



1. BEWARE OF THE DANGER WITHIN

Judges 9:1-6 Abimelek son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan, ²"Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood."

³ When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelek, for they said, "He is related to us." ⁴ They gave him seventy shekels^[a] of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelek used it to hire reckless scoundrels, who became his followers. ⁵ He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerub-Baal, escaped by hiding. ⁶ Then all the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo gathered beside the great tree at the pillar in Shechem to crown Abimelek king.

2. LISTEN FOR THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Judges 9:7-15 When Jotham was told about this, he climbed up on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to them, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you.

⁸ One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.'

⁹ "But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and humans are honored, to hold sway over the trees?'

¹⁰ "Next, the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and be our king.'

¹¹ "But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?'

¹² "Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come and be our king.'

¹³ "But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and humans, to hold sway over the trees?'

¹⁴ "Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come and be our king.'

¹⁵ "The thornbush said to the trees, 'If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!'

3. SIN ALWAYS HAS A PRICE

Judges 9:22-25 After Abimelek had governed Israel three years, ²³ God stirred up animosity between Abimelek and the citizens of Shechem so that they acted treacherously against Abimelek. ²⁴ God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal's seventy sons, the shedding of their blood, might be avenged on their brother Abimelek and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him murder his brothers. ²⁵ In opposition to him these citizens of Shechem set men on the hilltops to ambush and rob everyone who passed by, and this was reported to Abimelek.

Judges 9:27-29 While they were eating and drinking, they cursed Abimelek. ²⁸ Then Gaal son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelek, and why should we Shechemites be subject to him? Isn't he Jerub-Baal's son, and isn't Zebul his deputy? Serve the family of Hamor, Shechem's father! Why should we serve Abimelek? ²⁹ If only this people were under my command! Then I would get rid of him. I would say to Abimelek, 'Call out your whole army!'"

4. GOD IS ALWAYS WORKING OUT JUSTICE, WHETHER WE SEE IT OR NOT

Judges 9:51-57 Inside the city, however, was a strong tower, to which all the men and women—all the people of the city—had fled. They had locked themselves in and climbed up on the tower roof. ⁵² Abimelek went to the tower and attacked it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire, ⁵³ a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull.

⁵⁴ Hurriedly he called to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that they can't say, 'A woman killed him.'" So his servant ran him through, and he died. ⁵⁵ When the Israelites saw that Abimelek was dead, they went home.

⁵⁶ Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelek had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers. ⁵⁷ God also made the people of Shechem pay for all their wickedness. The curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal came on them.

(All Scriptures NIV unless otherwise noted.)