

ABIMELECH – THE WORTHLESS THORN BUSH – PART 1

--JUDGES 8:29-9:21--

INTRODUCTION:

We all know good parents whose children have turned out bad, they did not follow in the footsteps of their parents. In some of these cases a parent can be held at least partly to blame for how their children turn out. In the end it is the responsibility of our children to own up to the choices they have made, and for some the choices and the actions that followed them are utterly evil. It is sad when good parents have children that turn out badly. We are going to begin looking at a son of Gideon that turned out badly and sadly Gideon is one of those fathers who is partly to blame for how his son turned out.

I. THE LEGACY OF GIDEON (Judges 8:29-35)

- a. As I said in my introduction, Gideon is one of those fathers who must be held partly to _____ for the way his son behaved.
- b. The fact that _____ would come is increased by the way Gideon behaved and chose to live in his later years. (Deuteronomy 17:14-17)
- c. The fact that his name meant “my father is _____” meant that the conflict would come to a head with the issue of succession.
- d. It seems that the people were just waiting for Gideon to die because as soon as he did, they again turned to _____ worship.

II. THE KINGSHIP OF ABIMELECH (Judges 9:1-6)

- a. As we enter into chapter nine, we learn how Israel did not show _____ to the household of Jerubbaal, or Gideon.
- b. Abimelech’s message to the city leaders is that a _____ struggle is already taking place and they are going to have to make a choice.
- c. If there is to be a power struggle, the _____ will stand with and back Abimelech.
- d. Once Abimelech has this group in hand, he wastes no time in carrying out his _____.

- e. This slaughter apparently impresses the leaders of Shechem because on his return they formally make Abimelech their _____. (Joshua 24:24-27)

III. THE FABLE OF JOTHAM (Judges 9:7-21)

- a. It takes someone with a lot of courage to go against the crowd, to be the _____ voice that speaks out against a crowd especially one that has a strong and ruthless leader.
- b. Jotham uses a _____ to catch the attention of the citizens of Shechem.
- c. By the end of the fable, it would have been obvious to Jotham’s audience that this _____ was about them.

CONCLUSION:

What follows in the rest of this chapter is no fable, but the true-life history of terrible retribution on unfaithful people.

What can we learn today? We can learn that our lives and the legacy that we leave will have an influence on our children. Did Gideon envision Abimelech murdering his other sons when he named him “my father is king,” or that his life would influence his son to claim succession and try to build a dynasty? I am sure that he did not. We must be careful how we live and leave a godly legacy for our children.

We can learn that the people of Shechem had forgotten the God who they had promised to serve even though the “oak of the pillar” was still there to remind them that it was a witness against them. The mountains of blessing and cursing were on either side of them and because of their unfaithfulness they both became mountains of cursing. They had forgotten their God; they had been unfaithful and made a covenant with a false god. We must be careful to be faithful to our God, we have an empty cross that stands as a witness against us, we have an empty stone tomb that stands as a witness against us. If we are faithful that empty cross will remind us of the blessing of salvation, and the empty stone tomb will remind us of the blessed hope we have for the future. Let these two always remind you that you are forgiven, and that Jesus Christ is coming again to take us home to be with Him forever.