

## Judges Study #6: Judges 8:29-9:57

Abimelek

**Intro:** Think of a time you got something that you really wanted, but it turned out to be disastrous. What happened? Why do you think it turned out that way?

There has been a familiar sequence of events in Judges: sin, oppression, crying out, a judge raised up, victory, peace. But now, we have a complete departure from the sequence. It's a horrendous episode in Israel's history. The Lord raised up not a judge, but an anti-judge, who would make himself king. This time, God's judgment on Israel is to give them exactly what they want.

### Read Judges 8:29-9:21

- Question #1:** What was wrong – specifically, with Abimelek's rise to power? In what ways were the leaders of Shechem no better?
- Question #2:** Many characteristics and attributes are sought after in choosing a leader. How do the requirements and qualities the world normally looks for in a leader compare with that of God's?
- Question #3:** In Jotham's parable, Abimelek is characterized as a thornbush. How was this imagery significant in earlier parts of Judges (2:3, 8:7, 16) and what does this teach us?

### Read Judges 9:22-57

- Question #4:** How do we often associate the link between our success and our behavior? What caution does Judges 9:22-25 give us?
- Question #5:** How does the story of Abimelek illustrate the principle of sowing and reaping? What did he sow? What did he reap? Do you think the sowing and reaping principle applies to Christians today (Galatians 6:7)?
- Question #6:** It is important to observe that God is mentioned only at the beginning (vv. 23-34) and at the end (vv. 56-57). Though it may seem that God is silent in this section, He is not absent. How do we see God's working in this narrative as He gives Israel over to their sinful desires? What is God's purpose in allowing the events to unfold in this way?

**Application:**

In what ways are you like Abimelek? How does the unseen reality of God's present judgment encourage and challenge your view of your life and this world?