

# OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

## STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 12 — “When the Enemy Strikes Back” — August 3, 2025

### Introduction: A Tale of Two Mountains

As the Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land, Moses gave them specific instructions in Deut. 27-28 regarding how they were to remind themselves of the terms of their covenant with God. The people were to be divided between two mountains (Mt. Gerizim & Mt. Ebal) and the blessings and curses associated with the covenant they had made with the Lord were to be declared to them. This act and the monuments and altar would stand as an enduring testimony of God's promises to them.

The Curses: Centered on the importance of proper worship, not taking advantage of or conspiring against one another, and avoiding sexual immorality.

The Blessings: Centered on obeying the Word of the Lord and trusting in His promises to them.

Main Point: The account of Abimelech's rise to power reminds us that we have an \_\_\_\_\_ who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy.

### Judges 8:33-9:21

Although Gideon's later years were marked by indulgence and spiritual failure, the Bible still sees him as a hero of faith because God used him to rescue Israel. For this reason, he and his family deserved the people's gratitude. After Gideon's death, however, the people once again fell into apostasy. Sensing an opportunity, one of Gideon's sons conspired to make himself king and, in the process, destroyed what was left of his father's legacy.

### Exposition:

I. Following the death of Gideon, the people of Israel once again fell into \_\_\_\_\_. (8:33-35)

#### Observations:

(1) The evil of Israel's apostasy is highlighted by the use of the word “\_\_\_\_\_.”

שוב (*šûb*)— to turn about or return.

“The use of [this] verb...is significant. It is a...term that is often used to call on Israel to “return” to its God from apostasy; here it designates the reverse...” —Boda & Conway

(2) The strong language used of Israel's apostasy emphasizes the severity of its \_\_\_\_\_.

“whored”

“Baal-berith”

⇒ The use of *berith* (covenant) in relation to Baal suggests a formal, binding commitment and underscores the depth of Israel's apostasy, as they replaced the Lord of the covenant (YHWH) with a false lord of the covenant.

(3) The way that the people treated Gideon's family was indicative of their failure to “\_\_\_\_\_” the Lord.

“they did not show steadfast love...in return for all the good he had done”

חֶסֶד (*hesed*)—Loving-kindness, benevolence; used frequently of God's covenant love for His people

⇒ The Lord had delivered them by the hand of Gideon. Rather than rightly worshiping the Lord and honoring Gideon's family, they abandoned both.

Key Point: When God's people turn away from Him and back to sin, it is in some sense an evil and perverse version of \_\_\_\_\_.

II. Gideon's son, Abimelech, saw an opportunity to seize power and have himself declared \_\_\_\_\_. (9:1-6)

#### Observations:

(1) Abimelech's background helps to understand the nature of his conspiracy.

“Shechem”

“his mother's relatives”

(2) Abimelech's relatives \_\_\_\_\_ his military force with silver from their temple of Baal.

(3) The killing of Gideon's sons and Abimelech's installation as king recall Gideon's original \_\_\_\_\_ to serve the Lord.  
*"he went to his father's house...and killed his brothers...on one stone"*

*"they went and made Abimelech king...by the oak [terebinth] of the pillar at Shechem"*

**Key Point:** The real \_\_\_\_\_ of indulging our passions may only become apparent in the long-term.

### III. Gideon's last remaining son, \_\_\_\_\_, rose up and spoke prophetically to the people of Shechem. (9:7-21)

#### Observations:

(1) The setting and the language that Jotham used are intentionally ironic.

*"Mt. Gerizim"*

*"God"*

"The fact that he stands on the mountain of blessing rather than Ebal, the mountain of curses, while he actually pronounces a curse on Israel is deeply ironic. The Israelites assumed they would be blessed, but the blessings they expected have turned into curses because of their apostate behavior." —Boda & Conway

(2) Jotham's address began with a fable that was intended to illustrate the difference between Gideon and Abimelech.

The Trees:

The Productive Trees:

The Bramble:

(3) He then indicted the people for how they had treated the family of their deliverer, Gideon.

(4) He concluded by pronouncing a \_\_\_\_\_ upon both the people and Abimelech.

#### Assessing Gideon & Abimelech

- In spite of all the good that Gideon had done, his nickname (Jerubbaal) became prophetic as Baal did in fact contend with him, nearly destroying the entirety of his \_\_\_\_\_.
- Abimelech stands as a living testimony of some to the \_\_\_\_\_ aspects of Gideon's character.

#### Applying the Text

1. Parents and children each \_\_\_\_\_ one another with their sin.

2. Our enemy \_\_\_\_\_ parents and their children and will work with either to wreak destruction.

John 10:10a— The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ for parents and children who sin against one another is found in Christ alone!

John 10:10b-11—I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

# OUR GOD'S FAILURES & FAITHFULNESS

## STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part 12 — “When the Enemy Strikes Back” — August 3, 2025

### Introduction: A Tale of Two Mountains

As the Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land, Moses gave them specific instructions in Deut. 27-28 regarding how they were to remind themselves of the terms of their covenant with God. The people were to be divided between two mountains (Mt. Gerizim & Mt. Ebal) and the blessings and curses associated with the covenant they had made with the Lord were to be declared to them. This act and the monuments and altar would stand as an enduring testimony of God's promises to them.

The Curses: Centered on the importance of proper worship, not taking advantage of or conspiring against one another, and avoiding sexual immorality.

The Blessings: Centered on obeying the Word of the Lord and trusting in His promises to them.

Main Point: The account of Abimelech's rise to power reminds us that we have an enemy who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy.

### Judges 8:33-9:21

Although Gideon's later years were marked by indulgence and spiritual failure, the Bible still sees him as a hero of faith because God used him to rescue Israel. For this reason, he and his family deserved the people's gratitude. After Gideon's death, however, the people once again fell into apostasy. Sensing an opportunity, one of Gideon's sons conspired to make himself king and, in the process, destroyed what was left of his father's legacy.

### Exposition:

#### I. Following the death of Gideon, the people of Israel once again fell into apostasy. (8:33-35)

##### Observations:

(1) The evil of Israel's apostasy is highlighted by the use of the word “turned.”

שׁוּב (šûb)— to turn about or return.

“The use of [this] verb...is significant. It is a...term that is often used to call on Israel to “return” to its God from apostasy; here it designates the reverse...” —Boda & Conway

(2) The strong language used of Israel's apostasy emphasizes the severity of its evil.

“whored”

“Baal-berith”

⇒ The use of *berith* (covenant) in relation to Baal suggests a formal, binding commitment and underscores the depth of Israel's apostasy, as they replaced the Lord of the covenant (YHWH) with a false lord of the covenant.

(3) The way that the people treated Gideon's family was indicative of their failure to “remember” the Lord.

“they did not show steadfast love...in return for all the good he had done”

חֶסֶד (*hesed*)—Loving-kindness, benevolence; used frequently of God's covenant love for His people

⇒ The Lord had delivered them by the hand of Gideon. Rather than rightly worshiping the Lord and honoring Gideon's family, they abandoned both.

Key Point: When God's people turn away from Him and back to sin, it is in some sense an evil and perverse version of repentance.

#### II. Gideon's son, Abimelech, saw an opportunity to seize power and have himself declared king. (9:1-6)

##### Observations:

(1) Abimelech's background helps to understand the nature of his conspiracy.

“Shechem”

“his mother's relatives”

(2) Abimelech's relatives **funded** his military force with silver from their temple of Baal.

(3) The killing of Gideon's sons and Abimelech's installation as king recall Gideon's original **call** to serve the Lord.  
*"he went to his father's house...and killed his brothers...on one stone"*

*"they went and made Abimelech king...by the oak [terebinth] of the pillar at Shechem"*

**Key Point:** The real consequences of indulging our passions may only become apparent in the long-term.

### III. Gideon's last remaining son, **Jotham**, rose up and spoke prophetically to the people of Shechem.

Observations:

(1) The setting and the language that Jotham used are intentionally ironic.

*"Mt. Gerizim"*

*"God"*

"The fact that he stands on the mountain of blessing rather than Ebal, the mountain of curses, while he actually pronounces a curse on Israel is deeply ironic. The Israelites assumed they would be blessed, but the blessings they expected have turned into curses because of their apostate behavior." —Boda & Conway

(2) Jotham's address began with a fable that was intended to illustrate the difference between Gideon and Abimelech.

The Trees:

The Productive Trees:

The Bramble:

(3) He then indicted the people for how they had treated the family of their deliverer, Gideon.

(4) He concluded by pronouncing a **curse** upon both the people and Abimelech.

### Assessing Gideon & Abimelech

- In spite of all the good that Gideon had done, his nickname (Jerubbaal) became prophetic as Baal did in fact contend with him, nearly destroying the entirety of his legacy.
- Abimelech stands as a living testimony of some to the worst aspects of Gideon's character.

### Applying the Text

1. Parents and children each affect one another with their sin.

2. Our enemy hates parents and their children and will work with either to wreak destruction.

John 10:10a— The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

3. Hope for parents and children who sin against one another is found in Christ alone!

John 10:10b-11—I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.