**Be Careful What You Sow, for You Will Reap It Later; You Can Count on That!**

Upon hearing about a believer who was angry and showed no mercy toward this brother for being negligent with his responsibility, I said, “That man needs to be careful in condemning others like that because what goes around comes around.” Someone heard this and commented, “Hey, that’s karma,” implying that I was adding some Hindu concept to the Christian faith! I was merely paraphrasing one of the most foundational laws that govern events that occur in our everyday living. It is called, “You reap what you sow,” and when this principle is properly understood and sensibly applied to our lives, it can be a powerful motivator for doing what is right and just.

**Q:** Have you ever said, *Whatever goes round comes around* or something similar? What prompted you?

**A. Do you feel nervous when other religions teach something that is found in the Bible?**

1. If you’re a religious pluralist, then such a discovery really bolsters your postmodern belief. But if you’re an exclusivist, believing that Christ is the only way to God (Jn. 14:6) & strongly committed to the doctrine of Total Depravity (the fallen man is incapable of doing any spiritual good, and therefore also unable to make the least advance toward this recovery), then you may feel uneasy.

2. Don’t feel that way since the Bible doesn’t endorse a view that the religions of the world are devoid of any moral & ethical truth. Examine the law of Hammurabi of the Babylonian Empire (a worshiper of Marduk), which was formulated 3 cent. before Moses.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 8. If a citizen has stolen an ox, or a sheep, he shall give 30-fold. | Ex 22:1: If a man steals an ox . . ., he must pay back 5 head of cattle for the ox |
| 157. If a citizen after (the death of) his father lies in the bosom of his mother, they shall burn them both | Lv 18:7: Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. (Must be cut off.) |
| 195. If a son has struck his father, they shall cut off his hand. | Ex 21:15: He who strikes his father or mother shall surely be put to death. |

**Q:** The similarity is obvious! Moses wrote these laws after receiving a direct revelation from God; how then did Hammurabi manage to ascertain similar truths? (Rom. 2:14-15).

**B. The Hindu concept of karma isn’t entire wrong! Some of it is right on!**

1. Karma in Hinduism means action and it refers to the law of cause and effect, which is a critical component of reincarnation

(i.e., the unending cycle or birth, death and rebirth).

**Q:** What then is “bad karma” in Hinduism? In general, what does this term imply?

2. Several verses in the NT highlight this law of cause and effect. Gal. 6:7 says, “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” Mat. 7:1 says, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you

will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

**Q1:** To what extent is the karma of Hinduism similar to the concept found in Gal 6:7 & Mat. 7:1?

**Q2:** From the Scriptural standpoint, why is karma not acceptable? (Heb. 9:27).

**C. In what sense is the biblical principle of sowing & reaping different from karma?** For that, we will examine the life of Judge Abimelech (son of Jerbu-Baal, or Gideon) and the people of Shechem. (Abimelech acted more as a ruler of his people than a judge.)

1. Read 9:1-6, 22. Observe the role that the people of Shechem, many of them being Abimelech’s relatives on his mother’s side

(referred to as his brothers in 9:3a), played in his rise to power.

**Q1:** What did Abimelech do to become the judge of his people? What did he sow?

**Q2:** Read 9:16-20. Here, in rebuking the citizens of Shechem, Jotham pointed out their error & what might happen to them in the

future. What did they sow? How will they reap?

2. Jotham wished that the citizens of Shechem be punished by their *brother* Abimelech in the future. **Q:** Why was that so ironic?

**D. Did Abimelech and the people of Shechem end up reaping what they had sown? If so, how?**

1. First, let’s examine what eventually happened to the people of Shechem. Read 9:22-25.

**Q:** Did the good time between Abimelech & the people of Shechem last? Who then got involved?

2. You can read about the exact circumstance that led to the war between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem (led by Gaal) in 9:26-39, but that battle ended very badly for the latter. Read their tragic end in 9:39-49; then think on Gal 6:7 in view of 9:57. **Q:** What happened? (Rom. 12:19). How did what Jotham say come true?

3. What happened to the vile Abimelech, a killer of his own brother and an entire citizenry?

**Q:** Read 9:50-55. In what sense did God “repay the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his father by murdering his 69 brothers?” (9:56). Note how and what killed this man.

**E. Conclusion: What are the two biblical principles of sowing & reaping?**

1. First: What one does earlier in life can affect later in the same life correspondingly. In view of Mat. 7:1, if you show no mercy now, then you won’t be shown mercy later in this lifetime.

2. For the second concept, read the Gal. 6:7-10. **Q**:What is the second aspect of this principle?

**F. Application:** A sensible understanding of the law of sowing & reaping can motivate us to do what is right & just in the present.

**Q1:** Share some things that you ended up reaping (good or bad) from that which was sown earlier.

**Q2**: What are some things that you’ve been sowing that should be stopped at once in healthy fear of reaping its consequences?