
Abimelech –
The Seeds of Disaster

Judges 8:29—9:57

Sunday

July 30, 2023

Gideon's Final Days

Judges 8:29 – 35

29 Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.

30 Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives.

31 And his concubine who *was* in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

32 Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god.

34 Thus the children of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side;

35 nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.

The Sum of Gideon's Life

Multiple
Marriages

Not a Good
Father

Abimelech,
Son of
Concubine

Gideon
Honored

Israel Does
Evil

No Honor to
Deceased
Hero

The Rise of Abimelech

Judges 9:1 – 6

¹ Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brothers, and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,

² "Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem: 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one reign over you?' Remember that I *am* your own flesh and bone."

³ And his mother's brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem; and their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."

⁴ So they gave him seventy *shekels* of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men; and they followed him.

⁵ Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, because he hid himself.

⁶ And all the men of Shechem gathered together, all of Beth Millo, and they went and made Abimelech king beside the terebinth tree at the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

Map of Shechem



Map of Shechem



Jotham's Parable

Judges 9:7 – 21

⁷ Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and cried out. And he said to them:

“Listen to me, you men of Shechem,
That God may listen to you!

⁸ “The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree,
‘Reign over us!’

⁹ But the olive tree said to them,
‘Should I cease giving my oil,
With which they honor God and men,
And go to sway over trees?’

¹⁰ “Then the trees said to the fig tree,
‘You come *and* reign over us!’

Jotham's Parable

Judges 9:7 – 21
Continued

11 But the fig tree said to them,
'Should I cease my
sweetness and my good
fruit,
And go to sway over trees?'

12 "Then the trees said to the vine,
'You come *and* reign over us!'

13 But the vine said to them,
'Should I cease my new wine,
Which cheers *both* God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'

14 "Then all the trees said to the bramble,
'You come *and* reign over us!'

15 And the bramble said to the trees,
'If in truth you anoint me as king over you,
Then come *and* take shelter in my shade;
But if not, let fire come out of the bramble
And devour the cedars of Lebanon!'

Jotham's Parable

Judges 9:7 – 21 Continued

- 16** “Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him as he deserves—
- 17** for my father fought for you, risked his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian;
- 18** but you have risen up against my father's house this day, and killed his seventy sons on one stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his female servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother—
- 19** if then you have acted in truth and sincerity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, *then* rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you.
- 20** But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!”
- 21** And Jotham ran away and fled; and he went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

Map of Be'er Sheva



Beersheba

Bèer – A well dug by man

- As in Bèer Sheva → Well of Oath

Ein – An artesian or Natural Fountain

- As in Gedi → The well of the Goat

Abimelech's Judgment

Judges 9:22 – 51

22 After Abimelech had reigned over Israel three years,

23 God sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,

24 that the crime *done* to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be settled and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who aided him in the killing of his brothers.

25 And the men of Shechem set men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way; and it was told Abimelech.

Abimelech's Judgment

Judges 9:22 – 51 Continued

26 Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.

27 So they went out into the fields, and gathered *grapes* from their vineyards and trod *them*, and made merry. 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 not* Zebul his officer? 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 remove Abimelech.” So he said to Abimelech, “Increase your army and come out!”

Abimelech's Judgment Judges 9:22 – 51 Continued

30 When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was aroused.

31 And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Take note! Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem; and here they are, fortifying the city against you.

32 Now therefore, get up by night, you and the people who *are* with you, and lie in wait in the field.

33 And it shall be, as soon as the sun is up in the morning, *that* you shall rise early and rush upon the city; and *when* he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may then do to them as you find opportunity."

Abimelech's Judgment

Judges 9:22 – 51 Continued

³⁴ So Abimelech and all the people who *were* with him rose by night, and lay in wait against Shechem in four companies.

³⁵ When Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance to the city gate, Abimelech and the people who *were* with him rose from lying in wait.

³⁶ And 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 see the shadows of the mountains as *if they were* men.”

Abimelech's Judgment

Judges 9:22 – 51 Continued

37 So Gaal spoke again and said, “See, people are coming down from the center of the land, and another company is coming from the Diviners’ Terebinth Tree.”

38 Then Zebul said to him, “Where indeed *is* your mouth now, with which you said, ‘Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?’ *Are* not these the people whom you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now.”

39 So Gaal went out, leading the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.

40 And Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him; and many fell wounded, to the *very* entrance of the gate.

41 Then Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they would not dwell in Shechem.

Abimelech's Judgment

Judges 9:22 – 51 Continued

42 And it came about on the next day that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech.

43 So he took his people, divided them into three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city; and he rose against them and attacked them.

44 Then Abimelech and the company that *was* with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city; and the *other* two companies rushed upon all who *were* in the fields and killed them.

45 So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who *were* in it; and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.

Abimelech's Judgment

Judges 9:22 – 51 Continued

46 Now when all the men of the tower of Shechem had heard *that*, they entered the stronghold of the temple of the god Berith.

47 And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.

48 Then Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who *were* with him. And Abimelech took an ax in his hand and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it and laid *it* on his shoulder; then he said to the people who were with him, "What you have seen me do, make haste *and* do as I *have done*."

Abimelech's Judgment

Judges 9:22 – 51 Continued

49 So each of the people likewise cut down his own bough and followed Abimelech, put *them* against the stronghold, and set the stronghold on fire above them, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about a thousand men and women.

50 Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he encamped against Thebez and took it.

51 But there was a strong tower in the city, and all the men and women—all the people of the city—fled there and shut themselves in; then they went up to the top of the tower.

Abimelech's Demise at Hands of a Woman Judges 9:52 – 57

52 So Abimelech came as far as the tower and fought against it; and he drew near the door of the tower to burn it with fire.

53 But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull.

54 Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, 'A woman killed him.'" So his young man thrust him through, and he died.

55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed, every man to his place.

56 Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers.

57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem God returned on their own heads, and on them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

