

Day 14 – Feb. 16

As we finish the saga of Gideon today, I am once again struck by the propensity of God's people to turn away from Him so very quickly. Again and again in this book, we find the Israelites turning to idols the very minute their leader is not there to chivy them on to Yahweh worship. In this case, it is a golden ephod.

Gideon makes a sacred priests' vest/robe (that's what an "ephod" is) out of the gold plunder he has obtained. He puts it in his hometown to honor and remember his roots, a kingly gesture. But almost immediately, the people begin to worship it! They turn from God who delivered them from imminent death at the hands of Midian and begin to worship not a proven and living God but a really nice shirt! And the saddest thing is that this is only one of a long, long line of times when this happened. Moses leaves the people for a few weeks to literally go meet with God, and they create a golden calf to worship. The Judges each die and the people turn back to worshipping Baal, the local god-du-jour. And even when Gideon is still with them, they turn to a golden ephod instead of Yahweh who has rescued them.

It's a good thing we don't do that! We are utterly faithful to God and worship Him alone!

We never turn to money to fix our problems instead of God. Or to famous speakers or authors or influencers to give us wise advice instead of God. Or to modern medicine to heal us instead of God. These things might well be the tools God uses to fix, to guide, or to heal, but as Christ-followers, we should be turning to Him first. We should be letting Him guide us instead of society or pop-culture or our own desires. We should be asking Him for healing before we go to the doctors (not instead of!) And more than anything else, we should be living our lives in prayer. Turn away from Facebook and Tictok and social media and turn to God in prayer! Turn away from mind-numbing entertainment and turn to God in prayer! Turn away from fear-mongering newscasts and turn to God in prayer! The greatest sign of our own idolatry is our lack of prayer, by intention, by instinct, and by habit.

So what is your Golden Ephod? What are you turning to before God for help, for guidance, and for healing?