

Judges 9: The Rise and Fall of Abimelech

Getting started: Give an example from history or from the news in which someone received their just desserts for harm they brought others.

Read 9:1-6 **Abimelech's rise to power**

1. Who is Abimelech (8:31)? What request did he seek from the men of Shechem? What did they give to Abimelech? (vv. 1-4)
2. What did he do with the money he received? Who escaped the slaughter? What did the men do with Abimelech (vv. 5-6).

Read 9:7-21 **Jotham's parable**

3. Briefly explain the parable that Jotham told (9:7-15). What did the bramble represent? What foreboding message did it hold for the men of Shechem? (vv. 16-20)

Read 9:22-49 **Abimelech turns on Shechem**

4. What happened between Abimelech and the men of Shechem after three years? Who did the men of Shechem pick to rule over them? What did he encourage the men of Shechem to do? (vv. 22-28)
5. What did Gaal offer to do in order to rule Shechem? (v. 29) What advice did Zebul send to Abimelech? (v. 30-34)

6. When Gaal went out of the gates the next day, what did he see? (vv. 35-37) What did Zebul encourage Gaal to do? (v. 38-39)
7. What happened to Gaal and his men? What happened to the city of Shechem? (vv. 42-45) What did Abimelech do the city in a final act of defiance? (v. 45)
8. Where did the men of Shechem go to escape Abimelech? What did Abimelech ask his men to do? What ironic twist on Jotham's parable brought about their deaths (vv. 46-49)

Read 9:50-57 **Justice on Abimelech**

9. Where did Abimelech turn next to fight? (vv. 5-6) Where did the people hide themselves? (v. 7) What was Abimelech hoping to do? (vv. 50-52)
10. How did justice come to Abimelech? (v. 53) What happened to his army following his death? (vv. 53-55) How was Jotham's parable and curse fulfilled? (vv. 56-57)

Going Deeper

11. How had Abimelech act wickedly? How had the men of Shechem act wickedly? How did God repay their conspiracy against the house of Gideon (Jerubbaal)? What do the Scriptures say about our accountability to God for our actions toward men? (Proverbs 15:3; 11:31;; Matthew 12:36; Ecclesiastes 12:14)