

RUF Bible Study – Judges
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February 27, 2008
Judges 8 – Gideon Part 3 – Gideon’s Bad End

*And Gideon made an ephod of it and put it in his city, in Ophrah.
And all Israel whored after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family
Judges 8:27*

My wife Julie and I have gotten addicted to the television show *24*. We are almost through Season 6, and just last night Julie miffed me by only watching one instead of two episodes. Not that I have to have them or anything...

We think Jack Bauer is awesome. He can get out of any situation. He can handle any problem. Jack Bauer once stepped into quicksand. The quicksand couldn’t escape and died. The city of Los Angeles once named a city after Jack Bauer in gratitude for saving the city so many times. But they had to rename it after people kept dying when they tried to cross the street. No one crossed Jack Bauer and lives. There are two hand that can beat a royal flush. Jack Bauer’s right hand and Jack Bauer’s left hand. When someone asked Jack Bauer if he was afraid of James Bond, he asked, “What does afraid mean?”²

Jack Bauer saves people. It may be unsavory at times, but he saves them.

Do you need saving? As we’ve looked at Judges, we’ve been attempting to see ourselves in the story. Instead of only a collection of essays about crazy Isrealian historical figures, we want to identify with God’s people in whatever ways we can. Our premise is that when we see the depths of our need and depravity, we also will understand the heights of God’s love and salvation. Have you been seeing it?

We have the last section of Gideon here in Judges chapter 8, so we’re looking at the result and aftermath of his dramatic warfare campaign. Here’s something I want you to remember while we work through the story and then make our points – Gideon is one of the people mentioned in Hebrews 11 (11:32) as one of the people who displayed tremendous faith in God. That might cause us to scratch our heads, so we’ll need to sort that out.

The Story

When we start in Judges 8, we’re picking up the chase with Gideon going after the Midianites. You’ll remember the personal encounter with God in chapter 6 (Gideon’s fragile faith), and the astounding victory of chapter 7 (300 versus 135,000). Gideon then pursued those who had escaped, capturing two kings, but there were still some left to apprehend.

The first paragraph deals with the Ephraimites, a tribe of Israel. They seem to be upset they weren’t included in the victory. They claim they wanted a piece of the action and berate and scold Gideon for leaving them out. Gideon takes the “a gentle answer turns away wrath” approach by soothing them with kind, flattering words. “*What have I been in comparison to you?*” It works. Their anger dissipates.

Then the 300 continue after their prey and encounter resistance from more of their own people, this time from Succoth and Penuel. These cities are pretty suspicious that Gideon and his moppy army can do it. They’d rather be on the side of the victors, so they rebuff Gideon’s request for bread. Gideon threatens them, telling them he’s going to wipe them out. And he does. After achieving his victories, he returns to these cities and “taught them a lesson.” (8:16-17). Yikes.

Our next episode focuses on the two kings Zebah and Zalmunna. Gideon has them captured and interrogates them about “the men.” He reveals that these men were his brothers.

I imagine Gideon now in the CTU (Counter Terrorist Unit) room. He has Zebah and Zelmunna handcuffed. He says to the other men, “Let me handle it.” Then he gets personal. He doesn’t only want to kill them; he wants revenge. He isn’t satisfied with justice, but he wants to grind their faces in it. He wants his son Jether to be the one who kills them, which would be humiliating for the kings. But Jether won’t do it. He was afraid, for he was just a boy. The two kings mock Gideon, and he finally kills them and takes their gold ornaments.

We have two more paragraphs in the chapter, and these two change scenes. We’re done with the victories campaigns and the negotiations that come after the war. Now on to the spoils.

In the first, we find Gideon refusing to be Israel’s king even though they ask him. He says no – Yahweh will rule over you. Then Gideon takes a ton of money from the booty, as is his due. However, he makes an ephod (we’ll talk about this) and things go poorly in that regard for Gideon and Israel.

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For this series, I used commentaries on Judges from Block, Wilcock, Redeemer Pres, Davis, Cundall/Morris, Jordan, and listened to sermons from Brandon Barrett, Shaynor Newseome, and Pete Hatton. The reader should assume that none of the ideas expressed are original to me.

² From the internet – sites that are take-offs on the Church Norris “fact” phenomenon.

In Gideon's epilogue, the last paragraph of chapter 8, we read about Gideon's legacy. We're told he had a whopping seventy sons, and one of those was Abimelech. When Gideon died, "the people of Israel turned again and whored after the Baals and made Baal-berith their god" (8:33). Not good. An expected, but still sad end for God's people.

So what can we learn from this story? How can we see ourselves in it?

Disappointing Leadership – Gideon as King

Let's first look at Gideon's "kingship" since it is the overriding concern of the text. The narrator means to show the reader how Gideon's words and his actions don't line up. Since his gracious victory in chapter 7, Gideon starts acting just like kings do.

It starts in at the beginning of chapter 8, and follows a typical pattern of oriental kings. It is not a problem for Gideon to pursue his foes to death. And Gideon does well when speaking to his own people, the Ephraimites. He averts problems with them, even though their attitude and request are selfish are uncalled for.

But then things go wrong. He displays a ruthlessness with his subjects and countrymen. Although the towns of Succoth and Penuel didn't rally to his side, can we blame them? "The officials at Succoth gave the minute peasant army little chance of capturing the leaders of an elusive and still numerous semi-nomadic group operating in conditions favorable to them."³ Perhaps their trust was weak. Maybe their faith was fragile in God's deliverer. If so, weren't they just like Gideon himself? Gideon might have said, "Sure. I understand why you doubt, but God's grace is amazing, so trust in it and believe in it." Instead he says, "I'll show you and make you pay!"

In the next scene, Gideon's actions with the two kings are driven by a personal agenda. He treats the deaths of his brothers like they were royal assassinations requiring blood vengeance. Thrusting his young son into the role of kill is bloodthirsty and cruel. We're really starting to doubt his character now.

Then he denies the kingship. The people come to him and ask him. This is a reasonable request and not altogether a bad one. The people want stability. They have seen the hand of God on Gideon. He has been their deliverer. However, they are going about this all wrong. "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also." This speaks of a dynastic kingship, which was not biblical.⁴ God was to appoint the leaders and rulers. They want the assurance that things will be the same, and they know of this because of the culture around them.

Gideon says no. But then he takes their money, the spoils of victory. He becomes fabulously wealthy. He takes the symbols of royalty from the enemy and claims them for himself. We read of his harem. If you have seventy sons, you have an awful lot of wives. It is probable that the terms "seventy" refers to a rounded, huge number, meaning he could have had far more sons than that.

And here's the kicker – the ephod. This comes from Exodus, and is a vest-like robe the priests would wear. Gideon made one for himself, and he made it out of gold. This sets up a rival seat of priestly power, which solidifies his kingship. He assumes a kingly role by sponsoring a religious cult and setting himself up as an advisor of the will of God. The people don't waste any time in going for it. We're told they "whored after it there and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family." So it wasn't just a gold shirt. It was a symbol for so much more.

In 44 B.C., Julius Caesar refused the kingship of Rome. Presiding at the rostrum of the frenzied *Lupercalia* celebration, Caesar was approached by Antony with the diadem, a simple crown. Caesar dismissed him.

But it wasn't so simple was it? People wanted Caesar as king. Men would put crowns on his statues around town. People hailed him as a king. Still he refused. Yet – he was dictator for life. He was called "Father of His Country" and considered a savior. Appian writes, "His person was to be sacred and inviolate, he was to conduct business from a seat of ivory and gold, and he was always to sacrifice in triumphal dress. Every year, on the anniversaries of his great battles, the priests and priestesses in Rome were to offer public prayer for him, and immediately on entering office the magistrates were to swear not to oppose Caesar's decisions. In honour of his birth they changed the name of the month Quintilis to Julius. Furthermore, they voted many temples to him as if he were a god..."⁵

These were honors not only due kings, but to gods. So Caesar's refusal of the kingship was rather suspect. In fact, many suspected he has orchestrated the whole thing to only *appear* humble and servant-hearted.

It is possible to deny the title of king and still act as a king. Less than a year later, Julius Caesar was murdered. His opponents felt he had become too powerful as a king. They acted for the Republic, so they claimed.

³ Cundall, 116

⁴ Here are the rules from Deuteronomy 17: 14 "When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' 17 And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

⁵ from Appian's *History of Rome*, The Civil Wars Book 2, Section 106

No one went to kill Gideon for the Republic. He died a normal death in old age. But he was the king of Israel before they officially had one. I would say he was their first king. Though he denied it in words, he acted it out at every turn. God still blessed him, and the land had rest for forty years – the last time we read of rest in Judges.

I doubt many of us will be made kings in our lifetimes. But we may have great success. And, though it is what we all want, we should actually worry about success. Thomas Carlyle is reported to have said, Only one in a hundred passes the test of prosperity.

Gideon's life changes from his early career to the end of his career, and we get to observe this in the space of a few chapters. "When Gideon was a reluctant, frightened recruit, he so deeply distrusted his own competence that he needed multiple assurances from God that he would be helped by divine grace. But by the end of his life, Gideon built an empire and is pursuing advantage for his own family and his own glory rather than God's. He no longer goes to God for assurance. He is quite sure of himself, and so he fails."⁶

This so easily happens to us. We get a little success, and it goes to our heads. We start out humble and servant-hearted, but end up over-confident, sure of ourselves, arrogant and proud. I made it. I did it. I deserve it. But what did God say in the first place? *The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'*" That's just what has happened. Though Gideon gives a lip-service devotion to God, he really thinks he is the man.

This is how idolatry works. We go after something that isn't wrong in and of itself. There is nothing wrong with money. It has a ton of good uses, and God is for it. But if we give our lives to it, it will destroy us. We'll worship it, do anything to get it and wrap our lives around it.

God is pro-money. But he wants us to remember its proper perspective.

Deuteronomy 8 makes this clear; *17 Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 18 You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.*

The very next verse in that passage speaks of idolatry and its consequences, which aren't good. God's people must beware of making ourselves lords and kings of our world. Lord of money. Lord of success. Lord of grades. King of the suburbs, where everything is orderly and in control. This seems so right and good, but God says it's wrong.

And it may be why God chooses to keep bringing hurt and pain into our lives to keep us humble and dependant. "Adversity is not as spiritually dangerous as prosperity. In adversity, we are shown our true weakness and need for God. In prosperity, we come to see the things our hearts trust in rather than God. In prosperity, we are not forced to see any of this."⁷

I have a student who just started a business. I told him this week I pray he will be successful and become a millionaire. He seemed surprised. I assured him I was being honest, but I quickly added that I wanted this for him so he could give a ton of money to RUF and to the church, helping people far beyond what he could do right now. He nodded and agreed. I pray he will have that attitude, or else success will be bad for his soul.

Gideon starts off weak but filled with God's grace. With success, he become somewhat tyrannical, mean-hearted, angry, scared and filled with himself. I'm afraid that is in all of our hearts. We can be just like that, can't we?

In what areas are you having success right now? Are you doing well somewhere in your life? In dating? School? Work? Career plans? Are you starting to think you are the "lord" of that area? Are you mouthing God's sovereignty but really taking over? To pray with Jesus, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is a real prayer and an important one.

Misdirected Words – Gideon as Prophet

As a corollary of his kingly role, Gideon also takes on that of a prophet. We see this in two ways.

The first is when he speaks prophetically to the people of Succoth and Penuel. When they rebuff helping him, he tells them he will come back and repay them for their lack of assistance. "*Well, then when the Lord has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will flail your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers*" (8:7). And again in 8:18, "*When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.*"

Those words of prophetic threats come true. It's one thing for Gideon to pursue God's enemies, but here he is threatening and then punishing God's own people for their lack of faithfulness. We already mentioned how Gideon seems to have quickly forgotten his fragile faith. Not too long ago, he was less than gung ho about this mission. He didn't know God and didn't think God could do it. But he still pressed on in faith (remember Hebrews 11) and God came through!

We should be the most humble of people when dealing with others. Too often we are like Gideon. Though we start with grace, we move quickly to a proud works. We think, "I can do it. I am smart. I am righteous. Sure, I was dead in sin and made alive by Christ, but now I'm doing it!" And we treat others as lesser because we're greater.

It shouldn't be so for Christians. We should be gracious amidst unbelief. We shouldn't be surprised by doubt.

⁶ *Living in a Pluralistic Society*, 63

⁷ *Living in a Pluralistic Society*, 63

And we must watch our words. I know this sounds nitpicky and maybe crazy, but we should be careful about what we say to people. I think words have power. They truly do things in our world. So when we say something, even non-thinkingly-like “Damn you” or “Dammit” or “Dammit to hell” what are we really saying? Yeah, yeah, we don’t really mean it, do we?

Well – do we? Why are we damning things and people to hell, even jokingly? It’s because we have a hatred in our hearts. We’re angry when things and people don’t go our way, and we have a murderous intent of punishment. Sure, we don’t always or often act out that hatred. But it can grow and fester. And we hurt people that.

The Bible is filled with vengeance. But a recurring theme comes out – vengeance is the Lord’s, not yours. So let him have it. Don’t speak prophetic words of hatred toward others. Calm your heart. Discipline your mouth to speak words of truth and grace.

We also see Gideon’s kingly prophet role when he names his son. The narrator doesn’t comment on Gideon’s first son, Jether. We read how Gideon was a procreative power, siring at least seventy others. But one of those is singled out.

Gideon had an unnamed concubine. The Bible states he should have had only one wife. The Bible says kings especially must only have one wife so they won’t become hedonistic and corrupted. And you cannot have foreign wives. Gideon is breaking all of these marital commands – like many before him, he seems to be enjoying the sexual conquest that attends his powerful position.

Gideon’s mistress lived in another city, Shechem. She was surely a Canaanite. Her children from Gideon would be raised in her family not his, as was the custom of the day. When he was born, they considered some names. Jordan. Ashley if it were a girl. I see quite a few Sarah still. John is always popular. I searched for some crazier baby names and came up these: Veto, Meander, Run, Jetti, and I even read of someone who wants to name her child Baby Jesus. How would that work?

Gideon and Mrs. Gideon choose Abimelech. The key here is what that name means – “My father is king.” Prophetic. Kingly. Leaving no doubt as to what Gideon thought about himself and where his family was going.

Our words reveal quite a bit about our hearts. Jesus says this in Matthew 12:34: *For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.* Do you want to know about someone? Listen to what that person talks about, for that will reveal his or her heart. Does he always speak about sports and winning? Does she always speak about shopping and clothes? Do you constantly speak of your busyness? Do you speak of your GPA?

You could name your child, “Career-melech.” My career is king. Or how about “Independence-melech”? My independence is king. Or “Happiness-melech.” My happiness is king.

Listen to yourself and how you use your words to make your empire. Words and names have power to form us, to shape our world.

Disillusioned Worship – Gideon as Priest

We see the last part of Gideon usurping the king role when he makes this ephod thing. As I mentioned this was a symbol of divine priestly power. We read about this in Exodus 28, when Moses describes the ephod as a beautiful breastplate.

Gideon fashions one for himself. There is no recounting up to this point of the Levites, the tabernacle or the Ark of the Covenant. Those are three essential things for the worship of God’s people. But they’re absent from the narrative. Instead, God’s people are worshipping the Baals, the gods of the native country.

Gideon makes a merger here. He creates his own version of God’s plan for salvation of his people. This makes him tremendously powerful – not only prophet and king, but also the priest. The sponsor for the new temple. You don’t have to go to the tabernacle and the Levites any more. You can go to Gideon and his ephod. Less hassle. Less mess. Hooray for Gideon.

God doesn’t like Gideon’s ingenuity or creativity. In 8:28 we read the narrator’s godly assessment, *And all Israel whored after it there, and it became a snare for Gideon and to his family.*

We’ve previously discussed in Judges what it means to whore after other gods. Here we have that imagery again before us. Israel has been unfaithful to her husband and has taken in other lovers. She has shared the most intimate, personal part of herself with someone for a payment. Israel has given away a deep part of herself.

Gideon and Israel aren’t content with what God has given. They want more. They want more experience. They feel confined and want to be more expressive. “The ephod at Ophrah came to be regarded as a magical answer box, and people looked to it rather than to the Levites and the Lord for answers.”⁸

This harkens back to Exodus 32 and the infamous Golden Calf incident. Moses had gone up to Mt. Sinai to meet with God and receive his instructions. While he was up there, his brother Aaron gathers the people, and they construct together a golden calf to worship. This would have come from the Egyptian mindset, so they were borrowing from the concepts and gods of the people they had just escaped from. It made sense, since their God seemed cloudy, murky, thunderous and scary. They wanted something they could understand better.

I think the most chilling part of that story is this – when Aaron speaks to the people he says, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt... Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord.” Aaron isn’t just worshipping a golden calf and thinking it is a new pagan god. He is calling this Yahweh. He is attributing to it the works of Yahweh.

⁸ Jordan, 151

He thinks he's worshipping correctly, when he is actually directly contradicting the words of Yahweh: You shall not make for yourselves any graven images. That's the second commandment, found in Exodus 20. And Aaron thinks he's obeying that commandment but he's oh so wrong.

Gideon, likewise, thinks he's doing the right thing. But he's not. He thinks he's worshipping God, but he's instead leading the people into prostituting themselves.

How does this happen? It became a snare to them.

Again, it's important to see that there is nothing wrong with ephods. They have their proper place. They are good. They are directed and commanded by God.

But when a good thing gets out of place, we start to worship it, and it becomes a snare to us. The best example of this is the One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings*. The whole series is named after this little, tiny object. How can a ring matter so much? And yet the three books (and of course the fourth, *The Hobbit*) detail the travels and travails of that very ring. A young hobbit named Smeagol obtained the ring by killing his friend, who had found it while fishing.

Smeagol lived for over 600 years, and became a wretched, distorted creature, who we know as Gollum. When Bilbo tricks him out of the ring, Gollum nearly goes crazy for "his precious." The ring affects Bilbo. It exerts a power, and we discover it is really much of a ring than we thought.

So the story goes. Frodo must destroy the ring. Everyone wants it. Everyone thinks that if only they had it, they would wield its power with grace, fairness and justice. But the ring destroys people, and it even gets it clutches into the heart of Frodo.

It's a snare to his heart. It's just a ring. But it's so much more.

What are the ephods or rings in your life? What do you have to have to live? These are your idols, and you are in danger of selling out to them. You may be severely tempted to set up a rival kingdom with it in the center.

There are tons of permutations of idolatries. Power idolatry, comfort idolatry, independence idolatry, work idolatry, achievement idolatry, family idolatry, suffering idolatry – and many more. Think about what you have to have – what would make your life miserable if it instantly were gone? What makes you angry when you don't get it? You'll be on your way to identifying some of the places where you have your own kingdoms set up.

Gideon started (at the end of chapter 6) by tearing down the Baal centers of worship. But, once in power and having achieved success, he set up a rival kingdom to God and led the people into worshipping something that seemed so right but was so wrong.

He was a priest. He offered forgiveness apart from the true God. He told people they would be okay if they would just serve and worship the god he presented.

Friends, we must be careful not to be ensnared. It is so easy to worship a God Plus Something. God Plus Career. God Plus Security. God Plus Materialism. Many of these God Plus gods are sneaky; they get into our lives with our successes. We must root them out and only seek peace where there is peace – in Jesus, the only true Son of God, the author and perfecter of our faith.

One approach to Gideon and the book of Judges is a moralistic one. In that way of thinking, we look at Gideon and find things we should do and other things we shouldn't do. Be like Gideon in his faithful parts. Don't be like Gideon in his weak moments.

I think when we take this moralizing angle, we come up with a staid, cardboard character. Gideon becomes one-dimensional that way. But the real Gideon is a complicated chap, much like us. He is used by God and filled with the Spirit of God. He displays what we've called a fragile faith, and God honors that, using him to do great and wonderful things. Yet, Gideon doesn't end well. He drinks the poison of success and becomes too big for his britches. He leads his people into a peaceful, but disastrous life.

That sounds a lot like us. I've been really judgmental in my day. I've often written off leaders who fall and sin because I have thought following God is really easy. Know what God wants and do it. Pretty simple.

But it's really not. If I look at my own life, I am filled with contradictions. I want to be faithful to my wife, and yet my heart is unfaithful. I want to be diligent in my work and study, and yet I waste hours playing Scrabble online (and I'm not even mentioning Facebook). I talk about forgiveness, but I know there are people I feel bitter about and angry at.

What do people like me need? I set up rival prophets, priests and kings in my life. I can be my own prophet, priest and king.

But Jesus Christ is only redeemer of God's elect. He fulfills that role with the offices of prophet, priest and king. The Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it nicely with these three questions and answers:

Q. 24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet? A. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

Q. 25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest? A. Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.

Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king? A. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

I would encourage you to commit those questions and answers to memory and meditate on what they might mean for you. May Jesus rule in your life in these ways. May you turn over the places of worship in your life to him, the true God.

The truth is – it's tough to end well. When God gives us successes, we too often take the credit ourselves. The truth is, we can become mean, spiteful and turn people away from God. The truth is that we can neglect the normal means of grace, the way God works (like the Lord's Supper, prayer, fellowship, the preaching and reading of the Word), for something that seems more dynamic, immediate and emotional.⁹

I think Gideon was a Christian. He is mentioned in Hebrews as a great man of faith, and I think he was one. But that doesn't mean he wasn't screwed up. And that means he was an awful lot like you and me.

He's sort of like Jack Bauer. Jack always seems to come through in the end. He saves people. But he's not a very nice person. He's not perfect by any means. He has all sorts of problems. He's one messed up dude. People doubt him all the time. He's either saving the day or he's being arrested. He has the ear of the president, and yet is just as likely to be strung up and tortured by terrorists.

But you can't root against Jack. Gideon isn't Jack Bauer. Gideon was real. But he was just as messy. And that should give us hope. We don't have to be perfect for God to use us. I wouldn't bank on the fact that God works with people at the end of their lives like this. I wouldn't purposely continue with the ephod-king agenda now that you know what God thinks about it. I would repent. It's the best way.

Thankfully, God forgives. In fact, although he's tough on sin, he also is incredibly gracious to his people when they repent. He is even gracious when they don't repent.

So repent and believe. The Savior is near.

Are you filled with anxiety, pride, anger, guilt or boredom? Begone unbelief. Are you tired from all the kingdom making? Release the kingdom to God's reign and rule. As commentator Wilcox writes, "When the foe is so strong and we are so frail, we have to cast ourselves on the Lord."¹⁰

Friends, we aren't a perfect people. I hope you are over that. If you don't understand the church is messy, then you'll be constantly disappointed. There are people in my group who are really struggling. With drinking and drugs. With sex and temptation. With homosexuality. And more. They are welcome. The message of the gospel isn't "Shape up! Get your act together!" No, the gospel is for sinners like you and me. Don't be surprised by sin when you see it. Pray that God would deliver us from evil. We need deliverance from the power and presence of sin in our lives.

Are you laden with guilt and full of fears like Gideon? Fly to Christ alone, for in him is your refuge. He is the only leader – prophet, priest and king – who will not disappoint us in the end.

Laden With Guilt and Full of Fear, by Isaac Watts

*Laden with guilt and full of fears, I fly to Thee, my Lord,
And not a glimpse of hope appears, But in Thy written Word
The volumes of my Father's grace Does all my griefs assuage
Here I behold my Savior's face In every page*

*This is the field where, hidden, lies The pearl of price unknown
That merchant is divinely wise Who makes the pearl his own
Here consecrated water flows To quench my thirst of sin
Here the fair tree of knowledge grows, No danger dwells within.*

*This is the judge that ends the strife, Where wit and reason fail
My guide to everlasting life Through all this gloomy vale
Oh may Thy counsels, mighty God, My roving feet command,
Nor I forsake the happy road That leads to Thy right hand.*

⁹ "Christians no less than Israelites have a passion for enriched, extraordinary experiences while virtually ignoring the rich, normal means of grace God has provided." Davis, 115

¹⁰ Wilcox, 88