

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, יֵרֻבְבָּעַל), 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

וַיִּקְרָא	ל	וְ	בַּיּוֹם	הַהוּא	יָרֵבָּ עַל	יָרֵב	לְאֵמֹר	וַיִּפְתָּח
he called		H0	Therefore on that day	H1931	him Jerubbaal	saying		plead
H7121			H3117		H3378	H559		H7378
בּוֹ	הַבַּיִת	עַל	כִּי	נָתַן	אֵת	מִזְבְּחוֹ		
H0	Let Baal	H3588	against him because he hath thrown down	H853	his altar			
H1168			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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