

Why Isn't This
a Shakespeare Play?

Judges 9:1-21

Now Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's relatives and said to them and to the whole clan of his mother's family, "Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?' Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh." And his mother's relatives spoke all these words on his behalf in

the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, “He is our brother.” And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless fellows, who followed him. And he went to his father’s house at Ophrah and killed his brothers the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, for he hid himself.

And all the leaders of Shechem came together,
and all Beth-millo, and they went and made
Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar at
Shechem. When it was told to Jotham, he went
and stood on top of Mount Gerizim and cried
aloud and said to them, “Listen to me, you
leaders of Shechem, that God may listen to
you. The trees once went out to anoint a king
over them, and they said to the olive tree,
‘Reign over us.’

But the olive tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my abundance, by which gods and men are honored, and go hold sway over the trees?’ And the trees said to the fig tree, ‘You come and reign over us.’

But the fig tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go hold sway over the trees?’ And the trees said to the vine, ‘You come and reign over us.’ But the vine said to them, ‘Shall I leave my wine that cheers God and men and go hold sway over the trees?’

Then all the trees said to the bramble, ‘You come and reign over us.’ And the bramble said to the trees, ‘If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade, but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.’

“Now therefore, if you acted in good faith and integrity when you made Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house and have done to him as his deeds deserved—

for my father fought for you and risked his life and delivered you from the hand of Midian, and you have risen up against my father's house this day and have killed his sons, seventy men on one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his female servant, king over the leaders of Shechem, because he is your relative—if you then have acted in good faith and integrity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you.

But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the leaders of Shechem and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the leaders of Shechem and from Beth-millo and devour Abimelech.” And Jotham ran away and fled and went to Beer and lived there, because of Abimelech his brother.

Judges 9:1-2

Now **Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal** went to Shechem to **his mother's relatives** and said to them and to the whole clan of his **mother's family**, "Say in the ears of all the leaders of Shechem, 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?' Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh."

Judges 8:31

And his **concubine** who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he called his name **Abimelech**.

Abimelech = “My father is king.”

Judges 9:4-5

And they gave him **seventy pieces of silver** out of the house of Baal-berith with which Abimelech **hired worthless and reckless fellows**, who followed him. And he went to his father's house at Ophrah and **killed his brothers** the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone. But **Jotham** the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, for he **hid himself**.

He shamelessly uses family loyalties and jealousies to feather his own nest...In the most ruthless and cold-blooded way he murders his seventy brothers at the family home and he is himself proclaimed king in Shechem. His jurisdiction is still limited. In effect, Abimelech is a local war lord; but it is a beginning, and no doubt his arrogance and ruthlessness combined to make plans for the extension of his power.

- David Jackman

Judges 9:7-9

When it was told to Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim and cried aloud and said to them, “Listen to me, you leaders of Shechem, that God may listen to you. The trees once went out to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us.’”

Judges 9:9

But the olive tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my abundance, by which gods and men are honored, and go hold sway over the trees?’

Judges 9:11

But the fig tree said to them, ‘Shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go hold sway over the trees?’

Judges 9:13

But the vine said to them, ‘Shall I leave my wine that cheers God and men and go hold sway over the trees?’

Judges 9:14-15

Then all the trees said to the **bramble**,
‘You come and reign over us.’ And the
bramble said to the trees, ‘If in good faith
you are anointing me king over you, **then**
come and take refuge in my shade, but if
not, **let fire come out of the bramble and**
devour the cedars of Lebanon.’

Judges 9:22-23

Abimelech ruled over Israel three years.

And God sent an evil spirit between

Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem,

and the leaders of Shechem dealt

treacherously with Abimelech,

the time period is by far the shortest of any oppression or judgeship in the book.
24 God does not put up with Abimelech and the Shechemites very long; his retribution is the swiftest in the book.

- K. Lawson Younger

Isaiah 19:2

And I will stir up Egyptians against
Egyptians,
and they will fight, each against another
and each against his neighbor,
city against city, kingdom against kingdom;

Judges 9:28

And Gaal the son of Ebed said, “Who is Abimelech, and who are we of Shechem, that we should serve him? Is he not the son of Jerubbaal, and is not Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him?”

I hold it to be a fact, that if all persons knew what each said of the other, there would not be four friends in the world.

-Blaise Pascal

Judges 9:41

And Abimelech lived at Arumah, and Zebul **drove out Gaal** and his relatives, so that they could not dwell at Shechem.

Judges 9:42-43

On the following day, the people went out into the field, and Abimelech was told. He took his people and divided them into three companies and set an ambush in the fields. And he looked and saw the people coming out of the city. So he rose against them and killed them.

Judges 9:45

And Abimelech fought against the city all that day. He captured the city and **killed the people** who were in it, and he **razed the city and sowed it with salt.**

Jeremiah 17:6

He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.
He shall dwell in the parched places of
the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

Judges 9:49

So every one of the people cut down his bundle and following Abimelech put it against the stronghold, and they set the stronghold on fire over them, **so that all the people of the Tower of Shechem also died, about 1,000 men and women.**

Judges 9:50-52

Then Abimelech went to Thebez and encamped against Thebez and captured it. But there was a strong tower within the city, and all the men and women and all the leaders of the city fled to it and shut themselves in, and they went up to the roof of the tower. And Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower to burn it with fire.

Judges 9:53-54

And a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. Then he called quickly to the young man his armor-bearer and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, lest they say of me, 'A woman killed him.'" And his young man thrust him through, and he died.

Judges 9:56-57

Thus **God returned the evil of Abimelech**, which he committed against his father in killing his seventy brothers.

And God also made all the evil of the men of Shechem return on their heads, and upon them came the curse of **Jotham the son of Jerubbaal**.

God frequently judges in this way, using evil men to destroy evil men, evil nations to wipe out other evil nations. Judges 9 teaches us something very important: there is no fellowship in evil; evil has no lasting cohesion; it does not care for its own (it only uses its own).

- Dale Ralph Davis

Who knows the extent to which we would give in to sin, were we to be given a guarantee of immunity from discovery and exposure?

- Sinclair Ferguson

1 Peter 2:24

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.** By his wounds you have been healed.