

JUDGES CHAPTER 9

JUDGES FEATURED IN THIS CHAPTER

OTHNIEL

EHUD

SHAMGAR

DEBORAH

GIDEON

ABIMELECH

TOLA

JAIR

JEPHTHAH

IBZAN

ELON

ABDON

SAMSON

ELI

SAMUEL

WHEN

- Most scholars place the period of the Judges between 1450 B.C. and 1000 B.C.
- The precise dates are still debated.
- The events of Judges 9 occurred within one generation of Gideon overthrowing the Midianites (Judges 7-8).

WHERE

- Gideon's sons lived near Ophrah (not on the map), which was in the territory of Manasseh.
- Jotham addressed the men of Shechem from Mount Gerizim.
- Abimelech was killed in Thebez.



CHARACTERS

- **Gideon** - The 5th Judge of Israel. God used him to free Israel from the oppression of the Midianites. He was given the name "Jerubbaal" which means "Let Baal contend against him" (6:32).
- **Abimelech** - The son of Gideon with his concubine. He is usually counted as the 6th judge of Israel, although some dispute his judgeship because he was not a godly man.
- **Jotham** - The youngest son of Gideon.
- **Gaal** - A man of Shechem who rebelled against Abimelech's rule.

OUTLINE

- ABIMELECH MADE KING IN SHECHEM (9:1-6):
 - + Abimelech, the son of Gideon, went to his mother's relative in Shechem and convinced them to make him their king.
 - + The men of Shechem gave him 70 pieces of silver with which he hired "reckless" men to kill all 70 of his brothers (the sons of Gideon).
 - + Only Jotham, Gideon's youngest son, managed to escape.
- JOTHAM'S PARABLE OF THE TREES (9:7-21):
 - + When Jotham learned the men of Shechem made Abimelech their king, he went to the top of Mount Gerizim and spoke a parable to them.
 - + The parable was about the trees trying to find a king.
 - + They went to the olive tree and asked him to be their king, but the olive tree didn't want to give up olive production to become king.
 - + They went to the fig tree, but the fig tree responded similarly.
 - + They went to the grape vine, but the grape vine didn't want to be king either.
 - + Finally, they went to the thorn bush, and the worthless bush accepted the job.
 - + Jotham compared the actions of Shechem to the actions of the trees.
 - + The house of Gideon had been full of honorable men, but the men of Shechem selected the worthless brother to lead them.
- SHECHEM IS DESTROYED AND ABIMELECH IS KILLED (9:22-57):
 - + Abimelech ruled Israel for 3 years, but God sent an evil spirit to trouble the relationship between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.
 - + The men of Shechem shifted their allegiance from Abimelech to a new man in town, Gaal the son of Ebed.
 - + Gaal plotted to overthrow Abimelech and to make himself king, but his plot was leaked to Abimelech.
 - + Abimelech set up an ambush around Shechem during the night.
 - + When the men of the city woke up, Abimelech's men attacked. Gaal fought against him but lost.
 - + The next day, Abimelech attacked the city again. He destroyed everything and sowed the city with salt.
 - + The last stronghold of the city was known as the Tower of Shechem, and the leaders retreated there as a last resort.
 - + Abimelech set the tower on fire and killed the 1,000 men and women inside.
 - + He then fought against the city of Thebez, which also had a tower.
 - + A woman in the tower threw a millstone on him and crushed his skull.
 - + As he was dying, he asked his servant to kill him with a sword so he wouldn't be remembered as having been killed by a woman.
 - + When the men of Israel learned Abimelech was dead, they stopped fighting and returned to their homes.
 - + "Thus God returned the evil of Abimelech, which he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers" (9:56).

APPLICATION

- Do not be sloppy, desperate, or impatient when selecting leaders because the outcome can be devastating.
- This chapter is a case study in bad leadership.
- When bad leaders are given control, it's difficult to get them out of leadership.
- This is an important lesson for the church, and I suspect it's part of the reason God's qualifications for elders is so high.
- It is better to wait patiently for qualified men than to appoint a thorn bush as your king.

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