

## JUDGES CHAPTER 9

<sup>1</sup> And Abimelech son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brothers; and he spoke to them and to all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak in the ears of all the men of Shechem, saying, 'Which is better for you, that seventy men, even all the sons of Jerubbaal, should reign over you, or that one man should reign over you?' And remember that I am your own flesh and bone." <sup>3</sup> And his mother's brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the ears of all the men of Shechem, and their heart turned after Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother." <sup>4</sup> And they gave him seventy *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baal-Berith; and Abimelech hired for himself worthless and cowardly men, and they went after him. <sup>5</sup> And he went to the house of his father to Ephratha, and killed his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men upon one stone; but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, for he hid himself. <sup>6</sup> And all the men of Shechem, and all the house of Beth Millo were gathered together, and they went and made Abimelech king by the Oak of Sedition, which was at Shechem.

<sup>7</sup> And it was reported to Jotham, and he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and wept, and said to them, "Hear me, you men of Sicima, and God shall hear you. <sup>8</sup> The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them; and they said to the olive, 'Reign over us.' <sup>9</sup> But the olives said to them, 'Shall I leave my fatness, with which men shall glorify God, and go to be promoted over the trees?' <sup>10</sup> And the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come, reign over us.' <sup>11</sup> But the fig tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruits, and go to be promoted over the trees?' <sup>12</sup> And the trees said to the vine, 'Come, reign over us.' <sup>13</sup> And the vine said to them, 'Shall I leave my wine that cheers God and men, and go to be promoted over the trees?' <sup>14</sup> Then all the trees said to the bramble, 'Come, and reign over us.' <sup>15</sup> And the bramble said to the trees, 'If in truth you anoint me to reign over you, come, stand under my shadow; and if not, let fire come out from me and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

<sup>16</sup> "And now, if you have done it in truth and integrity, and have made Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal, and with his house, and if you have done to him according to the reward of his hand, <sup>17</sup> as my father fought for you, and put his life in jeopardy, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; <sup>18</sup> and you have risen up this day against the house of my father, and have slain his sons, seventy men, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech the son of his bondwoman king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother: <sup>19</sup> if then you have done truly and faithfully with Jerubbaal, and with his house this day, *then* rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice over you. <sup>20</sup> But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Beth Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from the house of Beth Millo, and devour Abimelech." <sup>21</sup> And Jotham fled and ran away, and went as far as Beer, and dwelt there out of the way of his brother Abimelech.

<sup>22</sup> And Abimelech reigned over Israel three years. <sup>23</sup> And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem

dealt treacherously with the house of Abimelech, <sup>24</sup> to bring the injury done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, and to lay their blood upon their brother Abimelech, who killed them, and upon the men of Shechem, because they strengthened his hands to slay his brothers. <sup>25</sup> And the men of Shechem set men in ambush against him on the top of the mountains, and robbed everyone who passed by them on the road. And it was reported to Abimelech the king.

<sup>26</sup> And Gaal son of Ebed came, and his brothers, and passed by Shechem, and the men of Shechem trusted in him. <sup>27</sup> And they went out into the field, and gathered their grapes, and trod them, and made merry; and they brought *the grapes* into the house of their god, and ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech. <sup>28</sup> And Gaal the son of Jobel said, "Who is Abimelech, and who is the son of Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his steward, his servant with the son of Hamor the father of Shechem? And why should we serve him? <sup>29</sup> If only this people were under my hand! Then would I remove Abimelech, and I would say to him, 'Multiply your host, and come out.'"

<sup>30</sup> And Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, and he was very angry. <sup>31</sup> And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem; and behold, they have besieged the city against you. <sup>32</sup> And now rise up by night, you and the people with you, and lay wait in the field. <sup>33</sup> And it shall come to pass in the morning at sunrise, *that* you shall rise up early and draw toward the city; and behold, he and the people with him will come forth against you, and you shall do to him according to your power."

<sup>34</sup> And Abimelech and all the people with him rose up by night, and formed an ambush against Shechem in four companies. <sup>35</sup> And Gaal the son of Ebed went forth, and stood by the door of the gate of the city. And Abimelech and the people with him rose up from the ambush. <sup>36</sup> And Gaal the son of Ebed saw the people, and said to Zebul, "Behold, a people comes down from the top of the mountains." And Zebul said to him, "You see the shadow of the mountains as men." <sup>37</sup> And Gaal continued to speak and said, "Behold, a people comes down westward from the part bordering on the middle of the land, and another company comes by the way of Diviners' Terebinth Tree." <sup>38</sup> And Zebul said to him, "And where is your mouth as you spoke, Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? Is not this the people whom you despised? Go forth now, and set the battle in array against him." <sup>39</sup> And Gaal went forth before the men of Shechem, and set the battle in array against Abimelech. <sup>40</sup> And Abimelech pursued him, and he fled from before him; and many fell down slain as far as the door of the gate. <sup>41</sup> And Abimelech entered into Aruma, and Zebul cast out Gaal and his brothers, so that they should not dwell in Shechem.

<sup>42</sup> And it came to pass on the second day that the people went out into the field, and one brought word to Abimelech. <sup>43</sup> And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and formed an ambush in the field. And he looked, and behold, the people went forth out of the city, and he rose up against them, and struck them. <sup>44</sup> And Abimelech and the chiefs of companies that were with him rushed forward, and stood by the door of the gate of the city; and the two *other* companies rushed forward upon all that were in the field, and struck them. <sup>45</sup> And Abimelech fought against the city all that day, and took the

city, and killed the people that were in it, and destroyed the city, and sowed it with salt.

<sup>46</sup> And all the men of the tower of Shechem heard, and came to the gathering of Bethel-Berith. <sup>47</sup> And it was reported to Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. <sup>48</sup> And Abimelech went up to the mount of Zalmon, and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a branch of a tree, and took it, and laid it on his shoulders; and said to the people that were with him, "What you see me doing, do quickly as I do." <sup>49</sup> And every man likewise cut down a branch, and went after Abimelech, and laid them against the place of gathering, and burned the place of gathering over them with fire. And they died, even all the men of the tower of Sicima, about a thousand men and women.

<sup>50</sup> And Abimelech went out of Bethel-Berith, and encamped against Thebes, and took it. <sup>51</sup> And there was a strong tower in the midst of the city; and all the men and the women of the city fled there, and shut *the door* behind them, and went up on the roof of the tower. <sup>52</sup> And Abimelech drew near to the tower, and they besieged it; and Abimelech drew near to the door of the tower to burn it with fire. <sup>53</sup> And a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon the head of Abimelech, and broke his skull. <sup>54</sup> And he cried out quickly to the young man his armor bearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword, and kill me, lest at any time they should say, 'A woman killed him.'" And his young man thrust him through and he died. <sup>55</sup> And the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, and they went each to his place.

<sup>56</sup> So God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did against his father, in slaying his seventy brothers. <sup>57</sup> And all the wickedness of the men of Shechem God repaid upon their heads; and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal came upon them.