

BOOK OF JUDGES
GIDEON'S LEGACY IN ABIMELECH-PT 2
JUDGES 9:7-21

Introduction

In last week's message we saw how:

GIDEON'S ACTIONS SPOKE LOUDER THAN HIS WORDS!

GIDEON behaved himself as a **KING** before his death though he declined **ISRAEL'S** request to be their **KING** .

SOME OF GIDEON'S ACTIONS CAUSED A SNARE TO ISRAEL AND TO HIS OWN HOUSE!

The snare of the **GOLDEN EPHOD** that he erected in his city of **OPHRAH** where he lived. The **BIBLE** says that **all ISRAEL** went their **WHORING** after it and that **it became a snare unto GIDEON and to his house**.

We were looking at what happened in **GIDEON'S** family and **his nation** after his death! We began to see that **whatever positive influence GIDEON may have had on the children of ISRAEL** died with him as the nation **immediately went back to idolatry!** (*Judges 8:33*)!
GIDEON had NO LASTING SPIRITUAL LEGACY in the nation!

And **GIDEON'S snare**, that **GOLDEN EPHOD**, was one of the things that gave rise to **IDOLATRY** in the nation once again! So, that was on **GIDEON!**

GIDEON'S LEGACY here shows us how one's **ACTIONS** are clearly more important than their **WORDS!** We began to consider **GIDEON'S LEGACY** in just one of his sons—**ABIMELECH!** (*"My father is king"*)

ABIMELECH was bad to the bone! There is nothing good said about him in **GOD'S WORD!** **ABIMELECH was so wicked we're going to see that GOD rendered to him after his own wickedness and brought about his demise!**

We first looked at:

- I. *ABIMELECH'S BACKGROUND!* (*Judges 8:31*)
- II. *ABIMELECH'S RISE TO POWER IN SHECHEM!* (*Judges 9:1-6*)
 - A. *We Saw The Rich History Of SHECHEM!*
 - B. *We Saw ABIMELECH'S Rise To Power Came After His Dad's Death!* (*Judges 9:1-6*)

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How wicked was **ABIMELECH?** Well, we saw that he was responsible for the slaying of 69 of his half-brothers! That's about as wicked as you get!

He would have killed all 70 of his half-brothers, but the youngest one, **JOTHAM**, managed to hide from the **ABIMELECH'S** massacre!
(*Vs 5*)

ABIMELECH was then made "**king**" by all the house of **SHECHEM** along with all the house of **MILLO**. (*Vs 6*) **MILLO** is a Hebrew word meaning, "**filling**" which describes a stone terrace system employed in ancient construction.

"BETH MILLO"— "**The House of the Filling.**" This is believed to have been a **suburb of SHECHEM**, and most likely was a **CANAANITE sanctuary or shrine** of some sort. The shrine was built upon an artificial platform or **fill** and thus received the name "**House of the Filling.**" The **HOUSE OF MILLO** mentioned separately might indicate the "**priests**" associated with this **shrine or sanctuary**.

Tonight we see that **JOTHAM**, who is not called a **PROPHET**, came out of hiding to **PROPHECY** against both **SHECHEM** and **ABIMELECH!** So let's begin...

III. JOTHAM'S FABLE AND PROPHECY AGAINST SHECHEM AND ABIMELECH! (*Judges 9:7-21*)

So understand that this is about 300 years before **KING SAUL** would be **ANOINTED KING** over **ALL** of **ISRAEL** by the **PROPHET SAMUEL**. We see here that only a portion of the **ISRAELITES** (only those in **SHECHEM**) named **ABIMELECH** as their king according to *verse 6*.

We will see that **ABIMELECH** ruled as king for three years before his demise comes to fruition! But we see it **PROPHESED** early on here!

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A. We See JOTHAM'S Fable Of The BRAMBLE BUSH!
(Verse 7-15)

JOTHAM was **GIDEON'S** youngest son who, as we saw, who had managed to escape the slaughter of his 69 brothers at the hands of **ABIMELECH** and *the vain and light persons* that assisted him by hiding himself. *(Vs 5)*

Well, in the verses before us **JOTHAM** came out of hiding! *Verse 7* says that when **JOTHAM** heard that **ABIMELECH** had been elevated as king by those in **SHECHEM** and all the house of **MILLO**, he went to the top of **MOUNT GERIZIM** and lifted up his voice and cried out to those in **SHECHEM!**

Now that either took a bit of **STUPIDITY** or it took a whole lot of **COURAGE** as his life was definitely in danger here! I personally think he did this under the **LORD'S** direction!

So, because of that, let's give him the benefit of the doubt and call it **COURAGE!** Because later in *verse 21* we see that he ran away and fled after saying what he had to say here and **SCRIPTURE** tells us he did so because he feared his brother, **ABIMELECH!**

Obviously, **MOUNT GERIZIM** was close enough to **SHECHEM** for **JOTHAM** to have an audience with the men of **SHECHEM**.

When the **ISRAELITES** came into the land, **MOSES** had six tribes (*Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin*) assemble on **MOUNT GERIZIM** to bless the people as the **LEVITES** read out all the **BLESSINGS** of the **LAW** that would come to those who were **FAITHFUL** to the **LORD**. And then on nearby **MOUNT EBAL**, the other tribes assembled to curse the people as the **LEVITES** read out the **CURSINGS** of the **LAW** that would come to those who were **NOT FAITHFUL** to the **LORD**. **Deuteronomy 27:12ff**

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So, **JOTHAM'S** voice must have carried really well from off of **MOUNT GERIZIM!**

JOTHAM doesn't read out of the **LAW** here, but rather **TELLS A STORY!** (Some call it a **PARABLE**, some call it a **FABLE**, whatever one wants to call it, it was a story used to illustrate the demise of both the men of **SHECHEM** and his brother, **ABIMILECH!**)

In **JOTHAM'S FABLE**, the **TREES** wanted a **KING** to reign over them. They asked the **OLIVE TREE**, but the **OLIVE TREE** refused. The **TREES** then asked a **FIG TREE** to reign over them. The **FIG TREE** refused. Third, the **TREES** asked the **GRAPE VINE** to reign over them. The **VINE** refused.

Finally, the **TREES** ask the **BRAMBLE**, a **THORNY WEED SHRUB** used as **HEDGES**, to reign over them. The **BRAMBLE BUSH** replied in so many words here, *"If you really want me to reign over you, come seek refuge in my shade. But if you're just blowing smoke, then I will set you on fire and consume all of you!"*

Now, no one in their right mind would seek shade under a thorn bush! We would probably rather risk staying out in the sun than having to deal with thorns! Plus, the **BRAMBLE** grows much closer to the ground than trees and would not be comfortable from that perspective either.

B. So, What Was The Meaning/Purpose Of The Fable Of The BRAMBLE BUSH!

The basic message of **JOTHAM'S FABLE** is that these men of **SHECHEM** have chosen a **BRAMBLE BUSH (ABIMELECH)** to be their king and **he will eventually bring about their downfall, their ruin, and their destruction.**

Now, while **JOTHAM** is not identified as a **PROPHET** here, we will see that about three years later at the end of this story that **JOTHAM'S PREDICTION** or **PROPHECY** comes true!

C. LET'S CONSIDER JOTHAM'S APPLICATION OF THE FABLE! (Vs 16-21)

He said that if the men of **SHECHEM** have dealt "*truly and sincerely*" by making **ABIMELECH KING** and by killing **GIDEON'S** sons (**JOTHAM'S** brothers), then they should rejoice in **ABIMELECH** and **ABIMELECH** should rejoice in them! (Vs 19)

(Understand that those two words "*truly and sincerely*" or "*truth and sincerity*" were often associated with making a **COVENANT** with the **LORD GOD JEHOVAH!**)
(Cf. *Joshua 24:14*)

Now, in the middle of that sentence, **JOTHAM** reminds the men of **SHECHEM** what his dad did for them! (Vs 17)

However, **JOTHAM** says in *verse 20*, if they are acting in some way other than "*truly and sincerely*," he suggests fire will come out from **ABIMELECH** and destroy these men of **SHECHEM!** And, fire will come from the men of **SHECHEM** and consume **ABIMELECH!**

That's what could be called a MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION! (e.g. *It is like starting a nuclear war that is going to destroy your enemy and yourself at the same time!*)

After delivering this fable and its application, **JOTHAM** fled to place a called *Beer* and remained hidden from his half-brother. And get this...we don't hear from **JOTHAM** ever again! **JOTHAM** disappeared into oblivion and we don't even know if lived to see his **PROPHECY** carried out!

Conclusion

Next time, LORD willing, we WILL SEE the PROPHECY come to pass!