

## Judges 9 Abimelech's Conspiracy

Now Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's relatives, and spoke to them and to the entire family of the household of his mother's father, saying, 2 "Speak, now, in the hearing of all the leaders of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: for seventy men, all the sons of Jerubbaal, to rule over you, or for one man to rule over you?' Also, remember that I am your bone and your flesh." 3 So his mother's relatives spoke all these words on his behalf in the hearing of all the leaders of Shechem; and they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our relative."

4 And they gave him seventy pieces of silver from the house of Baal-berith, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men, and they followed him. 5 Then he went to his father's house in Ophrah and killed his brothers the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, because he hid himself. 6 All the leaders of Shechem and all Beth-millo assembled together, and they went and made Abimelech king, by the oak of the memorial stone which was in Shechem.

7 Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and raised his voice and called out. And he said to them, "Listen to me, you leaders of Shechem, that God may listen to you. 8 Once the trees went to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us!' 9 But the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I give up my fatness with [j]which God and mankind are honored, and go to wave over the trees?' 10 Then the trees said to the fig tree, 'You, come, reign over us!' 11 But the fig tree said to them, 'Shall I give up my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?' 12 Then the trees said to the vine, 'You, come, reign over us!'

13 But the vine said to them, 'Shall I give up my new wine, which cheers God and mankind, and go to wave over the trees?' 14 Then all the trees said to the bramble, 'You, come, reign over us!' 15 And the bramble said to the trees, 'If you really are anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, may fire come out of the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon.'

16 "Now then, if you have acted with honesty and integrity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have dealt with him as he deserved— 17 for my father fought for you, and risked his life and saved you from the hand of Midian; 18 but in fact you have risen against my father's house today and have killed his sons, seventy men, on one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his female slave, king over the eaders of Shechem, because he is your relative

19 so if you have acted with honesty and integrity toward Jerubbaal and his house this

day, be joyful about Abimelech, and may he also be joyful about you. 20 But if not, may fire come out of Abimelech and consume the leaders of Shechem and Beth-millo; and may fire come out of the leaders of Shechem and from Beth-millo, and consume Abimelech.” 21 Then Jotham escaped and fled, and went to Beer; and he stayed there because of his brother Abimelech.

22 Now Abimelech ruled over Israel for three years. 23 Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem; and the leaders of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, 24 so that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal would come, and the responsibility for their blood would be placed on their brother Abimelech, who killed them, and on the leaders of Shechem, who encouraged him to kill his brothers. 25 The leaders of Shechem set up men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed everyone who would pass by them on the road; and it was reported to Abimelech.

26 Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his relatives, and crossed over into Shechem; and the leaders of Shechem trusted him. 27 So they went out to the field and gathered the grapes of their vineyards and trampled them, and held a festival; and they went into the house of their god, and ate and drank and cursed Abimelech. 28 Then Gaal the son of Ebed said, “Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is Zebul not his governor? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him? 29 If only this people were under my authority! Then I would do away with Abimelech.” And he said to Abimelech, “Enlarge your army and come out!”

30 When Zebul the leader of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger burned. 31 So using deception, he successfully sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, “Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his relatives have come to Shechem; and behold, they are stirring up the city against you. 32 So now, arise by night, you and the people who are with you, and lie in wait in the field. 33 Then in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, you shall rise early and attack the city; and behold, when he and the people who are with him come out against you, you shall do to them whatever you can.”

34 So Abimelech and all the people who were with him got up at night, and lay in wait against Shechem, in four units. 35 Now Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood at the entrance of the city gate; and Abimelech and the people who were with him arose from the ambush. 36 When Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, “Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains.” But Zebul said to him, “You are seeing the shadow of the mountains as if they were people.” 37 And Gaal spoke yet again and said, “Look, people are coming down from the highest part of the land, and one unit is coming by way of the diviners’ oak.”

38 Then Zebul said to him, “Where then is your boasting with which you said, ‘Who is Abimelech that we should serve him?’ Is this not the people whom you rejected? Go out now and fight them!” 39 So Gaal went out [an]in the sight of the leaders of Shechem and fought Abimelech. 40 But Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him; and many fell wounded up to the entrance of the gate. 41 Then Abimelech stayed in Arumah, but Zebul drove out Gaal and his relatives so that they could not stay in Shechem.

42 Now it came about the next day, that the people went out to the field, and it was reported to Abimelech. 43 So he took his people and divided them into three units, and lay in wait in the field; when he looked and saw the people coming out from the city, he attacked them and killed them. 44 Then Abimelech and the company who was with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the city gate; the other two companies then attacked all who were in the field and killed them. 45 Abimelech fought against the city that whole day, and he captured the city and killed the people who were in it; then he tore down the city and sowed it with salt.

46 When all the eaders of the tower of Shechem heard about it, they entered the inner chamber of the temple of El-berith. 47 And it was reported to Abimelech that all the leaders of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. 48 So Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand and cut down a branch from the trees, and lifted it and put it on his shoulder. Then he said to the people who were with him, “What you saw me do, hurry and do likewise.” 49 So all the people also cut down, each one, his branch and followed Abimelech, and put them on top of the inner chamber and set the inner chamber on fire over those inside, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem also died, about a thousand men and women.

50 Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he camped against Thebez and captured it. 51 But there was a strong tower in the center of the city, and all the men and women with all the leaders of the city fled there and shut themselves in; and they went up on the roof of the tower. 52 So Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it, and approached the entrance of the tower to burn it down with fire. 53 But a woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech’s head, crushing his skull.

54 Then he called quickly to the young man, his armor bearer, and said to him, “Draw your sword and kill me, so that it will not be said of me, ‘A woman killed him.’” So the young man pierced him through, and he died. 55 Now when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, each left for his home. 56 So God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father in killing his seventy brothers. 57 God also returned all the wickedness of the men of Shechem on their heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal came upon them.

1. Jerubbaal sons are the sons of Gideon.
2. Abimelech creates a division between his seventy brothers and conspires to lead a revolt and kills his brothers.
3. Who will you let rule over you?
4. The people of Shechem were persuaded by Abimelech's invitation to make him their leader.
5. They provided the funds to pay for worthless fellows, to stand with Abimelech, against his seventy brothers.
6. What is it to be followed by 'worthless fellows'?
7. How could anyone kill seventy of their brothers in cold blood, on one stone?
8. The only brother that survived, of the seventy sons of Gideon, was Jotham.
9. The people anointed Abimelech their leader, was this in the will of God? Or, the historic happenings of Israel?
10. The young boy, Jotham, prophesied to Abimelech, him now having been appointed leader to the nation.
11. He spoke a riddle regarding trees that were seeking a king to rule and to reign over them.
12. In the riddle, having been turned down by dignified trees, the trees were prepared to accept the leadership of a brambly and thorny bush.
13. In the riddle, they are invited to come and find comfort and protection amongst the thorny bush, but how can you be protected and comforted by such things?
14. The challenge that Jotham brought to Abimelech was, 'how could you do what you have done'?
15. Have you ever found yourself asking that question of yourself?
16. Jotham pointed out to Abimelech, 'you have done wrong to our fathers house'!
17. He asked the question 'why have you turned your back on Gideon, your redeemer?'
18. The mouth speaks the words of a curse with fire from hell.
19. Having proclaimed, Jotham fled the land for fear of death from his brother.
20. After three years rule Abimelech is attacked by an evil spirit from God. Why does God send this spirit?
21. Because he could – access was possible into Abimelech because Abimelech was open to this level of evil.
22. We are seeing the by-product of a life that could be invaded by an evil spirit.
23. Unrest came into the land at this onslaught of division, Jesus said 'if your enemy fights against itself, it will be destroyed by itself'.
24. Not only was there unrest in the land but the people gave themselves to wanton pleasure.
25. Abimelech is drawn into more conflict, when you live by the sword, you die by the sword.
26. There is civil war in the land, as the army invades the land they pass by the diviners

oak. What do you think of this?

27. Abimelech torched the towers to destroy his enemy.

28. Abimelech is wounded by a grinding wheel rock, thrown by a woman, in fear of his capture

29. He allows his young man to kill him.

30. What do you think of euthanasia?

31. What do you think of suicide?

32. Who do you think was responsible for his death – the woman, the young man or God's judgement?