

## Episode #527 Judges 9 Part 1 – The Usurper Abimelech

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God's works and ways.

II. We completed our consideration of the career of Gideon, the fifth judge. He rightly refused to become king, acknowledging the LORD as the true King, but made a priestly garment for his family contrary to God's commands. His judgeship overall was good, yet when he died the people of Israel failed to acknowledge all the good he had done for them.

III. Abimelech's coup. Judges 9:1-6.

- A. Verse 1. Abimelech, the son of the Jerubba'al's concubine (8:30-31) solicits help from his mother's brothers, his uncles, and all the family of his mother's father.
- B. Verse 2. Gives a false choice, as no one was suggesting seventy kings! He also implies nepotistic benefits to his home city.
- C. Verse 3. They listen to him because he is related to them.
- D. Verse 4. The men of Shechem give him funds for his scheme, and he hires empty and reckless thugs.
- E. Verse 5. He goes to his father's house at Ophrah and murders all his brothers on one stone (probably a backstop for beheading) except Jotham (meaning Jehovah is Upright) the youngest.
- F. Verse 6. Shechem and all the House of the Mound (nearby?) makes him king by the oak of the pillar. Yet what gave them the right to choose a king for the nation? This man was more a robber chieftain than a legitimate "king."

IV. Jotham's satirical fable.

- A. Verse 7. Jotham has something to say to this. Stands on Gerizim "Cutting Off," near where they were but cut off from it so they could not get at him. The mountain where they read the blessings in the time of Joshua.
- B. Verse 8. The trees want to find a king. They asked the olive tree first.
- C. Verse 9. The oil is too busy producing oil to be king.
- D. Verse 10. They go to the fig as their next choice.
- E. Verse 11. The fig tree is too busy producing fruit.
- F. Verse 12. They go to the vine as their next choice.
- G. Verse 13. The vine is too busy producing wine.
- H. Verse 14. They go to the bramble bush as their next choice.
- I. Verse 15. The bramble is ready to be king. He calls on the mighty cedars to rest in his shadow, or else fire will come out of him to devour them!
  - 1. Is this a parable? No! Nothing in this is parallel with what happened.
  - 2. This is a satirical fable. Satire only makes sense in light of a knowledge of current events. For example: Gulliver's Travels. Another great Scriptural example is II Samuel 12:1-7. Also a satire, not parallel to the events it is satirizing.
- J. Verse 16. Obviously they know that they have not done truly and sincerely! Was this how to deal with Jerubba'al's house? Is this what he deserves for saving them?
- K. Verse 17. He reminds them of what they owed Jerubba'al, delivering them from Midian when they tried to wipe them from existence!
- L. Verse 18. He states bluntly the wrong they did his family after him.

M. Verse 19. This is obviously highly sarcastic.

N. Verse 20. His curse on them. May these treacherous men destroy each other!

O. Verse 21. He flees, fearing the wrath of his wicked half-brother. He dwells in Be'er  
(A Well) on the border of Moab, so removed from Shechem.

V. The Israelites of Shechem showed no gratitude to the family of Gideon even after he rescued them from destruction at the hands of Midian. This is a common failing of human beings, "What have you done for me lately?" People will show the same ingratitude toward God as they show towards His representatives. Are we thankful to our Lord for the glorious salvation that he has provided for us?