

Introduction

Last week we began looking at the STORY OF GIDEON'S sons as we looked at the subject of "The RESULT of REJECTING RIGHTEOUSNESS" from Judges 9.

We discovered that **Joshua ESTABLISHED THE RULE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** at the end of his life in Joshua 24:14-27.

We then discovered that **THE RULE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS REJECTED WHEN SIN PROSPERS.**

And SIN PROSPERS:

1. WHEN IT GAINS A Foothold –
2. WHEN IT APPEALS TO PRIDE –
3. WHEN MONEY ENTERS THE PICTURE –
4. WHEN EVIL PEOPLE RULE –
5. WHEN VIOLENCE RULES –
6. WHEN RELIGION GETS CORRUPTED –

Today I want to look at the rest Judges 9 and see what happened:

The RESULT of REJECTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

As we consider the RESULT of REJECTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. GOD CONFRONTS THOSE WHO REJECT RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. God USES THE MOST UNLIKELY PEOPLE –

v5 He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerub-Baal, escaped by hiding. v6 Then all the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo gathered beside the great tree at the pillar in Shechem to crown Abimelech king. v7 When Jotham was told about this, he climbed up on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to them,

Jotham is the youngest son of the youngest son, Gideon. Age is not important when God has a task to do. Jacob, Joseph, David, Samuel, Jeremiah were all young when God called them to serve HIM.

2. God USES THE MOST UNLIKELY METHODS –

v7 When Jotham was told about this, he climbed up on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to them, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. v8 One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.' v9 "But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and men are honoured, to hold sway over the trees?' v10 "Next, the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and be our king.' v11 "But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?' v12 "Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come and be our king.' v13 "But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men, to hold sway over the trees?' v14 "Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come and be our king.' v15 "The thornbush said to the trees, 'If

you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!"

Jotham tells a story in the form of a parable. The irony of the parable lies in who the nation has chosen to rule over them, THE THORNBUSH, which was unsuitable for many reasons:

- i. It was worthless in providing sustenance or food.
- ii. It was useful for shade, IF YOU AVOIDED THE THORNS
- iii. It was volatile – it burned easily and caused the destruction of others in the process.

God does not allow sin to go unchecked:

- i. God confronted Adam & Eve
- ii. He spoke to Cain
- iii. He destroyed the town of Sodom & Gomorrah
- iv. He caused confusion at Babel
- v. He flooded the world
- vi. Nathan confronted David
- vii. Israel was sent into captivity.
- viii. Jesus cast out demons
- ix. THE DRAGON WILL FALL in Revelation.

1. GOD CONFRONTS THOSE WHO REJECT RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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2. GOD CONVICTS THOSE WHO REJECT RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*v16 "Now if you have acted honourably and in good faith when you made Abimelech king, and if you have been fair to Jerub-Baal and his family, and if you have treated him as he deserves-v17 and to think that my father fought for you, risked his life to rescue you from the hand of Midianv18 (but today you have revolted against my father's family, murdered his seventy sons on a single stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his slave girl, king over the citizens of Shechem because he is your brother)-v19 if then you have acted honourably and in good faith toward Jerub-Baal and his family today, may Abimelech be your joy, and may you be his, too! v20 **But if you have not, let fire come out from Abimelech and consume you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and let fire come out from you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and consume Abimelech!"***

Those who sin AGAINST GOD will face the consequences of their actions –

The Bible is full of verses about the wicked being punished

Proverbs 11:21 *Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free.*

Isaiah 3:11 *Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done.*

Psalms 11:6 *On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot.*

Matthew 25:41 *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, ...

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As we consider the RESULT of REJECTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

3. GOD ALLOWS CONSEQUENCES TO HAPPEN TO THOSE WHO REJECT RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*v21 Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and he lived there because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech. v22 After Abimelech had governed Israel three years, v23 **God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, who acted treacherously against Abimelech. v24 God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal's seventy sons, the shedding of their blood, might be avenged on their brother Abimelech and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him murder his brothers. v25 In opposition to him these citizens of Shechem set men on the hilltops to ambush and rob everyone who passed by, and this was reported to Abimelech. v26 Now Gaal son of Ebed moved with his brothers into Shechem, and its citizens put their confidence in him. v27 After they had gone out into the fields and gathered the grapes and trodden them, they held a festival in the temple of their god. While they were eating and drinking, they cursed Abimelech. v28 **Then Gaal son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should be subject to him? Isn't he Jerub-Baal's son, and isn't Zebul his deputy? Serve the men of Hamor, Shechem's father! Why should we serve Abimelech? v29 If only this people were under my command! Then I would get rid of him. I would say to Abimelech, 'Call out your whole army!' "** v30 When Zebul the governor of the city heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, he was very angry. v31 Under cover he sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, "Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem and are stirring up the city against you. v32 Now then, during the night you and your men should come and lie in wait in the fields. v33 In the morning at sunrise, advance against the city. When Gaal and his men come out against you, do whatever your hand finds to do." v34 So Abimelech and all his troops set out by night and took up concealed positions near Shechem in four companies. v35 Now Gaal son of Ebed had gone out and was standing at the entrance to the city gate just as Abimelech and his soldiers came out from their hiding place. v36 When Gaal saw them, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!" Zebul replied, "You mistake the shadows of the mountains for men." v37 But Gaal spoke up again: "Look, people are coming down from the centre of the land, and a company is coming from the direction of the soothsayers' tree." v38 Then Zebul said to him, "Where is your big talk now, you who said, 'Who is Abimelech that we should be subject to him?' Aren't these the men you ridiculed? Go out and fight them!" v39 **So Gaal led out the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelech. v40 Abimelech chased him, and many fell wounded in the flight--all the way to the entrance to the gate. v41 Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem. v42 The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields, and this was reported to Abimelech. v43 So he took his men, divided them into three companies and set an ambush in the fields. When he saw the people coming out of the city, he rose to attack them. v44 Abimelech and the companies with him rushed forward to a position at the entrance to the city gate. Then two companies rushed upon those in the fields and struck them down. v45 **All that day Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it. v46 On hearing this, the citizens in the tower of Shechem went into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith. v47 When Abimelech heard that they had assembled there, v48 he and all his men went up Mount Zalmon. He took an axe and cut off some branches, which he lifted to his shoulders. He ordered the men with him, "Quick! Do what you have seen me do!" v49 So all the men cut branches and followed Abimelech. They piled them against the stronghold and set it on fire over the people inside. **So all the people in the tower of Shechem, about a thousand men and women, also died.*********

Verse 23 appears to imply that God is the one who sent the evil spirit.

In Hebrew thinking, God is the cause of everything, however we know God does not cause evil or even temptation.

James 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;

The passage is clear. "GOD ALLOWS SIN TO REAP IT'S CONSEQUENCES".

James 1:14-15 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. v15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

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4. GOD CONDEMNS THOSE WHO REJECT RIGHTEOUSNESS.

v50 Next Abimelech went to Thebez and besieged it and captured it. v51 Inside the city, however, was a strong tower, to which all the men and women--all the people of the city--fled. They locked themselves in and climbed up on the tower roof. v52 Abimelech went to the tower and stormed it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire, v53 a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull. v54 Hurriedly he called to his armour-bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that they can't say, 'A woman killed him.' " So his servant ran him through, and he died. v55 When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they went home. v56 Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers. v57 God also made the men of Shechem pay for all their wickedness. The curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal came on them.

The Bible is clear

Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. v8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

CONCLUSION

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THE STORY DOES NOT END THERE.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.