

Judges 9 Abimelech

v1-6 Remember that Gideon had many sons from many wives (8:30-31). Abimelech's plan, presented to *his mother's* family elevating that part of the family, is accepted and almost completely accomplished, except that Jotham escapes.

Who was Jerubbaal?

Why was Shechem an important city in Israel? (Josh. 24:25-26)

What was the pillar in Shechem intended to remind the people of? (see Joshua 24:26-27)

Why was Shechem important at this time? (notice 8:33)

What does verse 4 tell us about this part of Gideon's family?

v7-21 Jotham's parable and warning

Jotham's parable shows that Israel had invited others to be king over them. We know they invited Gideon (8:22). What did their offer tell us about Israel and of what did Gideon's response remind Israel (8:23)?

What did Jotham say in verse 7, which shows that Israel's invitation was sinful?

v22-57 God repays Abimelech and the men of Shechem

v22-24 This "spirit" may not be a spiritual being but may be describing God "giving them over to" the path they have chosen, as also described in Romans 1:24, 26 or Exodus 7:3.

v25-29 Shechemites choose to follow Gaal, who is not an Israelite, so Gaal challenges Abimelech.

If Gaal gains rule in Shechem, what could easily happen throughout the rest of Israel?

v30-33 Zebual sends a message to Abimelech with a plan to get rid of Gaal

v34-41 Gaal is defeated but at least some of the people of Shechem are still against Abimelech (v23)

v42-55 Abimelech destroys Shechem but dies at Thebez

Read Proverbs 3:33-35; 11:17-21 and comment on how God repaid Abimelech and the Shechemites.

Application Questions

1. What is a common problem seen in polygamous families (like Gideon, Jacob, etc.)?
2. Polygamy is currently, technically, illegal in America, but "no-fault divorce" creates a polygamy-like situation because a man has several women and often women with several children—the primary difference being that he only lives with one woman at a time. What problems that are present in classic polygamy are also present in families where a man has several wives but only accepts one at a time?
3. Though Jesus' law regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage is viewed as "harsh" and "strict" because our society has moved so far away from it, discuss the benefits Jesus' law brings to each family and society.

4. Generations before Israel asked Samuel to appoint a king “like all the nations,” they were already dissatisfied with God’s plan and imitating “all the nations” in areas beside civil leadership (worship 6:25, family 3:6, economic development 1:28, and no doubt in other routines of life unrecorded). Name some areas where today we may be tempted to become dissatisfied with God’s plan, strengthening the temptation to borrow ideas from other sources for what pleases us.

5. What passages and teachings help (re)train our thinking so we are less likely to become dissatisfied with any of God’s plans, revelation?