

# Judges 8:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.

## Analysis

**And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.**

The capture of Zebah and Zalmunna completes Gideon's divinely appointed mission. The kings' names carry symbolic weight: **Zebah** (Zevach, זֶבַח) means "sacrifice" while **Zalmunna** (Tsalmunna, צִלְמוֹנָה) means "shade/protection denied" or "shadow withdrawn." Whether these were birth names or throne names, they ironically foreshadow their fate—they became sacrifices to divine justice, their protection stripped away. Their flight—**when Zebah and Zalmunna fled** (vayyanusu Zevach u-Tsalmunna, וַיָּנֻסוּ זֶבַח וְצִלְמוֹנָה)—demonstrates that even kings cannot escape God's judgment.

Gideon's relentless pursuit—**he pursued after them** (vayyirdof achareihem, וַיִּרְדֹּף אַחֲרֵיהֶם)—models complete obedience. God had commanded Israel to destroy the Midianites; Gideon refused to settle for routing the army while leaving leadership intact. The phrase **and took the two kings** (vayyilkod et-shenei malkhei Midyan, וַיִּלְכֹּד אֶת־שְׁנֵי מַלְכֵי מִדְיָן) emphasizes capture of both kings—complete fulfillment of the mission. The verb lakad (לָכַד, "capture, seize") indicates decisive control.

The final phrase—**and discomfited all the host** (ve'et kol-hamachaneh hechrid, וְאֶת כָּל־הַמַּחֲנֶה הֶחָרִיד)—uses charad (חָרַד, "to tremble, be terrified, scatter"). This is the same terror God sent in the initial battle (Judges 7:22). The complete victory—

from 135,000 warriors reduced to scattered remnants, their kings captured—vindicated Gideon's confidence in God's promise. This foreshadows Christ's complete victory: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15). Partial victory leaves enemies to regroup; complete victory ensures lasting peace.

## Historical Context

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The capture of enemy kings was militarily and psychologically decisive in ancient warfare. Leaderless armies typically disintegrated, with soldiers fleeing to their homes. The kings' capture prevented future Midianite coalitions—without royal leadership to organize and motivate troops, the nomadic groups would return to fragmented clan-based existence rather than unified raiding.

Zebah and Zalmunna's capture is referenced in later Scripture as paradigmatic of God's judgment on Israel's enemies. Psalm 83:11 invokes their defeat: "Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna." This memorialization demonstrates how Gideon's victory became proverbial—a reminder of God's faithfulness to deliver His people and judge those who oppress them. The kings' eventual execution (Judges 8:18-21) completed the judgment, ending the Midianite threat for generations.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does Gideon's pursuit to complete victory challenge modern Christian tendency toward partial obedience or incomplete sanctification?

2. What 'kings' (besetting sins, spiritual strongholds) in your life require complete capture and removal rather than mere suppression?
3. How does the complete discomfiture of the Midianite host illustrate Christ's total victory over spiritual enemies that believers appropriate by faith?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיִּסּוּ	וְזַבַּח	וְזַלְמוּנָא	וַיִּרְדֵּף	אַחֲרֵיהֶם	וְלָכְדוּ	
fled	And when Zebah	and Zalmunna	he pursued	after	them and took	
H5127	H2078	H6759	H7291	H310	H3920	
אֵת	שְׁנֵי יְ	מְלָכֵי יְ	מִדְיָן	אֵת	וְזַבַּח	וְזַלְמוּנָא
H853	the two	kings	of Midian	H853	And when Zebah	and Zalmunna
	H8147	H4428	H4080	H2078	H853	H6759
וְכָל	הַמַּחֲנֶה	הַיְּהוּדִי:				
H3605	all the host	and discomfited				
	H4264	H2729				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 83:11** (Parallel theme): Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna: