



Conquering Canaan

Lesson 9: Abimelech To Abdon

(Judges 9:1-12:15)

Gideon had 70 sons. One of them was named Abimelech. After Gideon had died, Abimelech went to his family in Shechem and asked them if it was better for 70 men to rule over them or just one. So, he asked them to make him king – and they agreed. They gave him 70 pieces of silver. Then, Abimelech took that money and hired evil people to kill his 70 brothers. Only Jotham (the youngest brother) survived, because he hid. So, Abimelech was officially made king.

When Jotham heard this news, he climbed to the top of Mount Gerizim and spoke to the people of Shechem. He warned them that if they had done well in making Abimelech king over them, they would be rewarded for it. But, if they had not done well in this, then there would be consequences. Then, he fled so that he would not be killed.

Since God had not made Abimelech a ruler over His people, God punished Abimelech and the people of Shechem – just as Jotham had said. Shechem fought against Abimelech and Abimelech killed the people. But, whenever Abimelech tried to attack a tower in Thebez, a woman threw part of a millstone so that it hit Abimelech's head. He was hurt so badly that he told his armor-bearer to kill him so that he would not die because of a woman.

After Abimelech, the seventh judge over Israel was Tola, from the tribe of Isaachar. He judged Israel 23 years. Then, the eighth judge over Israel was Jair. He had 30 sons who rode on 30 donkeys and had 30 towns in Gilead. He judged Israel 22 years.

Still, the Israelites did evil and worshiped false gods. So, God was angry with them and He sold them to the Philistines and the Ammonites. They shattered and

crushed the Israelites in Gilead for 18 years. So, the Israelites cried out to God for help, saying that they had sinned against God. Then, the Israelites got rid of the false gods and worshiped the true God.

When the Ammonites and Israelites were ready to fight in Gilead, the Israelites knew they needed someone to lead them. They chose a man named Jephthah as their leader. Jephthah agreed.

When the Ammonite king told Jephthah that he wanted the land, Jephthah reminded the king how God had given the land to Israel. So, he said that they could have whatever their false god Chemosh would give them and Israel would have whatever the Lord God would give them. But, the Ammonite king did not listen to Jephthah's message.

Later, Jephthah made a promise to God. He said that if God would make him victorious over the Ammonites, he would give the first person who came out of his house when he got home as a sacrifice to God. Then, Jephthah fought against the Ammonites and God made him victorious!

But, whenever Jephthah got home, Jephthah's daughter was the first person out of his house. She was his only child! When Jephthah saw her, he was very sad and told her what he had promised. But, she told her father to keep his promise after she went into the mountains for two months, because God had defeated their enemies. So, after those two months, Jephthah kept his promise and gave his daughter to God.

After Jephthah, the tenth judge over Israel was Ibzan, from the tribe of Benjamin. He had 30 sons and 30 daughters and judged Israel for seven years. The eleventh judge over Israel was Elon, from the tribe of Zebulun. He judged Israel for ten years. Then, the twelfth judge over Israel was Abdon. He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on 70 donkeys, and judged Israel for eight years.

Memory Verse:

“Then the Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. They worshiped the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Aram, Sidon, and Moab, and the gods of the Ammonites and the Philistines. They abandoned the Lord and did not worship him” (Judges 10:6).

Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about: