

BOOK OF JUDGES
GIDEON'S LEGACY IN ABIMELECH-PT 3
JUDGES 9:22-57

Introduction

In the last two messages we have been looking at **GIDEON'S LEGACY in just one of his sons—the one named, ABIMELECH**. **GIDEON'S** other 70 sons were born of his wives. **ABIMELECH** was his one son that was born out of a relationship with a concubine who was a handmaid. We don't know, but that may have led to **ABIMELECH'S** treachery and his mother encouraging him in that treachery.

When our time comes to leave this world, I think most of us would love to know that we're leaving behind a **GREAT, LASTING, SPIRITUAL LEGACY in our FAMILY!** The reality, however, can sometimes be quite different. We can influence the choices of our family, but none of us can live their lives for them! Their personal choices are just that!

Most of us would settle for leaving at least a **GOOD and DECENT LEGACY** behind! But there are many men of **FAITH** who fall into the category of men such as (or similar to) that of **GIDEON!** Men who failed greatly in their families on the one hand while they did great things for **GOD** on the other!

We have been looking the last couple weeks at what happened both in **GIDEON'S** family and his nation after his death! We saw that whatever **positive influence GIDEON** may have had on the **children of ISRAEL died with him (Judges 8:33)** as the people immediately returned to **IDOLATRY!**

Then whatever good seed **GIDEON** may have had was quickly snuffed out by **one bad seed**, with the exception of his youngest son, **JOTHAM**, who hid himself from the slaughter that befell his 69 brothers.

ABIMELECH was a bad seed! GOD'S WORD has nothing good to say about him!

We've said that **ABIMELECH** was so wicked that **GOD** was going to render to him after his own wickedness and bring about his demise according to what we saw last week!

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Last week we saw in Judges 9:7-21...

JOTHAM came and spoke a FABLE and with it a PROPHECY AGAINST SHECHEM AND ABIMELECH!

JOTHAM illustrated with his FABLE that if the men of SHECHEM were acting in some way other than truly and sincerely, fire would come out from ABIMELECH and destroy these men of SHECHEM! And, fire will come from the men of SHECHEM and consume ABIMELECH! A MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION!

After delivering this fable and its application, JOTHAM fled to place called Beer and remained hidden from his half-brother. We don't ever hear from JOTHAM again!

IV. WE SEE THREE YEARS WHERE NOTHING HAPPENED! (Vs 22)

It tells us that **ABIMELECH** reigned for 3 years, seemingly with impunity because nothing of what **JOTHAM** said came to pass in those three years! Don't you imagine that **ABIMELECH** and the men of **SHECHEM** probably had more than a few laughs at the expense of **JOTHAM** and his **FABLE!**

They probably thought that **JOTHAM** was just full of hot air and that nothing was going to happen and that they were getting away with their evil deeds! Because that's the way evil people think!

Listen to the wisdom of Solomon regarding delays in **GOD bringing about HIS JUDGEMENT:**

Ecclesiastes 8:11-13— "11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. 12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: 13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."

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The **LORD GOD NEVER FORGETS** when sin is not properly dealt with! And **ABIMELECH** continued his evil, idolatrous ways!

Numbers 32:23- "...be sure your sin will find you out."

SIN is never forgotten unless it is wiped clean by the actions of **GOD!** Also, **VENGEANCE** belongs to the **LORD** and **HE WILL REPAY!**

Tonight we see the **LORD** work things to accomplish **HIS VENGEANCE** on **ABIMELECH** as well as on the men of **SHECHEM** who participated in **ABIMELECH'S** evil plan against **GIDEON'S** family and then elevated him as **KING!**

The **LORD** is the one that determines the timing of these things! We see that after three years, **LORD** began to "*stir the pot*" so to speak between **ABIMELECH** and the men of **SHECHEM!**

We're not given all the specifics, but **GOD** caused trouble to spring up between them! *Verse 24* tells us that **GOD** did this so **HE** could bring **VENGEANCE** back around on the head of **ABIMELECH** and the men of **SHECHEM!**

IV. WE SEE AFTER THREE YEARS TROUBLE COMES!
(Judges 9:25-49)

A. We See The Trouble Begin Between ABIMELECH And The Men Of SHECHEM! (Vs 25)

The **LORD** first used the greediness of the men of **SHECHEM** to start robbing folks as they passed through the mountains!

ABIMELECH got word of what they were doing. This may have been motivated by something like **ABIMELECH** not paying the men what they thought they deserved or, perhaps not giving them the respect that they thought they deserved. We don't know the exact motivation, but they did want more money.

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B. We See The Conspiracy Of One Named GAAL! (Vs 26-33)
The scene shifts here in *verse 26* as we are introduced to one named **GAAL**, whose name means "*rejection or contempt*".

He is identified as the "*son of Ebed*". "*Ebed*" is the word for *slave* so the writer here might simply be calling him the "*son of a slave*," which suggests the lowest of all men is now challenging the self-appointed king for his authority!

Notice at the end of *verse 26*, "*the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.*" They "*trusted*" **GAAL**. Now we have a rival to the throne, or at least to the hearts, of the men of **SHECHEM! ABIMELECH** versus **GAAL**.

Under **GAAL'S** leadership, the men of **SHECHEM** made some wine, went to the house of their god (**BAAL**), ate and drank, and cursed **ABIMELECH! (vs 27)**

In *verse 28*, **GAAL** mocks **ABIMELECH** as not being worthy to be served saying that he was simply the son of **JERUBBAAL** and that **ZEBUL**, who was the ruler of the city of **SHECHEM (Vs 31)** was just **ABIMELECH'S** 'flunky' or 'minion'!

Then **GAAL** boasts in *verse 29* that if the men of **SHECHEM** were to get behind him, he would remove **ABIMELECH**. i.e. He would give the men of **SHECHEM** their desire! And **GAAL** even goes so far as to challenge **ABIMELECH** to battle!

In *verses 30-33*, we see **ZEBUL**, the ruler of the city, heard about **GAAL'S** boast, got mad, and secretly informed **ABIMELECH** and even suggested plans of how **ABIMELECH** might go about defeating **GAAL** and his brethren as well as the men of **SHECHEM** who sided with him!

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C. The Ambush Of GAAL And The Men Of SHECHEM By ABIMELECH! (Vs 34-41)

So, **GAAL** fought against **ABIMELECH** and **ABIMELECH** won and brought the city of **SHECHEM** back under his control and those who remained of **GAAL** and his brethren were not allowed to dwell in **SHECHEM**.

So, at this particular point, some of the men of **SHECHEM** have been killed in battle. So, **GOD'S PROPHECY** through **JOTHAM** was partly fulfilled. But the story is not over because the **PROPHECY** was not yet completely fulfilled.

D. The Further Destruction Of SHECHEM! (Vs 42-45)

There were more men in **SHECHEM** who followed **GAAL** and left the city to go out in the field.

ABIMELECH went out of the city and slaughtered this group of men from **SHECHEM** as well. Then afterward, he fought against the whole city for the rest of the day and killed those in the city, beat down the city and then sowed it with salt so it would be infertile for years to come!

Get the picture now, the very city that chose to make **ABIMELECH** king was destroyed by their king!

E. The Destruction Of The Tower Of SHECHEM! (Vs 46-49)

Well, the men who occupied a defense tower on the outskirts of **SHECHEM** had escaped the blood bath in the city.

So, they took refuge in the house of the god **BERITH**, the "*god of the covenant*," which is another reference to **BAAL**. I guess they thought their idol was going to save them!

ABIMELECH and his soldiers went into the woods and cut some very large branches and they lay them against the wooden frame of the house of **BERITH** and set the branches on fire.

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In that way, **ABIMELECH** killed most, if not all the rest, of the men of **SHECHEM**, numbering around 1,000 men and women! The place where these people sought refuge - the house of their idol - turned out to be their coffin.

So, at this point, half of **JOTHAM'S PROPHECY** was been fulfilled. What about the other half? What about **ABIMELECH** himself? Well, the **LORD** sees to it that he dies a very dishonorable death...!

V. WE SEE HOW ABIMELECH IS KILLED! (9:50-57)

In *verse 50*, **ABIMELECH** went to **THEBEZ**, a village that has not shown up in this story just yet. This is the only place where **THEBEZ** is mentioned, along with a later report in *2 Samuel 11:21* which is referring to this very story.

We are not told here why **ABIMELECH** went against this village. But the **LORD** used it to bring about **ABIMELECH'S** demise!

The whole purpose of the story, the reason the **LORD** put it into the **BIBLE** for the sake of the **ISRAELITES** and us is given in *verses 56-57*.

GOD rendered the wickedness of **ABIMELECH** and all the wickedness of the men of **SHECHEM** on their heads!
And **GOD** fulfilled the **PROPHECY OF JOTHAM!**

Whether *Numbers 32:23*, "*Be sure your sins will find you out*" comes to mind or *Galatians 6:7*, "*For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*," we can be assured that **GOD'S WORD** is true!

So, we shouldn't take vengeance into our own hands but rather leave vengeance to **GOD**. **GOD** can render to them much better than we can!