

“Abimelech”

Judges 9

Scripture Ref: Judg 8:30-32; 1 Sam 16:14; James 4:7-8; Eph 6:14-17;
Prov 6:16-19

A tale of pride, treachery, and God’s repayment of wickedness!

Judg 8:30-32

*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. (My father is the king)*

Gideon’s Legacy

1. **Gideon lived in Ophrah, but had a woman in Shechem – 20 miles south**
2. **“Many wives” – this may have been the way of the world, but it was not the way of the Lord**
 - a. **Some people think that because a man of God might have many wives, that God is OK with the practice.**
 - b. **NO SO! Many men of God have areas of their lives that are not aligned with the Lord, and it does not mean that God approves.**
 - c. **When a man of God – or any Christian – is not willing to align their lives with the Lord, there are always consequences – as there are here!**

Abimelech’s Conspiracy

9:1 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

3. **This particular wife – we know nothing about her, not even her name, but we get some clues to this person that Gideon had a relationship with, and the place where she dwelled.**

Bad Sign #1

4. **The clan she came from were apparently easily swayed into forming a revolution of sort – being willing to back Abimelech in his little insurrection**

- a. They were not backing him because they felt it was from the Lord, or even the right thing to do
- b. They backed him because they were related, and that would mean that they would fare well under his kingdom.
 - i. This is almost a “Working class”, Gideon’s servant clan, vs “Royal Class”, Gideon’s children from his “proper” wives.
- c. This tells me something about the clan in general – they are self-seeking, rather than “God seeking”

Bad Sign #2

5. Another indication is Abimelech himself. How was this young man raised?
 - a. The fact that he would conspire to take the kingdom for himself tells me something of his heart – HE is self-seeking.

Bad Sign #3

6. They were not worshipers of God – but of Baal – see where their seed-money comes from.

Bad Sign #4

7. This was not even close to being ordained by God...
 - a. God had not called Abimelech, had not anointed him with His spirit (like the other judges), nor appointed him as king
 - b. This was 100% Abimelech!

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.

The Problem with Relationships

8. Now there no disputing the nature of this man Abimelech – a man that would kill his 68 of his half-brothers.
 - a. But I think the bigger picture is the fact that Gideon started all of this with his relationship with concubine from Shechem.
 - b. TRUTH – when we start a relationship with someone, we should be aware of the long-term implications of that relationship.
 - c. We should always be seeking the Lord – should I enter into a relationship with this person?
9. For instance – a guy and girl meet – have a little fling – what happens if she gets pregnant?

- a. **Are you willing to have a 18 year relationship with this person? Because if there is a child – that’s what you are getting into.**
- b. **How will that child be raised? What values will he instilled in them?**

10. You can apply this to so many decisions in our lives – what are the long-term implications if I take this job? If I move to this place? If I marry this guy or girl?

The Warning of Jothan

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!' 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!'

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.

11. Notice – no repentance! This was an opportunity for the men of Shechem to make things right – and missing it would cost them dearly.

Abimelech Get's Owned by God

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.

12. Would God send a “ill spirit?” We have a similar situation with Saul,

1 Sam 16:14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him.

- a. **In both cases, the men were willfully rebellious against God – so God was not “with them”**
- b. **In both cases, the linguistics favor more of a “permission” – that God allowed the spirit to being to influence the person.**
- c. **... in effect, we have a situation where the person is rebellious against God, which opens the door for satanic influence in that persons life.**

13. We can see similar situation today – the Christian is totally victorious over Satan – the bible is clear that if we submit to the Lord and resist the devil, he will flee

James 4:7-8 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

***The Armor of God
Eph 6:14-17***

- *girded your waist with truth*
 - *breastplate of righteousness*
 - *shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace*
 - *shield of faith*
 - *helmet of salvation*
 - *sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*
- a. **But when a Christian drifts away from God, no longer keeping the armor of God intact – it allows the enemy to get a foothold, to move in.**
 - b. **Suddenly that person is now being influenced by other spirits vs the Holy Spirit - doing things that are totally out of the character of their faith.**

14. So we have a plan – born in sin, funded by pagan money, achieved through murder – it's no surprise that things went south.
- a. You have to be careful who you make as your leader...
 - b. A person who will use treachery and violence when it suits them, will one day turn those things against you.
 - c. As well, people who support a person when it suits them, will one day turn against that person when it suits them!

Prov 6:16-19

*16 These six things the LORD hates,
Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look,
A lying tongue,
Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies,
And one who sows discord among brethren.*

15. So a new guy – a loudmouth names Gaal, comes in and talks a tough talk – and of course – the men throw their lot in with him!
- a. And feeling confident – he calls out Abimelech

Gaal – the Loudmouth God Used

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!"

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 Wins – But Does He?

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."

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.

16. Abimelech drove Gaal and his men back into the city, but Zebul made them leave –

- a. **Perhaps because Gaal's men had been routed, the other men in the city decided to turn against Gaal, so he had to leave – right into the hands of Abimelech.**
- b. **But is not done yet...**

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**.

17. The site of Shechem, now Tell Balatah, has been excavated several times

- a. **They found the pillar that Abimelech was crowned at**
- b. **And abundant evidence was found throughout the site that a violent destruction had occurred at the time of Abimelech**

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." 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**.

18. Fulfillment of Jotham's prophecy – they died by fire.

a. For some reason Abimelech moves on the Thebez

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. 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.

19. Abimelech was worried about his legacy, but in fact the true story help up, as 400 years later the account is remembered by Joab, King David's commander (2 Sam 11)

Lessons From Abimelech

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.

20. So looking at this account – many people were affected by the sin of Abimelech

- a. His brothers paid, as did their mothers and sisters**
- b. The men and women of Shechem paid**
- c. Abimelech paid**
- d. In the course of 3-4 years, so much death and destruction...**

21. What do we learn from this?

- a. The plans of man are not the plans of the Lord**
 - i. When we divorce ourselves from the Lord's truth and guidance, we are asking for trouble!**
- b. Be careful who you yoke yourself with –**
 - i. people tend to compromise when it comes to intimate relationships**
 - ii. Getting involved with someone because they are “hot” or whatever**
 - iii. And not thinking – “Is this a person I would want to have a long-term relationship with?”**
- c. Be careful who you choose to be your leader (that is very relevant in the next few months!)**
- d. Be careful what you go along with**
- e. Be careful to always act in truth and sincerity – as in God's truth, and with a sincere heart submitted to God**

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