

Judges 8:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god.

Analysis

As soon as Gideon was dead (כִּי-אָשֵׁר מֵת גִּדְעוֹן, ka'asher met gid'on)—the temporal phrase emphasizes immediacy; Israel's apostasy followed instantly upon Gideon's death. **The children of Israel turned again** (שָׁבּוּ, shavu)—the same verb used for 'repentance' here describes returning to sin. **Went a whoring after Baalim** repeats the language from verse 27, creating a tragic inclusio: they went whoring after Gideon's ephod, and now after the Baals themselves.

Made Baal-berith their god (בָּעֵל בְּרִית, 'Lord of the Covenant')—the supreme irony. Israel replaces Yahweh, the true Covenant LORD, with a Canaanite deity whose title usurps God's own covenant name. Baal-berith was apparently worshiped at Shechem (9:4), Abimelech's mother's hometown. The ephod that ensnared Gideon's house now facilitates national idolatry. This demonstrates the tragic pattern of Judges: each generation's compromises become the next generation's apostasy. What starts as questionable practice hardens into outright rebellion.

Historical Context

Baal-berith ('Baal of the Covenant') or El-berith ('God of the Covenant,' 9:46) was likely a syncretistic deity combining Canaanite Baal worship with covenant language borrowed from Yahwism—the worst kind of religious mixture. Shechem's

temple to this god (9:4, 46) became a center for this apostate worship, perverting the site where Joshua had renewed the covenant (Joshua 24).

Related Passages

John 15:13 – Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 – God is love

Study Questions

1. How quickly do you abandon spiritual commitments when strong leadership or influence is removed?
2. What syncretistic practices subtly replace biblical truth with worldly counterfeits in your life?
3. How are you ensuring that your faith outlasts your lifetime through discipleship of the next generation?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Judges 2:19 (References God): And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

Judges 9:4 (Parallel theme): And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him.

Judges 9:46 (References God): And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that, they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith.

Judges 2:17 (References God): And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.

Judges 8:27 (Creation): And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

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