

# The LORD Shall Rule Over You

Judges 8:23



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Together** Judges 8:23 <sup>(KJV)</sup> Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.

**Illustrate** A little boy was playing in his back yard, not far from where the lawn ended and the wooded area began. His father came up and watched his son for a few minutes. Suddenly he said to the child, "**Son, do just as I say. Drop to the ground and begin quietly crawling toward me. Don't argue with me! Do it now.**" The little boy didn't question his dad, for he had been raised to obey his father's voice. He dropped to the ground and crawled toward his father, just as he had been told. When he got to his father he asked, "**Daddy, why did you make me crawl?**". The father pointed to a tree near where the child had been playing. He said, "**On the branch just above your head was a very poisonous snake. I didn't want to shout because I didn't want to startle the snake, and I thought if I came toward you the snake might have attacked. The best thing for you to do was what I told you. I'm so glad you did!**"

If this child had ignored or mocked his father's words, he could have been hurt and perhaps even killed. In the same way we who are God's children need to respect, heed, and obey the Word of our Lord.

God tells His people that - if they will obey His voice and let Him rule - that they will be blessed. As Gideon said, "**The LORD shall rule over you**". God's people are to be ruled by God's Word. Disobedience belongs to the unbeliever, but the LORD calls His Children to

obedience!

When God told Pharaoh "**Let My people go so that they may worship Me**", the King replied:

**Exodus 5:2** <sup>(NIV)</sup> ... **Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.**

The unbeliever does not know the Lord, and so does not feel the need to obey the Lord. Those who belong in Egypt and who are yet blinded by sin see nothing wrong in ignoring God.

I read recently a number of disturbing trends sweeping our nation. For instance, I read an article that stated "**Obama Signs Proclamation Recognizing June (2011) As Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month**". If you are a Christian you know that God forbids and condemns this type of lifestyle as against His Design and His Word. He tells us in Romans:

**Romans 1:27-28** <sup>(NIV)</sup> .... **men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. ... God ... gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.**

The unbeliever doesn't know nor do they obey the Lord, but **the LORD shall rule over you**, if you are His by faith in Christ. The unbeliever does things that are inconvenient and sinful, but they do so from a heart still

occupied with darkness.

The world follows their lusts, but we who believe follow our Lord!

The Lord Jesus calls His believers, saying ...

**John 8:12** <sup>(NIV)</sup> ... **I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**

It is the calling of every Christian to obey their Lord and to follow His Word. When we do so we, by our obedience, open the eyes of the lost world by sharing the Gospel, to

**Acts 26:18** <sup>(NIV)</sup> ....**turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in {God}**

**We Love The Lord, Because The Lord Loves Us**

**Illustrate** Following the wrong thing can get you in trouble.

Three goobers went away on a hunting trip. Once they'd set up their camp site, they realized they had only one gun between them. Talking it over, they decided they would each take turns hunting. The first one headed out and, a few hours later, he returned. He came back with a raccoon. He told his friends, "**Saw tracks, followed tracks, shot raccoon**". The second

goober took the gun and went out. A short time later he came back with a bear. He said, "**Saw tracks, followed tracks, shot bear**". The third goober took the gun and went out. He came back *three days later*, battered and bruised - he was a mess! His friends asked him, "**What in the world happened?**" He replied, "**Saw tracks, followed tracks, got hit by train**".

Christians are not called to be goobers, but to be followers of the LORD. We follow His tracks. We do what He tells us to do. When we follow God, God can do great things using us.

We follow the Lord because we love the Lord, because we have a love relationship with Him. Following the Lord is more than putting a *fish* on the bumper of your car or putting a Christian *ring-tone* on your telephone.

God is *crazy in love* with each and every one of His people. How did God show His love for us? The Bible says:

**Philippians 2:5-8** <sup>(NIV)</sup> **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!**

God didn't just reach down from Heaven, but He came from Heaven to this earth. **He took upon Himself the**

**form of a servant.** The writer of Hebrews says:

**Hebrews 2:9** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.**

God lowered Himself in love to lift us up out of darkness and to make us the Light of the world. God should not have to demand our obedience. He has *earned* our obedience. He has given so much for us, how can we who are saved withhold anything from Him?

### **If We Love The Lord, We Will Learn To Put Him First**

Love always displays itself by putting others first. The Lord loved us, so He gave Himself for us. He put us first. The world will tempt us to put ourselves first. That Old Sin Nature inside us will tempt us to put ourselves first. But Beloved, if we're wise, we will always put God first.

Gideon was tempted. Right after Gideon led Israel to overthrow the Midianites a delegation came to him and said:

**Context Judges 8:22** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **... Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.**

Now that's *very tempting*. How would you have responded if the leaders of a nation came to you and said,

**"YOU saved us from the Midianites!  
YOU are so awesome!  
YOU are the best!  
We are going to make YOU our next king,  
and your family shall rule for  
THREE GENERATIONS!"**

Let's be honest: that would be a tough thing to beat! One of the greatest of all sins is the sin of PRIDE. Pride pulls at everyone. Deacons get lifted up by pride. Pastors get lifted up by pride. I have known the temptation of pride, and have wrestled with that monster often. I have known dear men of God, great Pastors, who have been lifted up with pride. The last words they said before they lost their position as Overseer was:

**"Because I say so, and I'm the Pastor!"**

Bad statement! Bad Pastor! Poor Moses, distracted and disturbed by a rebellious Israel, stood in front of the people and, *disobeying the Word of God* cried out:

**Numbers 20:10 <sup>(KJV)</sup> Hear now, ye rebels; must WE fetch you water out of this rock?**

Poor Moses! He lost the Promised Land along with the first generation of Israel! Would Gideon make the same mistake? No, he wouldn't, for Gideon replied:

**FOCAL Judges 8:23 <sup>(KJV)</sup> Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.**

Well done, Gideon! I remember there was a game show several years ago where the host would always ask, "Is that your final answer?" How did Gideon get to the point in his life where he could give such a good "final answer"?

### **The Four Steps To A Gideon Great Faith**

**1 Like Gideon, I must follow the Lord and not follow the crowd.** What does God's Word say? What does the Scripture define as "right" and "wrong"? When God's people began to follow the world rather than the One Who created the world, we read that:

**Judges 6:1 <sup>(KJV)</sup> ... the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.**

**Illustrate** When Israel acted like the Midianites, God turned them over to the Midianites. When the believer acts like an unbeliever, the Lord may turn us over to them. During the last week of May I read in the news that Christians, Muslims, and Jews were all going to swap and share their pulpits. The plan was concocted by so called clergy who wanted to share other faiths in their pulpits. Think about this for a minute:

**Can you imagine Peter on the Day of Pentecost giving equal time to the gods of Rome?** When the crowd heard Peter preaching about the Lord Jesus and asked,

**"Men and brothers, what shall we do?"**

Peter replied with the only sane answer. He said:

**Acts 2:38 (KJV) ... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

Can you imagine the Apostle Paul, standing on Mar's Hill in Athens saying, "I see you have an altar to an unknown god. How tolerant of you? No, but he preached:

**Acts 17:22-23 (KJV) ... Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. 23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.**

Paul went on to stand on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, saying:

**Acts 17:30-31 (KJV) ... now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because {God} hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man {Jesus} whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**

We are called as believers to follow our Lord, share His Gospel, and *to not compromise* with the Midianites - nor anyone else!

We who believe are to persist in doing God's Word in God's Way.

**2** Like Gideon, I must not allow my fears to dictate my actions. I am to follow my Lord! God told Gideon:

**Judges 7:2-3 (KJV) ... The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. 3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.**

Too often we have allowed *numbers* rather than *obedience* to dictate to us. God specifically told Gideon that - out of the 32,000 men that were there - He wanted to cut that number down.

**Neither numbers nor fear should drive the believer in God. The Lord shall rule over us!**

**Word Study** The Lord said, "Let those who are **"fearful and afraid"** leave this mountain". Literally the Lord said, "**Whoever is afraid and trembling**". If there were any who were being driven by fear and not by love of the LORD, they were to be released from service. 22,000 men departed post haste!

**Illustrate** In other parts of the world Christians have to stand together, loving one another and their LORD, often at the risk of their lives and the lives of their families.

I heard a missionary tell the story that he and several other Christians were gathered at someone's home to quietly worship the Lord. There was a knock at the door, and when the owner of the house opened the door he saw two soldiers with machine guns. **"We have heard that you gather to illegally worship this Jesus Christ. Let us in!"** They pushed their way in and, pointing the machine guns, said **"Those who are not serious about this Christ can leave unharmed!"** Several believers got up and left, but many remained. The soldiers turned, shut the door, then *put down their weapons*. They said, **"We, too, are followers of Christ. We just wanted to get rid of the pretenders before we came forward to worship with you!"**

**Illustrate** In his book *Radical Together* Pastor **David Platt** wrote of an overseas Church leader called **Dominic**. He said:

**"Dominic is now in his sixties, and he has been the pastor of a relatively small house Church for most of his life. Dominic's passion is telling people about Christ. He was once brought before the Communist council in his community to be questioned about his evangelistic work. He walked into the interrogation room with a large rock in his hands and set it down on the table in front of the men who were about to question him. Surprised, one of the men asked Dominic, "Why did you bring this rock with you?"**

**Dominic replied, "Before we begin my questioning today, I want you to know something. If you try to stop me from telling people about the greatness of Jesus Christ, this rock is going to start speaking for me." Dominic was alluding to Luke 19:40, where Jesus says that if the disciples 02:13:22 PM proclaim his glory, the stones would cry out instead. The communist leaders, of course, had no idea what Dominic was talking about. They conferred and decided he was out of his mind, so they released him without further questioning!"**

Dominic and his Church has planted *sixty other churches in his country, and has trained nearly every one of those pastors.*

When a Gideon stands with God, these two are a majority! Do not let low numbers or fear drive you.  
**The Lord shall rule His people!**

**3** God is looking for simple followers who will yield their hands to His cause - these the Lord will bless!

After 22,000 men left Gideon's Army the Lord said, **"You've still got too many men. Send the ten thousand that remain to the river. ... "**

**Judges 7:4-7 (KJV) ... the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped,**

putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

The Lord used a very simple test. As the day wore on the 10,000 men were getting thirsty. The Lord had Gideon send the men to the river to drink. Those who **lapped water like a dog, putting their hand to their mouth** were retained for the battle, whereas the remainder were released. Think about this for a moment.

The man who put his face to the water was vulnerable to attack, whereas the man who brought the water to his lips was *watchful*. God was looking to use those who were *watchful, ready, willing to take His mission seriously*.

**Illustrate** There is a difference between committed Love and calculating love. A young man was purchasing roses for his girlfriend. He actually had two reasons for the roses:

today was her nineteenth birthday, and he wanted to ask her to marry him.

As he stood in line waiting to be waited on he asked his friend, "Do you think I should get Sara *twelve* roses or *nineteen* - one for each year she was born?" His friend

said, "You're going to ask her to marry you, aren't you?" He said, "I sure am!" His friend replied, "Well, look at it this way. If she says "yes" to your marriage proposal there's coming a day when she won't be your *nineteen* year old girlfriend - she will be your *fifty* year old wife."

The young man ended up buying a dozen roses.

What do you think: did this young man have a *committed* love or a *calculating* love? Though his bride to be might not know the difference, God knows. We are to give God *all of us*.

*The Lord Jesus Christ gave all of Himself for me, so I am to give all of myself to Him.*

**Illustrate** I saw a cartoon once where a young boy and his father was sitting in a restaurant, and the father was counting out a tip for the waitress. The child asked,

"How come the waitress gets 15%, and God only gets 10%?"

Out of the mouths of babes! We are to give God all that we have, not all that we don't want!

**4** Gideon faith starts when we obey the Lord whether we understand Him or not.

The Lord had Gideon divide these 300 men into three companies. Each company then stood outside the enemy

camp on three sides. The Israelite soldiers were armed with **lamps in their left hands, and trumpets in their right hands**. Gideon told them:

**Context Judges 7:18 <sup>KJV</sup> When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon.**

They were to toot their trumpets and shatter their lamps on the ground.

At no point did Gideon debate with God on what they were doing. He just obeyed God.

Gideon didn't say, "Lord, what about a back up plan? **This sounds a little silly to me, tooting horns, shattering lamps, and yelling like banshees.**" No. Gideon did exactly what he was told - and so did his people. We may not understand the ways of God. In fact, the LORD tells us:

**Isaiah 55:8-11 <sup>KJV</sup> For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. .... my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it.**

We spend so much time debating God, when all we need to do is obey. God knows what is best. We are to follow

Him, to do what He says. It is noteworthy that Gideon and his men were to yell:

### **"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"**

What is the "Sword of the Lord?" It is the Will and the Word of God. What God has said will come to pass. We are to obey His Word in His time for our blessing!

The Bible tells us that when Gideon and his army of 300 did as God commanded that:

**Judges 7:22 <sup>KJV</sup> ... the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath.**

No one stands against God! As Gideon said, **The Lord shall rule over you**. God is in control. He has decreed that:

**Philippians 2:10-11 <sup>KJV</sup> .... at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

He is Lord! He is Lord!

**The First Step Is To Hear and Obey The Gospel**

The word "**Gospel**" means "**Good News**". In a world filled with bad news there is some overwhelmingly "**Good News**". The Bible tells us that

**Hebrews 9:27** that "**It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this, the judgment**".

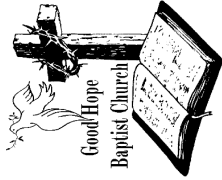
We're all going to die. That's bad news, if I'm not mistaken. When I die I will be judged. Again, that's bad news. How do I know that - when I see the Judge of Heaven and Earth - that I'll be accepted? Will it be by my **good works**? That's so relative. What may be a "good work" for me may not necessarily be a "good work" for another. What will please the Judge? The Bible tells me:

**John 3:16-17** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

This is the Good News, the Gospel. The bad news is that we are all sinners, but the Good News is that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for my sins and for yours. **We are forgiven when we repent, turn from our disobedience, and turn to Jesus Christ by faith.** The daughter of Billy Graham, **Ann Graham Lotz** said, "**One day, at any moment, could be my last. Live your life expecting to see Jesus any moment.**" Are you prepared to see Jesus? Are you ready to meet your LORD? The Bible tells us that **the LORD shall rule over you.** We are told:

**Philippians 2:9-11** <sup>(KJV)</sup> **Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

May God touch your hearts with His Word!



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Living Together In The Love Of God

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Exodus 5:2; Romans 1:27-28; John 8:12; Acts 26:18

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**We Love The Lord, Because The Lord Loves Us**

Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:9

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**When We Love The Lord, We Will Learn  
To Put Him First**

Judges 8:22; Numbers 20:10; Judges 8:23

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Additional Notes

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**The Four Steps To A Gideon Great Faith**

**1** Like Gideon, I must follow the Lord and \_\_\_\_\_

Judges 6:1; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:22-23; Acts 17:30-31

**2** Like Gideon, I must not allow my \_\_\_\_\_ to dictate my actions. I am to follow my Lord!

Judges 7:2-3

**Neither numbers nor fear should drive the believer in God. The Lord shall rule over us!**

**3** God is looking for simple followers who will yield their \_\_\_\_\_ to His cause - these the Lord will bless! Judges 7:4-7

**4** Gideon faith starts when we obey the Lord

Judges 7:18; Isaiah 55:8-11; Judges 7:22; Philippians 2:10-11

**The First Step Is To Hear and Obey The Gospel**

Hebrews 9:27; John 3:16-17; Philippians 2:9-11

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