

JUDGES: LESSON 7

VII. THE RISE AND FALL OF ABIMELECH (Chapter 9)

- A. Abimelech's usurpation (9:1-6)
1. Abimelech seeks leadership by appealing to men of Shechem as brother.
 - a. Appeal: better that one should rule than 70 of the other sons of Jerubbaal (Gideon)
 2. Men give Abimelech 70 pieces of silver from house of their god.
 3. Abimelech slays all but one of his brothers in father's house in Ophrah.
 - a. Jotham, the youngest, hides.
 4. Abimelech made king in Shechem
- B. Jotham's Fable (9:7-21)
1. Jotham speaks to men of Shechem from mount Gerizim.
 2. Trees seek for king.
 - a. olive tree sought – but why leave fatness (oil)?
 - b. Fig tree sought – but why leave sweetness (fruit)?
 - c. Vine sought – but why leave that which gives cheer (new wine)?
 - d. Bramble sought
 - (1). If sought in upright manner, then he would offer shade.
 - (2). If not, devouring fire will issue and destroy the strongholds of Lebanon.
 3. Application: Abimelech not selected uprightly – will become devouring fire for people and fire from men of Shechem will devour Abimelech.
 4. Jotham runs away in fear to Beer and dwells there.
- C. Abimelech's Downfall (9:22-57)
1. God sends evil spirit between men of Shechem and Abimelech.
 2. Gaal gains the trust of men of Shechem and challenges Abimelech and his army to fight.
 3. Zebul's crafty informing allows Abimelech to gain victory over Gaal.
 4. Abimelech destroys city of Shechem – about 1,000 men and women die in tower in Shechem by fire.
 5. Abimelech encamps against and takes city of Thebez.
 6. A woman of Thebez throws mill stone from tower and breaks the skull of Abimelech.
 - a. Abimelech asks armor bearer to kill him.
 - b. God requites the wickedness of Abimelech and men of Shechem.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Shechem the place for Abimelech to gain leadership?

2. What was the purpose of giving the 70 pieces of silver?
3. What was the character of the men hired to follow Abimelech?
4. What happened to the sons of Jerubbaal (Gideon)?
5. Who all made Abimelech king?
How long did he rule in Israel?
6. Was Jotham's story a parable or a fable? Explain.
7. What does the bramble being sought as ruler, but not in truth, have to do with Abimelech and Gideon?
8. Explain what did God do to cause friction between Abimelech and the men of Shechem?
9. In whom did the men of Shechem soon place their confidence?
How do you think this one gained the people's trust?
10. Who was the ruler of the city and Abimelech's officer?
How did his crafty informing help Abimelech gain a victory?
11. What did Abimelech do to the city of Shechem?
12. How many died in the tower of Shechem?
How does this event fit well with Jotham's story?
13. What happened to Abimelech when he was trying to burn the tower in the city of Thebez?
14. Did Abimelech gain his purpose in his request of his armor bearer?
15. Through these deadly events God was actually doing what?