

Judges 6:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

Analysis

Gideon receives a new name: Jerubbaal (yerubba'al, יְרֻבָּעַל), meaning 'let Baal plead' or 'Baal contends.' The name commemorates Joash's challenge: 'let him plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.' Like Abram becoming Abraham, Jacob becoming Israel, and Simon becoming Peter, this name change marks transformation. Jerubbaal declares Gideon's victory over Baal and mocks the impotent deity. That this name persists throughout the narrative (chapters 7-8) shows it became his primary designation. However, the name's retention contains tragic irony—Gideon later makes an ephod that becomes a snare (8:27), showing incomplete reformation.

Historical Context

Theophoric names incorporating deity names were common in the ancient Near East. That Gideon bore a name containing 'Baal' throughout his career shows either the people's continued syncretism or the name's transformation into a monument of Baal's defeat. Later biblical writers sometimes changed 'Baal' in names to 'Bosheth' (shame)—compare Jerubbaal/Jerubbesheth (2 Samuel 11:21), showing later sensitivity to any association with Baal.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do names and designations in Scripture mark significant spiritual transformations?
2. What does Gideon's new name teach about God's power to transform the fearful into bold witnesses?
3. How does the retention of 'Baal' in Gideon's name ironically proclaim the false god's impotence?

Interlinear Text

וְיִקְרָא	לֵאמֹר	יְרֻבָּעַל	לְמִבְּנָה	לְמִבְּנָה	לְמִבְּנָה
he called	H0	Therefore on that day	H1931	him Jerubbaal	saying
H7121		H3117		H3378	H559

בְּזַיִם	בְּזַיִם	נָתַת	מִזְבֵּחַ
Therefore	on that day	against him because he hath thrown down	his altar
		H5422	H4196

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 12:11 (Parallel theme): And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

2 Samuel 11:21 (Parallel theme): Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in

Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

Judges 7:1 (Parallel theme): Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

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