

9[1] And Abimelech, son of Jerubaal, went to Shechem to his mother's brothers and spoke to them and to all family of house of his mother's father saying, [2] “Please speak in the ears of all lords¹ of Shechem, 'What is good for you, the one who rules among you, seventy men, all sons of Jerubaal, or one man rule among you? And remember that I am your bone and your flesh.’” [3] And his mother's brothers spoke for him in the ears of all lords of Shechem all these words. And their heart was inclined after Abimelech, for they said, “He is our brother.” [4] And they gave to him seventy of silver from house² of Covenant Baal. And Abimelech hired with them empty³ and reckless men, and they went after him.⁴

[5] And he went to his father's house to Ophrah and killed his brothers, sons of Jerubaal, seventy men, upon one stone. And Jotham,⁵ son of Jerubaal, the youngest, remained, for he was hidden.⁶ [6] And all lords of Shechem gathered together and all House of Millo.⁷ And they went and made Abimelech king beside terebinth at the standing⁸ that was in Shechem.

[7] And they told Jotham, and he went and stood on top of mount Gerizim. And he lifted up his voice and cried out. And he said to them, “Listen to me, lords of Shechem. And Gods, may he listen to you. [8] Going, the trees went to anoint for themselves a king. And they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.' [9] And the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I cease my fatness,⁹ which in me¹⁰ they honor Gods and men, and go to sway over the trees?’ [10] And the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come reign over us.' [11] And the fig tree said to them, 'Shall I cease my sweetness and my good fruit and go to sway over the trees?’ [12] And the trees said to the vine, 'You come reign over us.' [13] And the vine said to them, 'Shall I cease my new wine which cheers Gods and men and go to sway over the trees?’ [14] And all the trees said to the bramble,¹¹ 'You come reign over us.' [15] And the bramble said to the trees, 'If in truth you anoint me to be king over you, come seek refuge in my shadow. And if not, let fire come out from the bramble and consume the cedars of Lebanon.’”

[16] “And now, if in truth and perfection you have made and caused Abimelech to reign, and you have done good with Jerubaal and with his sons, and if you have done to him as his hands deserve,

1 בְּעֵלִי (ba'alêy) “lords of” HCSB, ISV, LEB; “men of” NKJV, KJV; “leaders” NAS

2 בֵּית (bêyt) “house” KJV, NAS, YLT; “temple” NKJV

3 רֵיקִים (rêyqiym) “empty” - OJB “morally empty”; NKJV, NAS, etc. “worthless”; KJV, YLT “vain” - this is the same word for the “empty” jars in Judges 7:16.

4 i.e. they followed him.

5 יוֹתָם (yotâm) “Jotham” - found also in Judges 9:7, 21; 57. There is also by this name Azariah's son in 2 Kings 15:5, 7, 30, 32, 36, 38; 16:1; 3:12; 5:17; 2 Chronicles 26:21, 23; 27:1, 6-7, 9; Isaiah 1:1; 7:1; Hosea 1:1; Micah 1:1. There is also the son of Jahdai in 1 Chronicles 2:47.

6 נִחְבָּא (nechbâ) “he was hidden” YLT, NABRE; “he hid himself” NKJV, KJV, NAS; “he had hidden” Green – Niphal (passive) verb.

7 מִלּוֹא (millo) “Millo” - also found in Judges 9:20 for this location. There is also “House of Millo” (מִלְּא [millo]) in 2 Kings 12:21(H20). There is also “the Millo” (הַמִּלּוֹא [hammillo]) “citadel” BDB in 2 Samuel 5:9; 1 Kings 9:15, 24; 11:27; 1 Chronicles 11:8; 2 Chronicles 32:5.

8 מַצֵּב (mutstsâv) “the standing” - exact meaning unknown, basic idea is something fixed and standing - variously translated, NKJV, KJV, NAS, etc. “pillar”; YLT “the camp”; Green “the outpost”; DRA, WYC that “stood”; GW, NOG “still standing”; TLB “the garrison”; NLV that “had been set up”

9 דִּשְׁנִי (dishniy) “my fatness” KJV, NAS, YLT, Green, etc.; “my oil” NKJV, etc. - see footnote for Leviticus 1:16.

10 אֲשֶׁר־בִּי ('asher-biy) “which in me” - KJV, etc. “wherewith by me”; NKJV, NAS “with which”; Green, etc. “by which”

11 אֶתֶד (âtâd) “bramble” - “any of a genus (*Rubus*) of usually prickly shrubs of the rose family including the raspberries and blackberries” MW – found also in Judges 9:15; Psalm 58:9(H10).

[17] wherewith my father waged war for you, and cast his soul aside,¹² and delivered you from hand of Midian. [18] And you, you have risen up against my father's house, and killed his sons, seventy men upon one stone. And you have made Abimelech, son of his female slave, to reign over lords of Shechem, because he is your brother. [19] And if in truth and in perfection you have done with Jerubaa! and with his house this day, rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. [20] And if not, may fire go out from Abimelech and consume lords of Shechem and House of Millo, and may fire go out from lords of Shechem and from House of Millo and consume Abimelech.” [21] And Jotham fled and hurried and went to Well¹³ and dwelt there from the face of¹⁴ Abimelech his brother.

[22] And Abimelech ruled over Israel for three years. [23] And Gods, he sent a bad spirit¹⁵ between Abimelech and lords of Shechem. And lords of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, [24] to bring the violence of the seventy sons of Jerubaa! and their blood to be set upon Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and upon lords of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers. [25] And lords of Shechem set ambushes against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who passed by them on the way. And it was told to Abimelech. [26] And Gaal,¹⁶ son of Servant,¹⁷ and his brothers, came and crossed over into Shechem, and lords of Shechem trusted in him.

[27] And they went out into the field and harvested their vineyards and trod and made merry. And they went into house of their gods¹⁸ and ate and drank and cursed Abimelech. [28] And Gaal, son of Servant, said, “Who is Abimelech and who is Shechem that we should serve him? Is he not son of Jerubaa! and Zebul¹⁹ is his officer? Serve men of Hamor, father of Shechem. So, why should we serve him? [29] And who gives this people into my hand? So, I would remove Abimelech.” And he said to Abimelech, “Increase your army and come out.”

[30] And Zebul, leader of the city, heard the words of Gaal, son of Servant, and his anger burned. [31] And he sent messengers to Abimelech in secret saying, “Look, Gaal, son of Servant, and his brothers have come to Shechem. And look, they are fortifying the city against you. [32] And now, arise by night, you and the people who are with you and lie in wait in the field. [33] And it shall be, in the morning, as the sun rises, rise early and rush upon the city. And look, he and the people who are with him shall go out to you. And you shall do to him just as you find in your hand.” [34] And Abimelech arose, and all the people who were with him, by night. And they lay in wait against Shechem, four companies.²⁰

12 יָשַׁלְךָ אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ מִנֶּגֶד (yashlêkh 'et-naphsho mineged) “cast his soul aside” - YLT “cast away his life from [him]”; NKJV, NAS, etc. “risked his life”

13 בְּאֵרָה (be'êrâh) “to Well” - NKJV, etc. “Beer” - see footnote for Numbers 21:16.

14 מִפְּנֵי (mipnêy) “from the face of” YLT; “because of” NAS; “for fear of” NKJV, KJV; “away from the face of” Green.

15 רוּחַ רָעָה (ruach râ'âh) “bad spirit” NLV; “evil spirit” KJV, NAS, YLT, Green; “spirit of ill will” NKJV – found also in 1 Samuel 16:14 (“distressing spirit” NKJV; “evil spirit” KJV, NAS).

16 גָּעַל (ga'al) “Gaal” - found also in Judges 9:28, 30-31, 35-37, 39, 41.

17 עֶבֶד ('eved) “Servant” - NKJV, etc. “Ebed” - same exact word for “servant” e.g. in Judges 2:8; 1 Samuel 29:3; etc. - name for this man found also in Judges 9:28, 30-31, 35. There is also the son of Jonathan in Ezra 8:6.

18 אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (elohêyhem) “their gods” GNV, GW, NOG; “their god” NKJV, KJV, NAS, YLT, etc..

19 זִבְלִי (zebul) “Zebul” - found also in Judges 9:30, 36, 38, 41.

20 רִאשִׁיּוֹם (râ'shiym) “companies” - more literally, “heads”