

**A FOOLISH KING IN ISRAEL**

**Introduction:** Gideon's refusal to rule Israel as king (8:23) became the dominating desire of his son, Abimelech (9:6). After Gideon died, Israel forgot the LORD's goodness to them during Gideon's leadership and began to worship Baal again (8:33-35). The LORD allowed Abimelech to become a king for a few years during this time of apostasy. He was the son of Gideon by a concubine. Relying on his personal contacts from his mother's side of the family, political intrigue, and mass murder, Abimelech became a king. However, he apparently only ruled over Shechem and its environs. His attempt to rule Israel was aborted by his sudden death at the hands of a woman. His death allowed judges to continue to govern the affairs of Israel. Abimelech was followed by two obscure judges. The LORD used Tola and Jair to bring peace to Israel after the turmoil caused by Abimelech. They may have judged in different parts of Israel at the same time (10:1-5).

**Lesson Aim:** To stay away from the foolishness of pride and avoid the certainty of destruction.

**Memory Verse:** "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov16:18).

**Outline of the Lesson and Questions to Answer:****I. Pride of Abimelech — 9:1-6**

1. Where did Abimelech go to get support for his plan to become a king? 9:1
2. How did he get the leaders of Shechem to support him as their king? 9:2-3
3. Where did Abimelech get money to hire worthless men to follow him? 9:4
4. What did Abimelech and his hired men do so that he could become king? 9:5-6

**II. Prophecy of Jotham — 9:7-21**

5. Who did Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon (Jerubbaal), address from the top of Mt. Gerizim? 9:7
6. Who is the bramble in Jotham's parable? 9:8-16
7. Why did Jotham rebuke the city of Shechem? 9:17-18
8. Briefly explain Jotham's prophecy. 9:20

**III. Perversion of Abimelech — 9:22-57**

9. What happened between Abimelech and Shechem after three years? 9:22-23
10. Why did God do this? 9:24
11. What did the leaders of Shechem do to those who were going to Abimelech? 9:25
12. What happened to the man that the Shechemites trusted to defeat Abimelech? 9:26-41
13. What did Abimelech do to the people of Shechem in fulfillment of Jotham's prophecy? 9:42-49
14. How was Abimelech repaid for the evil that he did to his father and his brothers? 9:50-56

**IV. Problem of Israel — 10:1-18**

15. Who did God use to defend Israel after Abimelech died? 10:1-5
16. Describe the problem of idolatry in Israel? 10:6
17. What nations did the LORD use to punish Israel for its idolatry? 10:7-9
18. What did Israel need to do before the LORD would help them? 10:10-16

