

HEROIC DEEDS

Gideon chased what was left of the coalition army across the Jordan River and through the territory of the tribe of Gad. He was in hot pursuit of two Midian kings (Zebah and Zalmunna) who were traveling with the retreating army of the Sons of the East who were headed home.

Today's lesson explains why Gideon was so intense on capturing them. We will study the lesson text by the following three homiletical points.

- 8:18-19 Brothers Gideon's brothers were captured and killed
- 8:20 Boy Gideon's first-born initiation
- 8:21 Blood Gideon avenges his brothers blood.

Why was the death of his brothers such a big deal since they were at war with the Midianites? It was a big deal because of the way his brothers were killed. His brothers were captured, interrogated, and after learning that they were the brothers of Gideon they were killed. They were killed out of spite by a defeated and retreating enemy.

Gideon told the two kings that if they had let his brothers live he would have let them live (8:19).

Gideon viewed the killing of his brothers as an evil act that deserved avenging. This was an evil act much like Zarqawi terrorism in Iraq.

During Gideon's interrogation of these two kings, they quoted an interesting Near East idiom – **“for as the man, so is his strength.”**

They were not discussing the matter of death but rather the method of death. “Dying at the hands of a boy may have been considered a disgrace.” (NIV, 8:21; 1 Sam.17:42/ David and Goliath)

This lesson comes from the Near East idiom – **“For as the man, so is his strength.”** It is interesting that this was a **common Near East cultural idiom** understood by the different nations living in this region.

Today we will study SIX aspects of this common Near East idiom entitled, “Heroic Deeds.”

1. **The key word in this Near East idiom is (strength) – “For as the man, so is his strength.” Strength is the Hebrew word (gibbor).**

“The doubling of the middle radical intensifies its form. It refers to a particularly strong or mighty person who carries out, can carry out, or has carried out great deeds, and surpasses others in doing so. Therefore, the usual translation is ‘hero,’ especially in military activities.” (TD of OT, pg.373)

“In the Ancient Near East, original meaning – the root (gbr) can be detected in most of the Semitic languages if not always in some verb form, at last in derivatives.” (TD of OT, pg.367)

2. **“But it can also be used in a broader sense to refer to any special degree of physical might, power, authority, and splendor.” (TD of OT, pg.373)**

King of the jungle – “The lion which is mighty (gibbor) among beasts and does not retreat before any.” (Prov.30: 30)

King over the lion – “He was a mighty (gibbor) hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, ‘Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.’” (Gen.10:9)

3. The Nephilim were known as ‘mighty (gibbor) men who were of old, men of renown (shem/ name or fame).’ (Gen.6:4)

The Nephilim (fallen ones/ angels) were the children born to the daughters of men and the sons of god (Job 1:6; 2:1; Jude 6; 2 Pet.2: 4-5).

Many believe they were the old Greek heroes (gibbor) like the Titans and Olympians of Greek mythology.

These fallen angels were responsible for the saturation of evil that brought about the Noahic Flood on the Antediluvian world (Gen.6: 5-11). The Nephilim were cast into Tartarus to be held until the Second Coming of Christ (1 Pet.3: 19-10; 2 Pet.2: 4; Rev.9: 1-8; 20:1-10).

4. Sometimes gibbor is used to denote the most eminent and leading men in an official vocation. (TD of OT, pg.374)

The four principal Levites of temple gatekeepers were known as eminent temple gibbors (1 Chron.9:26-27).

Jeroboam was one of Solomon’s eminent gibbor officials who led a rebellion against Solomon (1 Kings 11:26-28).

Boaz was known by his community to be an eminent gibbor businessman (Ruth 2:1; 1 Sam.9:1; 2 Kings 15:19-22).

5. Background on the word "gibbor":

“By far the most frequent use of the word gibbor occurs in connection with military activities, especially as a designation for a warrior, either a man who is eligible for military service or is able to bear arms, or one who has actually fought in combat, who has already distinguished himself by performing heroic deeds (Judges 11:1; 1 Sam.2: 4; 14:52; Jer.46: 12; 51:30; Hos.10: 13; Amos 2:14; Eccl.9: 11).

When Gideon was called to become the 5th Judge of Israel, he was called – “O valiant warrior (gibbor).” (Judges 6:12). Goliath was a gibbor warrior (1 Sam.17: 4). David was called a gibbor warrior (1 Sam.16: 18).

David’s special guard was known as the gibborim (2 Sam.23-24; 23:23). They were quartered in special dorm known as Beth Hagibborim (House of Heroes) (Neh.3:16).

6. One of the Second Advent titles of Jesus Christ is “Mighty God (gibbor El).” (Isa.9:6; 10:21; 42:13) (Psa.89:18-19; 110; Rev.19:11-21/ Rider of white horse/ warrior God)

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isa.9:6)