## ~GIDEON (675)

(Gid'e-on) [Cutter Down, One Who Cuts Off]

- ·· Called To Serve As A Deliverer
- " Victory Over Midian
- " The Ephod Made
- Dies As An Approved Witness
- One of Israel's outstanding judges. The son of Joash of the family of Abi-ezer of the tribe of Manasseh. Gideon resided at Ophrah, a town evidently West of the Jordan. The tribal division to which he belonged was the most insignificant in Manasseh, and he was the smallest in his father's house.
- Later Yehowah's angel came and sat under the big tree that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abi-ezrite, while Gideon his son was beating out wheat in the winepress so as to get it quickly out of the sight of Midian. (Judges 6:11)
- In turn he said to him; Excuse me, Yehowah. With what shall I save Israel? Look! My thousand is the least in Manasseh, and I am the smallest in my father's house. (Judges 6:15)
- Gideon lived in a very turbulent time of Israel's history. Because of their unfaithfulness to Yehowah, the Israelites were not enjoying the fruits of their labor.
- For a number of years, neighboring pagan nations, especially the Midianites, had invaded Israel at harvesttime with hordes as numerous as the locusts.
- The hand of Midian proved to be so heavy upon them for seven years that the Israelites made underground storage places for themselves in order to conceal their food supplies from the invaders.
- Then the sons of Israel began to do what was bad in the eyes of Yehowah. So Yehowah gave them into the hand of Midian for seven years. (Judges 6:1)
- And the hand of Midian came to prevail over Israel. Due to Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the underground store places that were in the mountains, and the caves and the places difficult to approach. (Judges 6:2)

- And it occurred that, if Israel sowed seed, Midian and Amalek and the Easterners came up, yes, they came up against them. (Judges 6:3)
- And they would camp against them and would ruin the yield of the earth all the way to Gaza, and they would not let any sustenance or sheep or bull or ass remain in Israel. (Judges 6:4)
- For they and their livestock would come up with their tents.
  They would come as numerous as the locusts, and they and their camels were without number, and they would come into the land to ruin it. (Judges 6:5)
- And Israel became greatly impoverished due to Midian, and the sons of Israel began to call to Yehowah for aid. (Judges 6:6)

#### ·· Called To Serve As A Deliverer

- To avoid discovery by the Midianites, Gideon was threshing grain, not out in the open, but in a winepress, when an angel appeared to him, saying; Yehowah is with you, you valiant, mighty one.
- This prompted Gideon to ask how this could be true, in view of the Midianite oppression of the nation. When told that he would be the one to deliver Israel, Gideon modestly spoke of his own insignificance. But he was assured that Yehowah would prove to be with him.
- Therefore Gideon asked for a sign so that he might know that the messenger was really Yehowah's angel. He brought a gift of meat, unfermented cakes, and broth, and at the angels direction he placed the items on a big rock and poured out the broth.
- The angel touched the meat and unfermented cakes with his staff, and fire began to ascend out of the rock and to consume the offering, whereupon the angel vanished.
- Later Yehowah's angel came and sat under the big tree that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abi-ezrite, while Gideon his son was beating out wheat in the winepress so as to get it quickly out of the sight of Midian. (Judges 6:11)
- Then Yehowah's angel appeared to him and said to him; Yehowah is with you, you valiant, mighty one. (Judges 6:12)

- At this Gideon said to him; Excuse me, my lord, but if Yehowah is with us, then why has all this come upon us, and where are all his wonderful acts that our fathers related to us, saying; Was it not out of Egypt that Yehowah brought us up? And now Yehowah has deserted us, and he gives us into the palm of Midian. (Judges 6:13)
- Upon that Yehowah faced him and said; Go in this power of yours, and you will certainly save Israel out of Midian's palm. Do I not send you? (Judges 6:14)
- In turn he said to him; Excuse me, Yehowah. With what shall I save Israel? Look! My thousand is the least in Manasseh, and I am the smallest in my father's house. (Judges 6:15)
- But Yehowah said to him; Because I shall prove to be with you, and you will certainly strike down Midian as if one man. (Judges 6:16)
- At this he said to him; If, now, I have found favor in your eyes, you must also perform a sign for me that you are the one speaking with me. (Judges 6:17)
- Do not, please, move away from here until I come to you and I have brought out my gift and set it before you. Accordingly he said; I, for my part, shall keep sitting here until you return. (Judges 6:18)
- And Gideon went in and proceeded to make ready a kid of the goats and an ephah of flour as unfermented cakes. The meat he put in the basket, and the broth he put in the cooking pot, after which he brought it out to him under the big tree and served it. (Judges 6:19)
- The angel of the true God now said to him; Take the meat and the unfermented cakes and set them on the big rock there, and pour out the broth. At that he did so. (Judges 6:20)
- Then Yehowah's angel thrust out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unfermented cakes, and fire began to ascend out of the rock and to consume the meat and the unfermented cakes. As for Yehowah's angel, he vanished from his sight. (Judges 6:21)

- Consequently Gideon realized that it was Yehowah's angel. At once Gideon said; Alas, Sovereign Lord Yehowah, for the reason that I have seen Yehowah's angel face to face! (Judges 6:22)
- That very night Yehowah put Gideon to the test by commanding him to tear down his father's altar to the god Baal, to cut down the sacred pole alongside it, to build an altar to Yehowah, and then to offer his father's young bull of seven years, evidently a bull that was considered sacred to Baal, upon it, using as firewood the sacred pole.
- With due caution, Gideon did so at night with the aid of ten servants. When the men of the city got up in the morning and saw what had happened and then learned that Gideon was responsible, they clamored for his life.
- Joash, though, did not deliver up his son to them but retorted to the effect that Baal should make his own defense.
- Joash then gave his son Gideon the name Jerubbaal, meaning Let Baal Make a Legal Defense, Contend, saying; Let Baal make a legal defense in his own behalf, because someone has pulled down his altar.
- And it came about during that night that Yehowah went on to say to him; Take the young bull, the bull that belongs to your father, that is, the second young bull of seven years, and you must tear down the altar of Baal that is your fathers, and the sacred pole that is by it you should cut down. (Judges 6:25)
- And you must build an altar to Yehowah your God at the head of this stronghold, with the row of stones, and you must take the second young bull and offer it up as a burnt offering on the pieces of wood of the sacred pole that you will cut down. (Judges 6:26)
- Accordingly Gideon took ten men of his servants and went doing just as Yehowah had spoken to him, but it came about that, as he feared the household of his father and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he went doing it by night. (Judges 6:27)
- When the men of the city got up early in the morning as usual, why, look! The altar of Baal had been pulled down and the sacred pole that was beside it had been cut down, and the second young bull had been offered up on the altar that had been

## built. (Judges 6:28)

- And they began to say one to another; Who has done this thing? And they went inquiring and seeking. Finally they said; Gideon the son of Joash is the one that has done this thing. (Judges 6:29)
- So the men of the city said to Joash; Bring your son out that he may die, because he has pulled down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the sacred pole that was by it. (Judges 6:30)
- At this Joash said to all those who stood against him; Will you be the ones to make a legal defense for Baal to see whether you yourselves may save him? Whoever makes a legal defense for him ought to be put to death even this morning. If he is God, let him make a legal defense for himself, because someone has pulled down his altar. (Judges 6:31)
- And he began to call him Jerubbaal on that day, saying; Let Baal make a legal defense in his own behalf, because someone has pulled down his altar. (Judges 6:32)

#### " Victory Over Midian

- After this, when the Midianites, together with the Amalekites and the Easterners, again invaded Israel and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel, Yehowah's spirit enveloped Gideon.
- Calling together the Abi-ezrites for battle, Gideon sent messengers throughout Manasseh and to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, urging men to join him.
- Gideon, desiring further evidence that Yehowah was with him, requested that a fleece exposed at night on the threshing floor be wet with dew the next morning but that the floor be dry.
- When Yehowah granted him this miracle, Gideon cautiously wanted to establish by yet a second sign that Yehowah was with him, and therefore he requested and received a miracle with the circumstances reversed.
- And all Midian and Amalek and the Easterners gathered together as one and proceeded to cross over and camp in the low plain of

## Jezreel. (Judges 6:33)

- And Yehowah's spirit enveloped Gideon so that he went blowing the horn, and the Abi-ezrites got to be called together after him. (Judges 6:34)
- And he sent out messengers through all of Manasseh, and they too got to be called together after him. He also sent out messengers through Asher and Zebulun and Naphtali, and they came on up to meet him. (Judges 6:35)
- Then Gideon said to the true God; If you are saving Israel by means of me, just as you have promised. (Judges 6:36)
- Here I am keeping a fleece of wool exposed on the threshing floor. If dew comes to be on the fleece alone but on all the earth there is dryness, then I must know that you will save Israel by means of me, just as you have promised. (Judges 6:37)
- And it turned out to be that way. When he rose up early the next day and wrung the fleece, he got to drain off enough dew from the fleece to fill a large banquet bowl with water. (Judges 6:38)
- However, Gideon said to the true God; Do not let your anger blaze against me, but let me speak just once more. Let me, please, make a test only once more with the fleece. Let, please, dryness occur to the fleece alone, and upon all the earth let there come to be dew. (Judges 6:39)
- So God did that way on that night, and dryness came to be on the fleece alone, and upon all the earth dew occurred. (Judges 6:40)
- Thirty-two thousand fighting men rallied around Gideon in response to his call. They encamped at the well of Harod south of the Midianite camp at the hill of Moreh in the low plain.
- The Israelites 32,000 were outnumbered more than four to one by the invaders, who had a force of about 135,000.
- Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their camps with them, about fifteen thousand being all who were left over out of the entire camp of the Easterners, and those already fallen were a hundred and twenty thousand men who used to draw the sword. (Judges 8:10)

- But Yehowah indicated that there were too many men with Gideon, in the sense that if God were to give Midian into their hand, they might conclude it was their own valor that resulted in salvation. At God's direction, Gideon told those who were afraid and trembling to retire.
- Twenty-two thousand departed, but still there were too many men. Next, Yehowah instructed Gideon to lead the remaining 10,000 men down to the water to be tested. A few, merely 300, scooped water to the mouth by hand, and these were separated to one side.
- The others, who bent down upon their knees to drink, were not to be used. The 300, by their method of drinking, manifested alertness, concern for the fight for true worship in Yehowah's name. By means of this small band of 300, Yehowah promised to save Israel.
- Then Jerubbaal, that is to say; Gideon, and all the people who were with him, rose early and took up camping at the well of Harod, and the camp of Midian happened to be on the north of him, at the hill of Moreh, in the low plain. (Judges 7:1)
- Yehowah now said to Gideon; The people who are with you are too many for me to give Midian into their hand. Perhaps Israel would brag about itself against me, saying; My hand it was that saved me. (Judges 7:2)
- And now call out, please, in the hearing of the people, saying; Who is there afraid and trembling? Let him retire. So Gideon put them to the proof. With that, twenty-two thousand of the people retired, and there were ten thousand that remained. (Judges 7:3)
- Still Yehowah said to Gideon; There are yet too many people. Have them go down to the water that I may put them to the proof for you there. And it must occur that of whomever I say to you, This one will go with you, he is one that will go with you, but every one of whom I say to you, This one will not go along with you, he is one that will not go along. (Judges 7:4)
- So he had the people go down to the water. Then Yehowah said to Gideon; Every one that laps up some of the water with his tongue just as a dog laps, you will set him by himself, also every one that bends down upon his knees to drink. (Judges 7:5)

- And the number of those lapping with their hand to their mouth turned out to be three hundred men. As for all the rest of the people, they bent down upon their knees to drink water. (Judges 7:6)
- Yehowah now said to Gideon; By the three hundred men who did the lapping I shall save you people, and I will give Midian into your hand. As for all the other people, let them go each one to his place. (Judges 7:7)
- Gideon with his attendant Purah proceeded to scout the enemy camp at night. There Gideon overheard a man relating a dream to his companion.
- His companion, in turn, interpreted the dream to mean that Midian and all the camp would be given into Gideon's hand. Strengthened by what he had heard, Gideon returned to the camp of Israel, organized the 300 into three bands in order to enable him to approach the camp of Midian from three sides, and gave each man a horn and a large jar, inside of which was placed a torch.
- And it came about during that night that Yehowah proceeded to say to him; Rise up, descend upon the camp, for I have given it into your hand. (Judges 7:9)
- But if you are afraid to descend, descend, you with Purah your attendant, to the camp. (Judges 7:10)
- And you must listen to what they will speak, and afterward your hands will certainly grow strong, and you will be certain to descend upon the camp. At that he and Purah his attendant made their descent to the edge of those in battle formation who were in the camp. (Judges 7:11)
- Now Midian and Amalek and all the Easterners were plumped in the low plain as numerous as locusts, and their camels were without number, as numerous as the grains of sand that are on the seashore. (Judges 7:12)
- Gideon now came, and, look! There was a man relating a dream to his companion, and he went on to say; Here is a dream that I have dreamed. And, look! There was a round cake of barley bread turning over and over into the camp of Midian. Then it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell, and it went turning it

upside down, and the tent fell flat. (Judges 7:13)

- At this his companion answered and said; This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. The true God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand. (Judges 7:14)
- And it came about that as soon as Gideon heard the relating of the dream and its explanation, he began to worship. After that he returned to the camp of Israel and said; Get up, for Yehowah has given the camp of Midian into your hand. (Judges 7:15)
- Then he divided the three hundred men up into three bands and put horns in the hands of all of them and large empty jars, and torches inside the large jars. (Judges 7:16)
- With his band of 100, Gideon arrived at the edge of the Midianite camp right after they had posted the sentries for the middle night watch. Then, in keeping with Gideon's instructions, his men did exactly what he did.
- The stillness of the night was shattered by the blowing of 300 horns, the smashing of 300 large water jars, and the resounding of 300 war cries, at the same time, the sky was lit up with 300 torches. Confusion seized the enemy camp.
- The invaders began shouting and fleeing, and Yehowah proceeded to set the sword of each one against the other in all the camp, and the camp kept up their flight as far as Beth-shittah, on to Zererah, as far as the outskirts of Abel-meholah by Tabbath.
- And he went on to say to them; You should learn from watching me, and that is how you should do. And when I am come to the edge of the camp, it must also occur that just as I shall do, so you will do. (Judges 7:17)
- When I have blown the horn, I and all who are with me, you also must blow the horns, you too, round about all the camp, and you must say; Yehowah's and Gideon's! (Judges 7:18)
- In time Gideon came with the hundred men who were with him to the edge of the camp at the start of the middle night watch. They had just got through posting the sentries. And they proceeded to blow the horns, and there was a dashing to pieces

of the large water jars that were in their hands. (Judges 7:19)

- At that the three bands blew the horns and shattered the large jars and took fresh hold on the torches with their left hand and with their right hand on the horns to blow them, and they began calling out; Yehowah's sword and Gideon's! (Judges 7:20)
- All the while they kept standing each one in his place all around the camp, and the whole camp got on the run and broke out into shouting and went fleeing. (Judges 7:21)
- Yehowah proceeded to set the sword of each one against the other in all the camp, and the camp kept up their flight as far as Beth-shittah, on to Zererah, as far as the outskirts of Abelmeholah by Tabbath. (Judges 7:22)
- In the meantime, the men of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh were called together to chase after Midian. Moreover, messengers were sent to Ephraim to head off the fleeing Midianites.
- The Ephraimites followed through, capturing the waters as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. They also captured and killed the two Midianite princes Oreb and Zeeb. On meeting up with Gideon, though, the Ephraimites vehemently tried to pick a quarrel with him, as he had not called them to help at the beginning.
- However, Gideon, by modestly pointing out that what he had done was nothing in comparison with what they had done in capturing Oreb and Zeeb, calmed their spirit and thereby averted a clash.
- Meantime the men of Israel were called together from Naphtali and Asher and all of Manasseh, and they went chasing after Midian. (Judges 7:23)
- It was into your hand that God gave Midian's princes Oreb and Zeeb, and what have I been able to do in comparison with you? It was then that their spirit calmed down toward him when he spoke this word. (Judges 8:3)
- Crossing the Jordan, Gideon and the 300 men with him, though tired, continued pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian, and the men with them.

- On his way, he requested food from the men of Succoth, but the princes of Succoth refused to lend aid, saying; Are the palms of Zebah and of Zalmunna already in your hand so that bread has to be given to your army? The men of Penuel likewise refused to honor Gideon's request.
- Eventually Gideon came to the Jordan, crossing it, he and the three hundred men that were with him, tired but keeping up the pursuit. (Judges 8:4)
- Later he said to the men of Succoth; Please give round loaves of bread to the people that are following my steps, for they are tired and I am chasing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian. (Judges 8:5)
- But the princes of Succoth said; Are the palms of Zebah and of Zalmunna already in your hand so that bread has to be given to your army? (Judges 8:6)
- At this Gideon said; That is why when Yehowah gives Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I shall certainly give your flesh a threshing with the thorns of the wilderness and the briers. (Judges 8:7)
- And he continued on his way up from there to Penuel and went speaking to them in this same manner, but the men of Penuel answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered. (Judges 8:8)
- Hence he said also to the men of Penuel; When I return in peace, I shall pull down this tower. (Judges 8:9)
- Arriving at Karkor where the invaders, reduced to about 15,000 men, were encamped, Gideon struck the camp while the enemy was off guard. Zebah and Zalmunna took to flight. Gideon immediately went in pursuit and captured them. Furthermore, he drove all the camp into trembling.
- Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their camps with them, about fifteen thousand being all who were left over out of the entire camp of the Easterners, and those already fallen were a hundred and twenty thousand men who used to draw the sword. (Judges 8:10)

- And Gideon continued on up by the way of those residing in tents to the east of Nobah and Jogbehah and began to strike the camp while the camp happened to be off guard. (Judges 8:11)
- When Zebah and Zalmunna took to flight, he at once went in pursuit of them and got to capture Midian's two kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, and he drove all the camp into trembling. (Judges 8:12)
- While returning from the fight, Gideon captured a young man from Succoth and ascertained from him the names of the princes and older men of the city. In keeping with what he had said earlier when they did not comply with his request for food, Gideon put the older men of Succoth through an experience with thorns and briers. Also, as he had forewarned, Gideon pulled down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of that city for their failure to cooperate in providing food for his men.
- And Gideon the son of Joash began his return from the war by the pass that goes up to Heres. (Judges 8:13)
- En route he captured a young man of the men of Succoth and made inquiries of him. So he wrote out for him the names of the princes of Succoth and its older men, seventy-seven men. (Judges 8:14)
- With that he went to the men of Succoth and said; Here are Zebah and Zalmunna respecting whom you taunted me, saying; Are the palms of Zebah and of Zalmunna already in your hand so that bread has to be given to your tired-out men? (Judges 8:15)
- Then he took the older men of the city and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he put the men of Succoth through an experience. (Judges 8:16)
- And the tower of Penuel he pulled down, and he proceeded to kill the men of the city. (Judges 8:17)
- After this, Gideon directed his firstborn son Jether to slay Zebah and Zalmunna, as they had killed Gideon's brothers, the sons of his mother. Being a young man, Jether was afraid to put the Midianite kings to death. Therefore, Gideon, being challenged by Zebah and Zalmunna to do so himself, executed them.

- He now said to Zebah and Zalmunna; What sort of men were they whom you killed in Tabor? To this they said; As you are, so were they, each one, like the sons of a king in form. (Judges 8:18)
- At that he said; They were my brothers, the sons of my mother. As Yehowah lives, if you had preserved them alive, I would not have to kill you. (Judges 8:19)
- Then he said to Jether his firstborn; Get up, kill them. And the young man did not draw his sword, because he was afraid, for he was yet a young man. (Judges 8:2)
- So Zebah and Zalmunna said; Get up yourself and assault us, for as a man is, so is his mightiness. Accordingly Gideon got up and killed Zebah and Zalmunna and took the moon-shaped ornaments that were on the necks of their camels. (Judges 8:21)

#### " The Ephod Made

- Grateful Israelites asked Gideon to establish his family as a ruling dynasty. However Gideon appreciated that Yehowah was Israel's rightful King and therefore did not go along with their request. He then suggested that they contribute the gold jewelry they had acquired as spoils of war, the nose rings alone amounting to 1,700 shekels in gold (\$218,365).
- Gideon then made an ephod from the spoils contributed, exhibiting it in Ophrah. But all Israel began to have immoral intercourse with the ephod, it even becoming a snare to Gideon and his household.
- Thus, though his action was doubtless properly motivated, the ephod diverted attention from the true sanctuary assigned by Yehowah the tabernacle. Gideon's efforts miscarried, producing a result contrary to what he had intended.
- Later the men of Israel said to Gideon; Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson as well, for you have saved us out of the hand of Midian. (Judges 8:22)
- But Gideon said to them; I myself shall not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Yehowah is the one who will rule over you. (Judges 8:23)

- And Gideon went on to say to them; Let me make a request of you; Give me, each one of you, the nose ring of his booty. For they had nose rings of gold, because they were Ishmaelites. (Judges 8:24)
- Then they said; We shall surely give them. With that they spread out a mantle and went throwing each one the nose ring of his booty into it. (Judges 8:25)
- And the weight of the nose rings of gold that he had requested amounted to one thousand seven hundred gold shekels, besides the moon-shaped ornaments and the eardrops and the garments of wool dyed reddish purple that were upon the kings of Midian and besides the necklaces that were on the necks of the camels. (Judges 8:26)
- And Gideon proceeded to make it into an ephod and to exhibit it in his city Ophrah, and all Israel began to have immoral intercourse with it there, so that it served as a snare to Gideon and to his household. (Judges 8:27)

#### **See Also EPHOD 1**

## Dies As An Approved Witness

- So complete was the deliverance Yehowah brought about through Gideon that there was no further disturbance during the 40 years of his judgeship. Gideon came to have many wives, by whom he had 70 sons.
- After Gideon's death at a good old age, Israel again fell victim to Baal worship. Furthermore, Abimelech the son of Gideon by his concubine, a woman of Shechem, killed Gideon's other sons. Only Jotham, the youngest, escaped.
- Thus Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their head anymore, and the land had no further disturbance for forty years in the days of Gideon. (Judges 8:28)
- After that he went to the house of his father at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, upon one stone, but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left over, because he had hid. (Judges 9:5)

# See Also ABIMELECH 4 See Also OPHRAH 3

- Gideon's faith, in the face of great odds, entitled him to be mentioned as one of the so great a cloud of witnesses.
- And what more shall I say? For the time will fail me if I go on to relate about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David as well as Samuel and the other prophets. (Hebrews 11:32)
- So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)
- Additionally, his modesty was exemplary, and this was coupled with caution. Apparently Gideon's cautiousness was wholesome and is not to be viewed as springing from a lack of faith on his part, as he was never once censured for being cautious.
- Furthermore, as indicated by (Psalms Chapter 83), the defeat of Midian in Gideon's day provides a prophetic pattern of the coming destruction of all of Yehowah's opposers, resulting in the complete vindication of his holy name.
- For the yoke of their load and the rod upon their shoulders, the staff of the one driving them to work, you have shattered to pieces as in the day of Midian. (Isaiah 9:4)
- And Yehowah of armies will certainly brandish against him a whip as at the defeat of Midian by the rock Oreb, and his staff will be upon the sea, and he will certainly lift it up in the way that he did with Egypt. (Isaiah 10:26)