

Judges 9 - Abimelech's conspiracy

Proverbs 26:27 "If a man rolls a stone it will roll back on him".

As you work your way through the story, keep an eye on the phrase "one Stone".

In Judges 8:30-31, we read of Gideon's children. Gideon had many wives who bore him 70 sons. Gideon also had a concubine who bore him a son, Gideon's family lived at Ophrah, while his concubine lived in Shechem.

I don't have a lot of questions this week, more of an outline to the story. I think as you go through the story, questions will arise from within the group.

Three scenes to Abimelech's story

Scene 1

Abimelech becomes King after murdering his brothers. 9:1-6

- :1 Abimelech has a proposal for the people of Shechem, "Which would you rather, 70 kings or 1?"
- :3,4 Support grows for Abimelech (both numerical and financial support).
- Hit men are hired who kill 69 of his brothers at his fathers house "One stone".
- Jotham, the youngest son, escapes by hiding :5
- Abimelech's coronation takes place by the oak at the pillar of Shechem. :6

Jotham's fable. 9:7-21

- During Abimelechs coronation, Jotham watches on from the top of Mount Gerizim :7
- The fable of the trees picking out a King :8-14
 - While the other trees are busy doing what they were designed for, the bramble takes on a role that was never his to take.
 - Note the delusions of grandeur (take shelter under my branches).
- Explanation and warning :16-20. Sadly they had not acted in good faith, rather they had acted wickedly. Rightly, :20 would come true.
- Jotham flees for his life :21

The demise of Abimelech. :22-57

- Abimelech rules for three years (:22) before an evil spirit (spirit of disunity) comes between him and the leaders. (Discuss how his rule was brutal and explore what is meant by "an evil spirit")
- Even though things are bad, God still has his hand in what's going on. (Discuss God's sovereignty as it relates to evil. Look at 9:24,57)
- The leaders of Shechem turn on Abimelech, setting ambushes & taking his belongings (:25).
- Gaal tries to lead a group and take over Shechem :26-29.
- Abimelech finds out and attacks Gaal and the men of Shechem :30-45
- Abimelech burns 1,000 of the leaders in the tower of Shechem :46-49

- Abimelech then moves on the town of Thebes and attempts to burn down their strong tower (:50-52).
- An unknown lady throws down a millstone (one stone) and crush's Abimelech's skull (:53).
- As Abimelech is dying, his armour bearer kills him, so that it wouldn't be said that a woman killed Abimelech.

2 lessons that we can learn from the story

1. **God is not obligated to show grace to sinners:** Grace is not a deserved thing. Is it possible that we forget God is not obligated to give grace? Can we be caught off guard that God brings judgement and not grace. Remember the illustration of Pastor Don's mom doing laundry, cooking etc. There is no announcement of pending judgement
2. **God is sovereign (even over evil):** If God is only sovereign over the good stuff, there would be a lot that He has no control over. Think through the implications of this. Consider Daniel 2:2

3 Applications

1. Are you a believer? I trust you are. If not, remember that God's Judgement will come. Are you prepared? Are you trusting in Christ as Saviour. God saw Abimelech and his actions. He didn't get away with sin, nether will we.
2. Let God deal with evil. "Vengeance is mine, says the Lord" He will bring justice. Trust him.
3. If you are rolling a stone today, stop. When we find ourselves, purposely Rolling Stones, it's time to stop and let go of our vendettas. To give up on evil plans, stop and surrender our lives to God and to his justice.