

# LIFE IN THE SIN CYCLE

(A Study in the Book of Judges)

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Speaker: Mark Floyd

## ABIMELECH

(Judges 9)

### MASS MURDER IN OPHRAH (1-6)

- Gideon had many wives and seventy sons; Abimelech was a son to Gideon's concubine that lived in Shechem (8:30-31).
- After his father died, Abimelech convinced his clan that he would be a better leader than his brothers (1-3).
- Abimelech hired men of bad reputation to assist him in publicly executing all of his brothers except Jotham, who hid (4-5).
- The men of Shechem appointed Abimelech as king (6).

### THE CURSE OF JOTHAM (7-21)

- Jotham prophetically spoke a parable predicting the future demise of Abimelech and the Shechemites.
  - *The trees represent the men of Shechem, who sought a leader; the olive tree, fig tree and vine represent good Israelite men, who would not rule over the Shechemites; the bramble is Abimelech who would not provide the trees with shade (security), but fire (mutual destruction).*

### GOD REPAYS (22-57)

- God sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; Gaal leads a rebellion against Abimelech (23-29).
- Zebul warns Abimelech, who then destroys Shechem (30-49).
- While attacking a neighbouring city (Thebez), Abimelech is mortally wounded and, ultimately, dies (50-54).
- Thus, God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech and the men of Shechem (56-57).

*“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”  
(James 4:6)*

## APPLICATION

The story of Gideon does not have a happy ending. As a young man, God led Gideon and Israel to a miraculous victory over their enemies. What followed in the remainder of Gideon's life ultimately led to disaster for his family. This raises a number of questions. Where did Gideon go wrong? What did Gideon do that influenced the behaviour of those around him and his son, Abimelech? What sort of "testimony" did Gideon have in the latter part of his life? How did this ultimately affect his family?

The story of Gideon and Abimelech is a warning to us. Parents should take heed that what they *do* has a greater influence on their children than what they *say*. If parents are "worldly", they should expect that their children will also be worldly. If we are greedy for power and influence, resorting to sinful ways to get our way, God will be against us.

Here are some application questions to ponder and pray about:

What idols ("snares") do you have in your life?

In what ways are you depriving God of the glory He deserves?

What influence does your "lifestyle" (testimony) have on those around you (children, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbours, co-workers and fellow Christians)?

If God were to "repay you" for the way you have treated others, would that be good or bad for you?

*"Do not love the world or the things in the world...  
...the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the  
will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15,17)*