

## **Jotham's Parable of the Trees**

### **April 12, 2026**

**Judges 7:2-3**, *“The Lord said to Gideon, “The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, ‘My own power has delivered me.’”<sup>3</sup> “Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.’” So 22,000 people returned but 10,000 remained.”*

**Judges 7:4**, *“Then the Lord said to Gideon, “The people are still too many.”*

**Judges 8:22-23**, *“Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son's son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.”<sup>23</sup> Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.”*

**Judges 9:1-5**, *“Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal (Gideon) went to Shechem to his mother's relatives, and spoke to them and to the whole clan of the household of his mother's father, saying,<sup>2</sup> “Which is better for you, that seventy men, all the sons of Jerubbaal (Gideon), rule over you, or that one man rule over you?” Also, remember that I am your bone and your flesh.”<sup>3</sup> And his mother's relatives spoke on his behalf; and they followed Abimelech, for they said, “He is our relative.”<sup>4</sup> They gave him seventy pieces of silver from the house of Baal-berith with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men, and they followed him.<sup>5</sup> Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, seventy men. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal (Gideon) was left, for he hid himself.”*

**Judges 9:7-15**, *“They told Jotham, and he stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice, “Listen to me, O men of Shechem.<sup>8</sup> Once the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us!’<sup>9</sup> But the olive tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my fatness with which God and men are honored, and go to wave over the trees?’<sup>10</sup> Then the trees said to the fig tree, ‘You come, reign over us!’<sup>11</sup> But the fig tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to wave over the trees?’<sup>12</sup> Then the trees said to the vine, ‘You come, reign over us!’<sup>13</sup> But the vine said to them, ‘Shall I leave my new wine, which cheers God and men, and go to wave over the trees?’<sup>14</sup> Finally all the trees said to the bramble, ‘You come, reign over us!’<sup>15</sup> The bramble said to the trees, ‘If in truth you are anointing me as king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, may fire come out from the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon.’”*

**Judges 9:16-20**, “Now then, if you acted in truth and integrity when you made Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Gideon and his house, as he deserved—<sup>17</sup> for my father fought for you and risked his life and rescued you from the hand of Midian; <sup>18</sup> but you have risen against my father’s house today and have murdered his sons, seventy men, on one stone, and have made Abimelech, king, because he is your relative—<sup>19</sup> if then you have acted in truth and integrity, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. <sup>20</sup> But if not, may fire come out from Abimelech and devour the people of Shechem; and may fire come out from the people of Shechem, and devour Abimelech.”

## **1. Good Leaders Serve, Rather Than Demand Service**

**Mark 10:42-45**, “Jesus said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; <sup>44</sup> and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

## **2. God Alone is Worthy to Rule Over Us**

**2 Corinthians 1:24**, “We do not want to dominate you by telling you how to put your faith into practice. We want to work together with you so you will be full of joy, for it is by your own faith that you stand firm.”

**Joshua 24:14-15**, “Fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served, and serve the Lord. <sup>15</sup> If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods of your fathers, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”