

Judges 9

Judges 9.1-6

V1 – Who was Abimelech? Son of Gideon

-Whom did he send a message to? His mother at Shechem

V2 – His message? "Why have 70 rulers – just make me king"

V3 – Reaction of people in Shechem? Tended to follow Abimelech – he was related to Gideon

-Shechem was a Canaanite city, so Abimelech was half-Jewish and half-Canaanite

V4 – What did the people of Shechem do? Gave 70 pieces of silver to Abimelech

-What did he do with the money? Hired a bunch of worthless fellows to join him

V5 – 69 sons killed – these were the sons by Jewish women (see *Joshua 8.30* – direct descendants)

-Abimelech was the son of a concubine (*Joshua 8.31*)

-So there were 70 Jewish sons, plus Abimelech (half of each race)

-What did Abimelech do? Killed 69 sons

-Who escaped? Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon

V6 – What did the people of Shechem do? Assembled to make Abimelech king

Judges 9.7-15

V7 – What did Jotham do? Went to the top of Mt. Gerizim and addressed the people

-Gerizim = one of the two mountains where the people heard the law read (with Mt. Ebal) – very good acoustics

-2849 feet above sea level

V8 – The famous fable of Jotham

-Fable = make believe; parable = could have been real

-In the fable, who was asked to be king? The olive tree

V9 – The answer of the olive tree? No, I can help people better with my fruit, etc.

V10-11 – Which tree was asked next? Fig tree

-Answer? Refused – could help more with good fruit

V12-13 – Grapevine? – same answer

V14 – Who was asked next? The bramble

-Probably the buckthorn bush (a thorn bush) – not good for anything – no shade, no fruit

V15 – The bramble? Take refuge in my shade (none) – otherwise, I will consume you (a

threat)

-Today, many jobs get filled by the worst people because the good people are too busy and just don't want to be bothered (politicians, church leaders, etc.)

Judges 9.16-21

V 16 – The application of the fable

-**Conditions of the offer?** If you have dealt in truth....

V 17 – Jotham reminded them of all that his father Gideon had done

V 18 – **Had they dealt honestly?** No – They had killed the other sons of Gideon

V 19 – Then appoint Abimelech king (if done in honesty, etc.)

V 20 – **If not, what was the prayer of Jotham?** That fire would consume Abimelech

V 21 – **What did Jotham do?** Escaped – people were furious at him

Judges 9.22-25

V 22 – **Result?** Abimelech ruled over the people for three years

-There is always trouble when people place family loyalties above what is right

V 23 – Remember *Romans 12.19 – Vengeance is mine....*

-**What did God do?** Created trouble between Abimelech and the men of Shechem

V 24 – **Who was God going to punish?** Abimelech, plus the men of Shechem

-**Why?** Because they upheld Abimelech in his wickedness

V 25 – **What did the men of Shechem do?** Set up an ambush for Abimelech and robbed people

-This would have been a very embarrassing problem for Abimelech

Judges 9.26-29

V 26 – **Who became the leader at Shechem?** Gaal, son of Ebed

-v 30 and v 41 indicate that Abimelech had appointed Zebul as the leader over Shechem

-But the people rebelled and took Gaal as their leader

V 27 – **What did the men of Shechem do?** Made wine; had a great feast and celebration

V 29 – Hamor

-This is not the same as Hamor, the father of Shechem, who raped Dinah, the daughter of Jacob – *Gen 34.2*) – this is 400 years later

-So things were really getting wild in Shechem

V 29 – An open challenge from Gaal to Abimelech

Judges 9.30-33

V 30 – **Who got upset?** Zebul (Abimelech's appointed leader)

V 31-32 – **Message of Zebul to Abimelech?** Open rebellion here – attack the city early in the morning

Judges 9.34-41

V 34 – Abimelech divided his men into 4 groups

V 35 – Gaal was at the gate that morning

V 36 – Gaal = "The people are coming from everywhere"
-Zebul – "You're just imaging things (just shadows of the mountain)"

V 37 – "No, the people were coming down the mountains"

V 38 – Zebul = "Where's your bragging now?"

V 39 – Battle between Abimelech and Gaal

V 40-41 – **Result of the battle?** Gaal was defeated and driven out

Judges 9.42-45

V 42 – Abimelech was not satisfied with just defeating Gaal

V 43 – **Whom did he attack next?** The men of Shechem who were going into the fields to work

V 44 – They sealed off the gates of the city and would not let the men back in

V 45 – **Result of the battle?** The city was defeated, the men killed, and Abimelech sowed salt in the city (so that nothing would grow there again)

Judges 9.46-49

V 46 – **Where were the leaders of Shechem?** In the temple of the pagan god El-Berith

V 47 – The tower apparently was a separate fortification for the safety of the people of Shechem

V 48 – **What did Abimelech do?** Got all of his people to cut down trees

V 49 – **Reason for the trees?** Placed them on the tower and set it on fire

-About 1000 men and women were burned to death

-Notice the intense violence in Abimelech's personality

Judges 9.50-57

V 50 – Abimelech attacked the city of Thebez (12 miles north of Shechem) – they had been in a conspiracy with Shechem

V 51 – **Where were the people of Thebez hiding?** In a very strong tower

V 52 – **What did Abimelech plan to do?** Burn it just as he had Shechem

V 53 - **But what happened?** A woman threw a millstone from the tower – Abimelech's head was crushed

V 54 – **Abimelech reaction?** Asked his armor bearer to kill him (suicide)

V 55 – People went home after Abimelech died

V 56-57 – **Reason for this violent death?** God had carried out revenge against Abimelech

Lessons from this chapter:

1. Vengeance belongs to God
2. *Num. 32.23* – *Be sure – your sin will find you out* – Jotham's curse had been carried out

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