

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Jotham had to wait three years before Abimelech was punished for his sin. Many others have waited longer, and some have died without seeing justice done. You promise to deal with sin, but in your time not ours. In your mercy, you often spare sinners from immediate punishment, allowing them time to repent and turn back to you. However, you judge those who persist in sin, and you bring the evil they do to others back on their own heads. Praise the Lord!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me how Israel turned their back on you after Gideon's death. This time their idolatry was revealed as the fruit of an ungrateful heart. They weren't thankful for the way you had delivered them from their enemies, and they didn't show kindness to Gideon's household. As Jotham said, they had dealt treacherously with the sons of the man who had risked his own life to save theirs (Jdg 9:16–18). This helps me to see wickedness and rebellion from your perspective. When I refuse to obey you and insist on having my own way, I scorn the sacrifice of your Son and spit on His precious blood. Abimelech conspired with the men of Shechem, and with their blessing and their money, he led a team of assassins to Ophrah and killed all but one of his half-brothers. Jotham escaped the slaughter and called down a curse on Abimelech and Shechem: "Let fire come out from Abimelech and consume the men of Shechem and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from Beth-millo, and consume Abimelech" (Jdg 9:20). Abimelech scoffed at Jotham's curse, and he ruled over Israel for the next three years. His wickedness, however, did not escape your notice. Abimelech and the men of Shechem had sown treachery, and you made sure they both reaped a bloody harvest. You sent an evil spirit to sow discord between them, and it wasn't long before the Shechemites went up in smoke and Jotham's curse came crashing down on Abimelech's head (literally). This teaches me that no one ever gets away with doing evil. Even if the wicked go to their graves in peace, your fiery judgment will catch them in the end.

Reflection

If only Gideon had never taken a concubine in Shechem! A life of sacrifice and service can be ruined by the legacy of a single sin. How important it is to obey you in all things!

Request

Father, I want to leave a legacy of faithful obedience to you. Help me resist the passing pleasures of sin and cling to you in love.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for being a God who frustrates the plans of the wicked and laughs at the schemes of those who resist your will. As for me and my house, we will "serve Yahweh with fear" (Ps 2:11).

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: "[What Are You Sowing, Sinner?](#)" – Charles W. Naylor.

Meditation Verse: Judges 9:23.