

Judges Chapter 9

- This is the longest and saddest chapter in the book of Judges.
- We're introduced to Abimelech at the end of chapter **8:30-35**.

V: 1-6 (**Map**) Abimelech, the son of Gideon's concubine in Shechem, a Canaanite woman – probably one of many concubines.

- Gideon was a good man, but like many good men he had his flaws:
- Had Gideon been content with just one wife, as the Bible advocates – as is demonstrated by Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 – or if he had just been faithful to his “many wives” through which he'd had 70 sons + probably many daughters – we wouldn't be reading this tragic story.
- Abimelech goes to his mother's brethren and begins to sow seeds of discord and dissension – seeking to supplant his many brothers.

V: 2 Which is better? 1. For 70 to rule over you, or 2. For 1 person to rule over you – notice that Abimelech only offers 2 options, obviously slanted in his favor.

- Abimelech doesn't speak of the 3rd option which was Gideon's first option: that God would rule over them – Gideon had already said that neither he nor his sons, nor his son's sons would be king, but that God would be their King.
- Don't forget, I am your brother... ½ Canaanite – VS: Jewish.

Proverbs 6:16-19 “¹⁶These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: ¹⁷A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, ¹⁹a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

- The people were convinced, their hearts were inclined to murder – which means we know the author behind this evil plan.

John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him...”

- The people commissioned him with 70 pieces of silver, one for each son – out of the house of Baalberith.
- He killed all of his 70 brethren except for one – Jotham the youngest who had hidden himself.
- How could this happen?

Romans 3:15-18 “¹⁵Their feet are swift to shed blood: ¹⁶destruction and misery are in their ways: ¹⁷And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

- Jotham = “Jehovah is perfect” Different than the oldest, first born son of Gideon who was Jether (**Judges 8:20**) which means “Abundance”.
- Jether dies along with all the other sons of Gideon except for Jotham.
- Had Jether been obedient to his fathers command to kill the Midianite kings he would have avenged his family and upheld the law, he also would have brought honor to himself for the rest of his life – he would have gained a reputation – and it is likely that Abimelech would not have been able to challenge him let alone kill him – but he was disobedient and it may have cost him his life.
- The men of Shechem and Millo make Abimelech their king, actually king over Israel. (V: 22)

V: 7-21 Jotham – who is not a child goes to the top of Mt. Gerizim and begins to mock Abimelech and the men of Shechem below:

- This is the first parable of the Bible:
- The olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine are all honorable and fruitful trees who refused the request of the forest, the multitude, the nation.

V: 13 The fruit of the vine that cheereth God and man is referring to the drink offerings made to God.

- They finally came to the lowly and fruitless bramble bush – who spoke great things, boastful things – worthless things.
- If you have done rightly and rewarded Jerubbaal / Gideon according to his works then be at peace, but if you have done wrongly – as is obviously the case then may you all be devoured by fire.
- (**Map**) Then Jotham fled to the south into Judah to the city of Beer.
- The location of Beer is not certain but it was in the general area – near the city of Arad.

Pictures

1.	Sunrise in Arad	2.	Palm / oasis
3.	looking East to Dead Sea	4.	Looking West back onto Arad.

- Jotham went from being a prince in a fruitful place to being probably a nobody in a desolate place by comparison.

V: 22-24 God intervenes – and sends an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.

1 Samuel 11:6 God sends a spirit of jealousy upon king Saul.
Isaiah 19:14 God sends a perverse spirit into Egypt.

- The same as God confirming or hardening Pharaoh's heart when Pharaoh had gone too far, that point of no return.
- Specifically because of the cruel manner in which he had dealt with Gideon's family.

Galatians 6:7-8 ⁷“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Romans 12:19 “... vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

V: 25 They set an ambush for Abimelech but got distracted and started robbing people instead – speaks to the kind of people being used here.

V: 26 Gaal = “Abhorrence” – “Dung Beetle”.

Jeremiah 17:5 “Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.”

Isaiah 30:1 “Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of My spirit, that they may add sin to sin:”

V: 27-29 The time of the harvest, gathering the grapes, drinking – entering into the house of their god.

- They ate, and drank – celebrated – and cursed Abimelech with big words, and challenged him.
- Gaal is doing the same that Abimelech did, big talk; “if I was in charge... things would be different...”

V: 30-33 Zebul: (Exalted, Prince) hears of all this and informs Abimelech that there is rebellion in the making, you need to come and deal with it.

V: 34-40 Abimelech come up against Shechem, not just Gaal.

- Zebul is loyal to Abimelech and tries to play it off – Gaal and his men go out and are defeated by Abimelech.
- Zebul asks where is that big mouth now?

V: 41-45 Zebul kicks Gaal and his supporters out of the city, who are then conquered by Abimelech, but Abimelech goes on to conquer the city and kills its inhabitants, destroying the city.

V: 46-49 As the city was being conquered and destroyed many of the inhabitants ran to the tower connected to the temple of "Baal-Bereth" – one of the Canaanite deity's that the children of Israel began to worship.

- Abimelech began to gather firewood and had everyone else do so – then they burned the tower with about 1,000 men and women inside, killing them all.

V: 50-55 ([Map](#)) Abimelech moves onto Thebez which is modern day Tubas.

- In taking the city and coming against its tower Abimelech is struck by a millstone severely wounding him, but at his request so as not to be killed by a woman, he has his servant kill him.
- Abimelech wanted to be king so God used a woman to crown him...
- As Abimelech dies it takes the steam out of his army and they go home..

V: 56-57 God rendered unto Abimelech according to his deeds.

- The prophesy of Jotham that he gave from on top of Mt. Gerezim came true upon Abimelech and the city of Shechem.
- Thus ends the complete story with Gideon, a tragic end.

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- Had Gideon not had 70 sons through his many wives – and concubines things might have ended better.
 - Had Gideon taught his son the need for obedience and for courage – things might have ended better.
 - Had the people been content to allow God to rule over them – things would have been better.

Psalm 33:12 "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance."

Judges Chapter 10

V: 1-2 Tola = “Crimson Worm” dwelt in Shamir / Samaria.

- (Map) Arose to “defend” Israel as opposed to ruling Israel.
- He judged Israel 23 years then died and was buried.

V: 3-5 Jair – “Jah Shines Forth” from Gilead (Map)

- Judged Israel 22 years.
- 30 sons – who probably helped in rule over the cities of Gilead.

V: 6-9 After a short break in the usual pattern, Israel again does evil in the sight of the Lord.

Proverbs 14:34 “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

- A Combined 45 years of peace and prosperity – and again into an evil and idolatrous lifestyle of sin.
- Revival generation: Chuck Colson, Chuck Smith, Dave Hunt, Damien Kyle...

Deuteronomy 8:10-14 ¹⁰“When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee. ¹¹Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day: ¹²Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; ¹³and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; ¹⁴then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;”

- We have to always be on our guard particularly in our prosperity we don’t do the same thing.

Proverbs 30:8-9 ⁸“Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; ⁹lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”

- The essence of idolatry is to enjoy the blessing and the gifts, but to deny the giver of those gifts.

- 18 years they were vexed and oppressed on the East side of the Jordan in Gilead.
- Then it spilled over into Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim.

V: 10-14 After 18 years they cried unto the Lord! That means that in their adversity they didn't want to turn to the Lord – because they are a stubborn and stiffnecked people.

- They finally came to a place of acknowledging God, admitting that they had forsaken the true and living God for Baal.
- God then recites their history of deliverance from the various peoples that had oppressed them. Seven nations are listed.
- “Yet after all this you have forsaken Me” – *“so I will deliver you no more...”*
- How is God speaking to them? Through a prophet? Directly? We don't know.
- Cry out to your gods, the ones you've served and sacrificed to all this time, see if they can help you...

V: 15-18 The children of Israel continue to cry out to God and confess their sins, they didn't try to justify themselves or rationalize, then they simply fall upon His mercy.

- Smart move – God is merciful.

Deuteronomy 4:31 “For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them.”

- They showed true repentance, putting away the strange gods from among them and began to serve the Lord.
- God responds; His soul was grieved for their condition.
- The two armies get set up and seemingly are prepared for battle...
- To be continued next week...