

The Fall of Abimelech



From the context of Judges at this time ...

- In chapter 6, God had sent a prophet to the people.
- His message ... “You have disobeyed Me (Lord)”
- He raises up Gideon who destroys the Baal altars and Asherah poles and delivers the people from Midian
- But from that point, we have entered into this time of the judges where there is no repentance from the people
- God has had enough
- Sometimes God’s judgment comes in the form of divine withdrawal
- He is removing His hand of restraint away and giving Israel over to their own sin
- But in no way, is He absent or uninvolved
- God is intricately involved in carrying out His judgments

From last week ...

- Abimelech started a political campaign at the grassroots level (his family)
- His campaign slogan “I am your bone and your flesh.”
- He then uses the 70 pieces of silver to buy himself a mob force (“worthless and reckless fellows”) to strong arm his way into power
- He kills 70 of his siblings on the altar of the altar of Baal
- The men of Shechem make Abimelech ruler over the people
- In the midst of this, Jotham, Abimelech’s youngest brother provides a prophetic inauguration speech

Judges 9:19–20 (NASB95) — 19 if then you have dealt in truth and integrity with Jerubbaal and his house this day, rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. 20 “But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and consume the men of Shechem and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and from Beth-millo, and consume Abimelech.”

The Lord causes strife (22-24)

- Abimelech was allowed to rule for three years
- Implied that his reign had reached far beyond Shechem to then have control over all of Israel
- He, through his threats and violence had become a powerful leader
- But God was not impressed

“(The sending of the evil spirit) shows God’s complete sovereignty over it: even an evil spirit is made to serve his purpose of punishing wrongdoers. The effect of sending an evil spirit in this case was to cause the pact between Abimelech and the rulers of Shechem (a pact that was evil in itself) to break down, destroying Abimelech’s power base and making his position untenable. (Webb)

Shechem's plan for power (25)

- The men of Shechem lie in wait for Abimelech to overtake him
- Rob the people who pass by

Question: What would this cause the people to think about Abimelech?

Gaal and Shechem conspire (25-29)

- Out of nowhere Gaal son of Ebed, appears onto the scene
- Claims to be a descendant of Hamor who were the founding people of Shechem
- Highly Influential
- People follow him at once

“Grape harvest was a naturally joyous time and all the more so when the harvesters gathered for a happy hour at Baal-berith’s temple. Gaal found that a little Shechem Lite went a long way. He denounced Abimelech and offered to lead a revolt against him. He had lots of support there in Baal’s bar.” (Davis)

Abimelech retaliates (30-49)

- A. Against Gaal and his followers (30-40)**
- B. Against the people of Shechem (41-45)**
- C. Against the leaders of Shechem (46-49)**

The fall of Abimelech (50-55)

- A “certain” woman, unnamed
- The upper millstone is the smaller stone top used to grind grains
- They could range in size based on the size of the lower millstone (or base).
- The indication here is that this millstone is small enough to where this one, unnamed woman can hurl it over the side of the tower
- Abimelech calls his armor bearer to kill him

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

The Quiteness of God's judgement

God's judgment works so gradually here; there is no smell of fire and brimstone; Sinia is not shaking with smoke and thunder. Sometimes God's judgment is like that; it works so silently and unobserved. We need to beware of thinking that God avenges only when He makes a racket." (Davis)

The Irony of God's judgement- "The One Stone"

The certainty of God's judgment

The grace of God's judgment