC
SELECTED CHAPTERS JOSHUA and JUDGES

SUMMARY

After the 40 years of wandering in the Wilderness, a new generation enters the Promise Land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. Over the next few decades they will take much of the land from the inhabitants. However, their failure to completely eradicate the Canaanites will have dire consequences for future generations.

After Joshua’s death, the memory of God and His actions on behalf of Israel fades, and as we enter the period of the Judges, the people of Israel enter a cycle that will plague them for 350 years. They are in the Land, and they are a nation. However, as we close Judges, they are not yet prospering, spiritually or otherwise.

EVENT #34	SCRIPTURE
THE JEWS CROSS INTO THE LAND	JOSHUA 1-3
NOTES	
<p>1. The background of Joshua.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His name means ‘Yahweh Saves’, and was given to him by Moses in Numbers 13:16. • He is mentioned 30 times in the Pentateuch. • His first appearance is as a military commander in Exodus 17:18-13. • As Moses’ assistant he accompanied him at least part way up Mt. Sinai (Ex.24:13; 32:17) and assisted at the Tent of Meeting (Ex.33:11). • He was one of the 12 spies sent to scout out the Land and joined Caleb in exhorting the people to trust God (Numbers 14:6-9). These two would be the only men of their generation to enter the Land. • As Moses nears his death, the LORD instructs him to name Joshua as his successor (Numbers 27:18-19). God describes Joshua as a man, ‘in whom is the Spirit’ (Num.27:18). • God says that Joshua is the one who will lead the conquest of the Land (Deut. 1:38) and apportion it to the 12 Tribes (Numbers 34:17). <p>2. Joshua receives his charge from God. Joshua 1:1-9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse one serves as a connecting point to the Pentateuch, as it repeats the fact Moses has died. Having commissioned Joshua as his successor through the voice of Moses, God now speaks and commissions him. • God makes two key promises to Joshua: (vs.2-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I will give you the Land I have promised, every place you go. As we shall see, the one key failure of Joshua will be not going into every part of the Land promised by God. ○ I will be with you in the same way I was with Moses. • God then gives two key directives to Joshua: (vs.6-9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To be strong and courageous. Note that this strength and courage were to come from trusting in God’s presence with him, not Joshua’s personal strength. On the other hand, his trust in God was to lead to steps of action. ○ To internalize and follow God’s Word (The Book of the Law). Joshua was to meditate on it and follow it explicitly. <p>NOTE: <i>The real power in Joshua’s life was to come from the Presence and Word of God in his life. This is true of us as Fully Devoted Followers of Christ as well.</i></p>	

3. Joshua assumes command and addresses the leaders of Israel. **Joshua 1:10-15**
 - He gives a general command to instruct the People of Israel to prepare to break camp and cross the Jordan (**vs.10-11**).
 - Moses had given 2 ½ of the Tribes permission to settle east of the Jordan River under the condition that their fighting men accompany the rest of the Tribes in conquering the Land west of the Jordan before settling in their territory (**Numbers 32**). Joshua now reminds these men of their agreement. They will be allowed to return to their own land when the fighting is over. (**vs. 12-15**)
 - “Rest” (**vs. 15**) has a similar meaning as the word ‘Peace’ in the OT: Freedom from threat; enjoyment of God’s blessing; security within the Land God has given; a state of overall well being.

4. The leaders of the People of Israel then respond to Joshua with words of encouragement. **Joshua 1:16-18**
 - We will follow you and your orders in the same way we followed Moses.
 - We charge you to be strong and courageous as our leader.

5. Joshua sends two spies to Jericho, who are then protected by Rahab. **Joshua 2**
 - This chapter demonstrates the connection between taking responsibility for leading while also entrusting himself to God’s care. Joshua shows wisdom as a military man by sending in two men on a reconnaissance mission. (**vs.1**)
 - The men go to the house of Rahab, who is a prostitute. Her house probably also served as an inn for travelers. Rahab is remembered in Scripture for her faith (**Hebrews 11:31**), her good works (**James 2:25**) and for being one of the ancestors of Jesus Christ (**Matthew 1:5**). Note that there is no suggestion of a sexual encounter between her and the spies.
 - The people of Jericho are aware of the approaching Hebrews, and are afraid (**vs.8-11**). However, while the people of Jericho place their faith in their walled city, Rahab shows faith in the LORD. She is convinced that God is going to bring the People of Israel victory over her city (**vs.11-14**). Notice the degree of respect and reverence she pays to God in these verses.
 - As a result, Rahab and the two spies make a covenant with each other. If she will protect them and not give them away, then they will ensure her safety, along with any of her household who are in her home when Israel attacks the city (**vs.14-21**).
 - After their escape, note the response of the spies in **verse 24** and compare this to the report brought by the spies sent out by Moses! (**Numbers 13:32-33**) This new generation of men had learned faith in God as they grew up in the Wilderness.

6. The People of Israel cross the Jordan River. **Joshua 3 – 4**
 - This event shows the connection between trusting obedience to God’s Word and Him doing a work that is beyond our natural ability. The step of faith comes first, then is followed by God’s enablement. This is a great example of **Philippians 2:12-13**
 - Before crossing the Jordan, the People of Israel are given two instructions:
 - When the Ark went out, they were to allow approximately ½ mile before following it. This will allow them to see the direction they are to go. **3:3-4**)
 - They are to consecrate themselves in preparation of seeing God do wonders among them. This included washing their clothes and abstaining from sexual relations. (**vs.5**)
 - The next day Joshua tells the priests to carry the Ark towards the Jordan, which was at flood stage that time of year. They were to step into the water, at which time God causes the flow of the Jordan to stop upstream from them. As the priests stand in the midst of the river bed on dry ground, the people pass through the gap and on to the west shore of the river.
NOTE: The Ark represented God’s actual presence among His people. We have the presence of God within us as Christians, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

- The LORD tells Joshua to have the 12 men, one from each Tribe, that were chosen in **3:12**, to each take a stone from the river bed and carry it to their encampment that night (**4:2**). These stones are to be used:
 - When their children see the memorial created by these stones, and ask what they mean they can be told about the miracle God performed getting the people over/through the Jordan River. (**4:6-7; 20-24**)
- God used this miracle to put His mark on Joshua and his leadership so the people will respect and follow him. (**3:7; 4:14**)
- It is interesting to note that **Joshua 4:1** refers to 'The Nation'. Throughout Exodus and the Wandering in the Wilderness they had been referred to as 'The People of Israel'. Now that they have stepped into the Land they have become a nation.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 35	SCRIPTURE
TAKING THE LAND	JOSHUA 6-8; 10-11
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first city taken by the Israelites is Jericho. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jericho is one of the oldest fortified cities on earth. • It is also one of the lowest, at 750 feet below sea level. • It was built on an Oasis, therefore it had its own water supply within its walls. That enabled it to survive long sieges. With its imposing walls, it was considered indestructible. 2. As God gives instructions on taking the city, we note several things. Joshua 6:2-7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God makes sure Joshua understands that He, God, will deliver the city to them (vs.2) • God's instructions are familiar to most of us. The men of war are to march around the city once for six days. On the seventh day, they are to march around it seven times. Then as the priests sound the ram's horn, they the walls will fall flat and they are to take the city. The walls falling flat is an interesting detail. They are not going to be pushed in by human strength, but will fall flat by the hand of God. • Joshua relays the instructions to the priests. The Ark going with them was important, for this would be the Presence of God with them. The people then obey God, marching around Jericho once each day for six days. 3. Since Jericho was to be the first city taken, God makes it sacred. 6:15-21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will not be any spoils for the soldiers. Everything made of valuable metals were to be placed in the treasury of the LORD. • Everyone and every animal were put to death. While this seems harsh, there were two primary reasons for this destruction. First, the Canaanites were known for their evil, violent lives. God was bring judgment on them for that evil. Secondly, God didn't want His people, Israel, to be corrupted by letting Canaanites remain as neighbors in the Land. History will show this to be sadly true. It is important to note that this kind of destruction was reserved for the people in Canaan, and was not practiced against cities and peoples outside the land promised by God. (See Deut.20:10-15) • In verses 20-21, the people do as God instructed, and take the city. 	

4. Joshua keeps the promise given to Rahab. **6:22-25**
5. This victory establishes Joshua's name to the peoples around them. **6:26-27**
6. Israel learns an important lesson on obedience at the city of Ai. **7:1-8:29**
 - **Joshua 7:1** contains two notes of concern:
 - **The people 'broke faith'**, as a man named Achan took some of the devoted articles from Jericho and kept them for himself.
 - Unlike Jericho, where Joshua sought God, there is no record that Joshua sought God's guidance before deciding to attack Ai.
 - God's anger 'burned against the people of Israel'. They are a Covenant People, bound to God not only individually but corporately. The people as a whole will suffer the consequences of Achan.
 - The failed attack on Ai. **7:2-9**
 - It is possible that the spies report and Joshua's agreement show some self-reliance and over confidence. Again, note there is no mention of God giving them the city. **(vs.2-4)**
 - The attack ends in disaster **(vs.4-5)**
 - Now Joshua seeks God! **(vs.6-9)**
 - Joshua approaches God with humility and grief as well as fear **(vs.6-8)**
 - Fearing God has removed His hand from Israel, Joshua expresses the fear that emboldened Canaanite peoples will band together and wipe Israel out **(vs.9)**
 - God reveals why the Israelites had suffered defeat and instructs Joshua what to do **(vs.10-15)**.
 - Joshua follows through on God's instructions **(vs.16-26)**
 - The spoils taken by Achan were worth as much as a man's lifetime of earnings **(vs.21)**.
 - While the penalty against Achan seems severe, one must remember that 36 men lost their lives because of his sin **(7:5)**
 - The penalty matched what was done to the 'devoted things' taken at Jericho **(6:21)**
 - Ai is defeated **(Joshua 8:1-29)**.
 - Now it is God Who gives the instructions and promises victory **(8:1-2; 7, 18)**
 - One key difference between Jericho and Ai is that God gives permission for Israel to take the spoil for themselves **(8:2)**
 - The destruction of Ai is complete **(vs.22-29)**
7. Joshua reads The Law to the people and renews their commitment to The Covenant **(vs.30-35)**
 - Joshua begins with worship **(vs.30-31)**
 - He makes copies of the 10 Commandments **(vs.32)**
 - Reading the entire Law, Joshua and the people renew their commitment to God **(vs.33-35)**
 - This had been spelled out by Moses in **Deut. 27:1-8. (8:31)**
8. Having watched Jericho and Ai fall, the king of Jerusalem forms an alliance against Israel. **10:1-28**
 - The city of Gibeon had made peace with Joshua through deception in **Joshua 9**. This leads the alliance led by Jerusalem to attack it. This in turn led Joshua to come to their aid. **(vs.1-7)**
 - God assures Joshua of victory **(vs.8)** and Joshua attacks, aided by God's hand **(vs.9-11)**.
 - Running out of daylight before total victory can be achieved, Joshua asks for the sun to stand still. God grants his request, through it was the earth that comes to a halt. **(vs.12-15)**. Joshua and the men of Israel then complete the rout **(vs.16-28)**

9. Joshua and the men of Israel conquer southern and then northern Canaan. **Joshua 10:29-11:23.**

- This conquest takes Joshua into his late years. While there is still territory to be taken, God gives Joshua His blessing to stop, and to allocate the land to the Tribes. **(see Joshua 13:1-7)**

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 36	SCRIPTURE
JOSHUA'S FINAL CHALLENGE TO THE PEOPLE	JOSHUA 23-24
NOTES	
<p>1. Joshua's final charge to the leaders of Israel. Joshua 23 As Joshua nears the end of his life, he shares several charges to the leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To remember God's promise to drive out the remaining people in Canaan, as long as Israel steps out against them (vs.3-5)• They are to be committed to obeying God's Word. Special mention is made against marrying Canaanites and worshipping idols. Then there is encouragement to cling to their relationship with God. (vs.6-8)• They are to be very careful to love God. This was not duty bound obedience, but obedience motivated by love. (vs.11)• They are warned again about intermarrying with the Canaanites. There is a connection to verse 11 and loving God. The people of Israel cannot love God and the Canaanites. In the New Testament Jesus makes that same point of loving God and materialism in Matthew 6:24; as does John in 1 John 2:15-17. (vs.12-13)• Joshua reminds them of God's faithfulness to them, and exhorts them to be faithful in turn to God. (vs.14-16) <p>2. Joshua leads Israel in renewing their commitment to their Covenant with God. Joshua 24:1-28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joshua first rehearses the history of God's relationship with Israel, starting all the way back with Abraham. (24:1-13)• Then Joshua issues a challenge to serve God in sincerity and faithfulness. They have a choice to make, to follow after God or go back to worshipping the false gods of their early ancestors. Verse 14 is one of the best known verses in the Bible. It is important to note that Joshua first points out everything God had done for them before calling them to renew their commitment. Our commitment to grow as Fully Devoted Followers of Christ needs to come out of our love and appreciation for God and all He has done for us and not some sense of duty. (vs.14-15)• The people are quick to respond, choosing to serve and follow God (vs.16-18). However, Joshua warns against making a hasty vow they will be unable or unwilling to follow through on (vs.19-20)• The people insist, and Joshua acknowledges their decision (vs.22-28) <p>3. Joshua dies (vs.29). The people of Joshua's generation stand out as one of the most faithful in the history of Israel. Their trust in God has established them in the land He had promised to the Patriarchs. This faithfulness will continue through the lifetime of those who saw what God had done for them (vs.31).</p>	

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 37	SCRIPTURE
AN OVERVIEW OF THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES	JUDGES 1-2
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Background of the book of Judges.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The name of the book comes from the title given to 12 leaders (judges) who were temporary leaders during different times. They were civil and military leaders. They served between the time of Joshua and Samuel (1375BC to around 1050 BC).• The greatest threat Israel faced during this time was from idolatry, not other nations. They continuously slid into combining the Canaanite religions with their sensuality with worshipping God. In addition, there was no real capital or central government to bind the 12 Tribes together.• The nation went through a constant cycle of falling into idolatry – being disciplined by God through one of their pagan neighbors – crying out to God – a Judge rising up to lead them – deliverance – falling back into idolatry after the death of the Judge. Each time they went through this cycle they drifted further and further from God.• Some of the Judges are familiar to many of us: Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson.• A major theme is the lack of godly leadership leading to people doing what is right in their own eyes. This is not unlike our own culture in the 21st century!2. The conquest of the land continued after Joshua’s death. Judges 1:1-26<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These verses describe the successes of the tribes of Judah, Simeon, Ephraim and Manasseh. The majority of the territory given to these tribes are rid of Canaanites.• The exception are the Philistines, who have chariots, against which the Israelites have no weapons. (vs.19). Also, while most of Jerusalem is taken, the upper citadel is not. The Jebusites will remain there until the days of King David.3. The incomplete conquest by many of the Tribes sets up the nation of Israel for spiritual failure. Judges 1:27-364. Judges 2:6-10 are a repeat of the end of the book of Joshua, and serve as a connection to the book of Judges. These verses actually take place before Judges 2:1-5. The key verse in this section is 2:10, which points out that the generation after Joshua’s, “did not know the LORD or the work He had done for Israel”.5. This explains what happened in Judges 2:1-5.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The people of Israel had failed to drive out all of the Canaanites. Apparently, if there were not official treaties, there was a kind of truce with the Canaanites who were left in the land.• The result was that God was going to let the Canaanites stay in the land and be a snare to Israel.	

6. **Judges 2:11-23** give an overview of the whole book.

- Within one generation of Joshua, the people of Israel begin to worship a variety of false gods. The author refers to this as provoking and abandoning the LORD. **(vs.11-13)**.
- God responds by using the nations around Israel to bring discipline on them. **(vs.14-15)**
- God would raise up a Judge from time to time to deliver the nation of Israel **(vs.16-23)**
 - God was responding to the cries of His oppressed people **(vs.18)**
 - While the Judges were empowered by God to deliver the people, they were unable to lead true spiritual revival. The people of Israel would simply return to idolatry **(vs.16-19)**
 - As a result, God determined to not drive the remaining Canaanites out of the land. Instead, they remained a religious and military nemesis **(vs.20-23)**
- This cycle will repeat itself a dozen times over the next 300+ years.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT # 38	SCRIPTURE
DELIVERANCE BY DEBORAH AND BARAK	JUDGES 4
NOTES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deborah stands out among the women of the Bible as well as among the Judges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is the godliest Judge in the book of Judges. Her words consistently point people towards God. • She is also a Prophetess (Vs.4) • She was so well known and trusted they named the spot where she met people ‘the palm of Deborah’. It was here people would come to her for wisdom and to resolve disputes. (vs.5) 2. During her ministry the people of Israel are disciplined by God through the hand of Jabin, King of Hazor. This city was located north of the Sea of Galilee. 3. Jabin’s army was powerful, and included 900 chariots, the tanks of the day. This army was led by Sisera. He oppressed the people of Israel with cruelty for 20 years. As is common, they begin to cry out to God, not in repentance but distress, hoping for relief. 4. Deborah summons Barak, who has been chosen by God to lead an army against Sisera. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She acts as prophetess and delivers a message to Barak: he is to gather an army of 10,000 men to fight. God will draw Sisera out to battle and deliver him into Barak’s hands (vs.6-7). • Barak hesitates and states that he will only go if Deborah joins him. To have a woman join an army going into battle was unheard of. Deborah agrees to go. But as a result of his lack of faith, the glory associated with killing Sisera would not go to him but to a woman (vs.8-10) 5. We are then introduced to Heber the Kenite. This is the family of Moses’ father-in-law. His wife, Jael will figure prominently in the story (vs.11) 6. The armies of Sisera and Barak meet in battle. God gives Sisera into Barak’s hand and the battle becomes a rout. Sisera flees the field and his army is wiped out. (vs.12-16) 	

7. Sisera flees to the family compound of Heber the Kenite, thinking he is safe **(vs.17)**.
8. Jael meets Sisera and leads him to her tent. While he is asleep she drives a tent peg through his head, killing him **(vs.21)**.

PERSOANAL OBSERVATIONS:

EVENT #39	SCRIPTURE
DELIVERANCE BY GIDEON	JUDGES 6-8

NOTES

1. **Judges 6:1-10** describes the continuing apostasy of the people of Israel. This time the LORD uses the nation of Midian to bring His discipline on them.
 - The Midianites brought a level of oppression not seen before. They came in waves to steal the herds, flocks and crops of Israel, leaving them destitute. The Israelites created hiding places in the hills and mountains to escape the Midianite incursions. **(6:1-5)**
 - The people cry out to God for relief, as they had done in the past. However, instead of sending a Judge immediately, God sends a prophet to rebuke them. This is the first time God does this. He is calling the people to repentance, but they do not respond. In His mercy, the LORD will deliver the people from Midian. However, His greater desire is to deliver them from the sin of idolatry, and its continuing consequences. As the prophet says, the people will not obey God's voice. **(vs.6-10)**
2. God calls Gideon to deliver the people of Israel from Midian. This will come in three steps. **6:11-40**.
 - The Angel of the LORD appears to Gideon while he is beating wheat **(vs.11-24)**
 - Wheat is usually threshed on an open floor where the wind can carry away the chaff. Gideon is doing it in a winepress, trying to hide the wheat from the Midianites. **(vs.11)**
 - The Angel of the LORD comes with encouragement: calls Gideon 'mighty man of valor' and assures him of the LORD's presence. However, Gideon shows the discouragement that undoubtedly was common, asking where God was and why He was allowing the Midianites to oppress them. **(vs.12-13)**
 - The next exchange reminds one of Moses and the LORD in Exodus 3 and 4. God tells Gideon He will empower him to succeed. Gideon replies that he is a humble man from a humble family, how can he be a leader? God's continuing encouragement brings Gideon to the place where he asks for a sign **(vs.14-18)**.
 - Gideon brings what he thought was a meal. The LORD gives Gideon his sign by using fire to turn it into an offering. Gideon immediately recognizes what God has done and is terrified. Usually one did not see God and live. However, God assures Gideon he will not die. Gideon responds by building an alter and worshipping Him as 'The LORD of Peace' **(vs.19-24)**

- God then gives Gideon a task – to destroy the altar and Pole used for worshipping the Canaanites gods/goddess Baal and Asherah. These stood side by side on Gideon’s father’s property. **(vs.25-32)**
 - Baal was worshipped by sacrificing on an altar. The goddess Asherah was worshipped at a sacred pole. Gideon was to destroy both. **(vs.25-26)**
 - To show God’s dominance over these false gods, Gideon offers the LORD a sacrifice using the wood of the Asherah Pole.
 - Gideon’s shaky faith is seen in his doing what God said (faith) but at night, out of fear of the people (shaky). **(vs.27)**
 - The people do indeed intend to kill Gideon for what he did. The wise response of his father diffuses the situation. **(vs.28-31)**
 - When Gideon is not struck dead by Baal, Gideon is given a name that signifies he has challenged Baal and won. **(vs.32)**
- The third step is the well-known fleece. **(vs.33-40)**
 - The Midianites, joined by the Amalekites cross the Jordan into Israel for one of their raids. The fact Gideon had been threshing wheat indicates it is harvest season. In response, Gideon puts out a call for men to come to fight. **(vs.33-35)**
 - But before Gideon is ready to fight, he asks God to demonstrate His presence by the fleece test. God responds both times. Note that it was not really unusual for the fleece to contain water after the ground was dry (‘and it was so’). However it was God Who made the fleece dry when the ground was wet (‘And God did so’) **(vs.36-40)**

3. Gideon’s army is winnowed down from 32,000 to 300 by God. **Judges 7:1-14**

- **Judges 7:2** gives us the reason for God doing this counter-intuitive military move. He wants Israel to know it is the LORD Who is delivering them, not they themselves. God wants to do more than give them relief from oppression; He wants to turn their hearts back to Him. **(vs.1-8)**
 - Once the army is down to 300 men. the LORD assures Gideon He will save Israel using these 300 men. **(vs.7)**
- After all but 300 of the men go home, God gives Gideon an unasked for sign to encourage him. The dream spoken of in **7:13-14** undoubtedly came from God. **(vs. 9-14)**

4. Gideon responds with faith and leads Israel to victory over Midian. **Judges 7:15-8:21**

- This final sign from God leads Gideon to first worship God for His promised victory and then to ready the men with the words, “The LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand”. True godly leadership points people to God for the victory, not to their own resources. **(vs.15)**
- Gideon then gives the men a plan to put the enemy into a state of confusion **(vs.16-18)**
- Gideon and his men implement the plan, but it is God Who puts the Midianites into a state of confusion that causes them to start to kill each other. Soon, they are in full flight. **(vs.19-23)**
- Gideon wants more than to drive Midian out of Israel. He recognizes this is an opportunity to destroy them once and for all. He calls out to Ephraim to cut off the fords over the Jordan, preventing the Midian army from escaping. **(vs.24-25)**
- Gideon first uses tact to prevent the men of Ephraim from turning on him for not calling them to the initial battle **(8:1-3)**. Then he pursues the two kings of Midian **(vs.4-21)**.
 - The cities of Succoth and Penuel are both in Israel. They refuse to help Gideon, confident the Midian kings will in time be back.
 - Gideon shows a less than gracious response to their fear, and promises retaliation for their refusal to help. **(8:4-9)**
 - After capturing the kings, Gideon comes back and follows through on his threats. **(vs.13-17)**
 - These two kings had captured and executed Gideon’s brothers some- time in the past. In retaliation, Gideon executes them. **(vs.18-21)**

NOTE: From *Judges 8:4* on there is no mention of God being involved in Gideon’s actions. What we see is his pride and desire for revenge. Like all of us, Gideon experienced times of

complete faith in God while also experiencing times of self-reliance that led to less than god-honoring actions.

5. Gideon's tragic mistake – making an Ephod for himself. **Judges 8:22-28**

- The people of Israel try to make Gideon their king. Their intent is to set up Gideon's family as a dynasty. **(vs.22)**
- Gideon responds by pointing the people back to God, for He is the one Who has delivered them. **(vs.23)** Unfortunately, Gideon's following actions seem to indicate he gives in to this opportunity to some degree.
- Gideon asks for the gold earrings from the Midian army. In addition, they give Gideon royal garments of the two Midian kings. **(vs.24-26)**
- Gideon uses these to make an Ephod. This was a colorful outer garment that was to be worn by the High Priest only. It included a breastplate that contained a pocket containing instruments used to discern God's will. **(Ex.28; 39)** This garment was to be worn only by the high priest. Gideon, however, wants one of his own. Undoubtedly this was some kind of 'royal garment' that signified his position as a leader. It also would have been used to inquire about God's will. Clearly, God was not going to honor this clear violation of His Word. The result was a form of idolatry around this Ephod that led the people away from God. **(vs.27)**
- Again, God's mercy is seen, as Midian never again rises up against Israel. Gideon rules as Judge for 40 years. **(vs.28-32)**

6. After the death of Gideon however, the people return to their idolatry. They do not remember God or His deliverance. This clearly indicates there was never true spiritual repentance. **Judges 8:33-35.**

The story of Gideon serves as an example of this season of Israel's history. There are many more cycles and Judges to come. However, it is not until the arrival of Samuel that true repentance begins to take place among the people.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS: