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(Peter Lok) 駱沅祺

[lokpeter@outlook.com](mailto:lokpeter@outlook.com)

[Bibleao.com](http://Bibleao.com)

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YouTube Prayer Link

God's justice and retribution don't have to wait ten or eight years

Judges 9 is the story of Jerubbaal. Jerubbaal was the son of Gideon, and he proclaimed himself king of Shechem. He used violence and murder to gain power and tried to kill Jotham, the son of Abimelech, the other Christian leader. Jotham escaped, vowing revenge to the people of Shechem. Later, God sent a prophetess to tell Jerubbaal and Shechem that their sins would bring punishment. Eventually, Jotham's curse came true, Jerubbaal was obliterated by his servants, and the city of Shechem was destroyed.

God's justice and retribution are important issues in many religions and beliefs, but their timing and manner may vary from faith to faith. Some people believe that God's justice and retribution are immediate, while others believe that it may take time to materialize. The differing perspectives stem from an understanding of the nature of God and belief systems.

In some beliefs, it is believed that the gods act instantly and respond immediately to human actions. This means that when a person does good or bad deeds, God immediately rewards or punishes them. This view gives the impression that God's justice is swift and that retribution will come immediately.

However, there are also those who believe that God's justice and retribution may not be achieved immediately. Some beliefs believe that God's plan is beyond human comprehension, and that retribution may take longer to come. In this view, God's justice may manifest itself at other stages of life, rather than immediately.

Either way, God's justice and retribution carry people's faith in justice and good and evil. They constitute a guide to beliefs and behaviors that help people determine their own behavior and moral code. It is important that regardless of whether or not God's justice and retribution are achieved immediately, people should act in a manner of kindness and integrity, with respect and care for others, which are values emphasized by many religions and moral systems.

Whether justice and retribution are immediate or not, they symbolize a belief in the consequences of good and evil actions and play an important role in people's beliefs and values. There are many passages in the Bible that deal with God's justice that describe God's character and His actions toward the world. Here are some verses related to God's justice:

Psalm 89:14: "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne, and lovingkindness and truth walk before you." "

Proverbs 21:3: "It is more acceptable to the Lord to do what is right and just than to sacrifice." "

Isaiah 30:18, "The Lord will wait and be gracious to you, and he will arise to have mercy on you." For the LORD is a God of justice, and blessed are all who wait for him. "

I Peter 1:17: "Since you have called your father the Lord who does not show favoritism and judges every man according to his works, spend your days on earth in reverence." "

II Peter 3:9: "The Lord does not delay his promises, as some think, but forgives you, not that any of you should perish, but that all repent." "

These verses emphasize God's justice and fairness as His attributes and remind people to be righteous and fair to others. God's judgment of good and evil is also a manifestation of His righteousness, and His tolerance and mercy are also a manifestation of His love for mankind. In the Bible, God's justice is a manifestation of His sovereign power and righteousness, as well as a response to human behavior.

We are to wait on God with a clean heart at all times

A clean mind represents a clear and pure inner state, which is a response to God's piety and reverence.

In Christianity, this concept of purifying the heart is embodied in the fear of God and vigilance against sin. People are encouraged to keep a clean heart, free from sin, and to continually seek God's face in the life of faith. It's not just a spiritual attitude, it's also a moral choice to bring people closer to God and better follow His will.

Purifying the heart is also about waiting on God. Waiting on God represents the believer's faith and hope in God, looking forward to God's guidance and help. This waiting is not just passively waiting, but a process of actively growing in the faith, praying, and seeking God's will. This kind of waiting can help people experience God's guidance and help more deeply.

Purifying the heart and waiting on God are important elements in the life of faith, they bring people closer to God, closer to God's will, and help people grow and thrive in their faith.

## We thank God for His righteous

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for being worthy of praise and honor for Your righteousness. Your righteousness is steadfast, a rock on which we can trust. Today, we want to thank You for the righteousness You have shown in our lives. Thank You for doing justice and righteousness in all that we see and experience.

Help us to seek righteousness in our daily lives, to live in Your image, and to demonstrate Your virtue and love. Help us to be a conduit for Your righteousness in this world, so that our words and actions and choices show Your righteousness and truth.

We also want to thank You for keeping us alive and giving us strength in the midst of the challenges we face. Let us be comforted by Your righteousness and strengthened by Your promises.

May our lives be a testimony to Your righteousness and that Your name may be glorified in all that we do. All this, we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, amen.

## Judges Chapter 9

Ju. 9:1 Abimelech son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's brothers in

Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan,

Ju. 9:2 "Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood."

Ju. 9:3 When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."

Ju. 9:4 They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelech used it to hire reckless adventurers, who became his followers.

Ju. 9:5 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. Ju. 9:6 Then all the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo gathered

beside the great tree at the pillar in Shechem to crown Abimelech king.

Ju. 9:7 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.

Ju. 9:8 One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.'

Ju. 9:9 "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?'

Ju. 9:10 "Next, the trees said to the fig-tree, 'Come and be our king.' Ju. 9:11 "But the fig-tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?'

Ju. 9:12 "Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come and be our king.' 587

Ju. 9:13 "But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men, to hold sway over the trees?'

Ju. 9:14 "Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come and be our king.'

Ju. 9:15 “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!’

Ju. 9:16 “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 —

Ju. 9:17 and to think that my father fought for you, risked his life to rescue you from the hand of Midian

Ju. 9:18 (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) —

Ju. 9:19 if then you have acted honourably and in good faith towards Jerub-Baal and his family today, may Abimelech be your joy, and may you be his, too!

Ju. 9:20 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!”

Ju. 9:21 Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and he lived there because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech.

Ju. 9:22 After Abimelech had governed Israel for three years, Ju. 9:23 God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, who acted treacherously against Abimelech.

Ju. 9:24 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.

Ju. 9:25 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.

Ju. 9:26 Now Gaal son of Ebed moved with his brothers into Shechem, and its citizens put their confidence in him. Ju. 9:27 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.

Ju. 9:28 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? Ju. 9:29 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!'"

Ju. 9:30 When Zebul the governor of the city heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, he was very angry.

Ju. 9:31 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.

Ju. 9:32 Now then, during the night you and your men should come and lie in wait in the fields.

Ju. 9:33 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."

Ju. 9:34 So Abimelech and all his troops set out by night and took up concealed positions near Shechem in four companies.

Ju. 9:35 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.

Ju. 9:36 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."

Ju. 9:37 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."

Ju. 9:38 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!"

Ju. 9:39 So Gaal led out the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelech.

Ju. 9:40 Abimelech chased him, and many fell wounded in the flight — all the way to the entrance to the gate.

Ju. 9:41 Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem.

Ju. 9:42 The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields, and this was reported to Abimelech.

Ju. 9:43 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.

Ju. 9:44 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. Ju. 9:45 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.

Ju. 9:46 On hearing this, the citizens in the tower of Shechem went into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith.

Ju. 9:47 When Abimelech heard that they had assembled there, Ju. 9:48 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!"

Ju. 9:49 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.

Ju. 9:50 Next Abimelech went to Thebez and besieged it and captured it.

Ju. 9:51 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. Ju. 9:52 Abimelech went to the tower and stormed it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire,

Ju. 9:53 a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull.

Ju. 9:54 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.

Ju. 9:55 When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they went home.

Ju. 9:56 Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers.

Ju. 9:57 God also made the men of Shechem pay for all their wickedness. The curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal came on them.

The Book of Judges, Chapter 9 in the Christian Bible talks about the rise and fall of Abimelech, one of Gideon's sons who sought to become a king over Israel. Abimelech first killed all of his seventy brothers, except for one who escaped, and then gained the support of the leaders of Shechem to make him their ruler.

However, Abimelech's reign was short-lived, as he soon faced opposition from a man named Gaal, who also sought to become the ruler of Shechem. Abimelech defeated Gaal and his followers, but his reign was plagued by conflict and opposition.

Eventually, Abimelech and his army attacked a tower in the city of Thebez, where a woman dropped a millstone on his head, mortally wounding him. Abimelech then commanded his armor-bearer to kill him, so that it would not be said that he was killed by a woman.

The chapter concludes with a brief mention of several other judges who followed Abimelech, but whose stories are not told in detail.

The story of Abimelech in Chapter 9 of The Book of Judges serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of seeking power and glory for oneself, and the destructive consequences of selfish ambition. It also highlights the importance of wise and just leadership, which seeks the good of the people rather than one's own interests.

Here are some key verses from Judges chapter 9:

- "Now Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's relatives and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, 'Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, "Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?"'" (Judges 9:1-2)
- "But the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my abundance, by which gods and men are honored, and go hold sway over the trees?'" (Judges 9:9)
- "And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem, and the leaders of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech." (Judges 9:23)
- "Thus God returned the evil of Abimelech, which he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers." (Judges 9:56)

These verses highlight the story of Abimelech, one of Gideon's sons, who attempted to become a ruler over Israel by killing all his brothers. He made a pact with the leaders of Shechem to support him in his quest for power, but ultimately they turned on him and he died. The parable of the trees, in which the olive tree, fig tree, and vine each decline to rule over the other trees, is used to illustrate the folly of Abimelech's ambition.

Judges chapter 9 provides a reflection on the story of Abimelech, the son of Gideon, and the consequences of his quest for power and his oppressive leadership.

The chapter begins with Abimelech's desire for power. After Gideon's death, Abimelech convinces the leaders of Shechem to support him in becoming their ruler. He manipulates their desire for power and convinces them that he is the rightful successor to his father.

Abimelech then proceeds to eliminate his brothers, all except Jotham who escapes, in order to secure his position as ruler. This act reflects his ruthless and power-hungry nature, willing to commit violence to maintain control.

Jotham, the only surviving brother, delivers a parable to the people of Shechem, criticizing their choice to support Abimelech and warning them of the consequences. The parable illustrates the folly of their decision and foreshadows the destruction and chaos that will come as a result of Abimelech's oppressive rule.

As Abimelech reigns as king, he leads the people astray and brings calamity upon them. He engages in violent battles and kills many people. However, his reign is ultimately cut short when a woman drops a millstone from a tower and fatally wounds him.

Recognizing his impending death, Abimelech commands his armor-bearer to kill him to avoid being killed by a woman.

The reflection in Judges chapter 9 reveals the dangers of seeking power at all costs and the destructive consequences of oppressive leadership. Abimelech's quest for power leads to the loss of innocent lives, division within the community, and his own downfall.

Furthermore, the chapter highlights the role of Jotham as a voice of reason and warning. Jotham's parable serves as a reflection on the consequences of supporting an unjust ruler and the importance of making wise and moral choices in leadership.

Overall, Judges chapter 9 serves as a reflection on the dangers of unchecked ambition, the consequences of oppressive leadership, and the need for wisdom and discernment in choosing leaders. It warns against the pursuit of power at the expense of others and emphasizes the importance of justice, integrity, and the welfare of the community.