

# Lessons in the Lord's Judgment and Mercy

Judges 9:22-10:18

## I. Previously on *Living Lawless in the Land...*

- A. Big Picture of Judges: We have a cycle that degenerates
  - 1. Rebellion → God lets them face oppression → The people cry out → God raises up a deliverer (judge) → Land has rest.
  - 2. But the cycle repeats and the wheels start coming off as Israel spirals deeper into its nose-dive.
  
- B. Last time: Gideon died and his son Abimelech violently asserts himself as a king.

## II. Evil Returns on the Head of the Evil (Judges 9:22-57)

- A. Shechem Stirs up Strife (Judges 9:22-25)
  - 1. They “dealt treacherously with Abimelech”
  - 2. God is orchestrating the falling out as a form of judgment on Shechem and Abimelech (vv. 23-24 and 22-57 bookends this whole section with God’s sovereignty)
  
- B. A Self-Promoting Rival to a Self-Promoting King (9:26-29)
  
- C. Abimelech Burns Shechem (9:30-49)
  
- D. Abimelech slaughters the citizens of Shechem (9:42-45)
  
- E. Abimelech, the Bramble, Burns the Leaders (9:46-49 cp. V. 20)
  
- F. The Evil of Abimelech Returns on His Own Head (9:50-57)
  - 1. The way he dies is ironic
  - 2. It is more than ironic though... it’s prophetic (cp. Genesis 3 and promise of crushing the serpent’s head).
  
- G. Applications from this section about Abimelech.
  - 1. God is in control, even when people are doing exactly what they want (see bookends)
  - 2. God’s judgments don’t always come in immediate fashion.
  - 3. The self-destructing nature of evil people is on display (Ps. 7:12-17)
    - a. “There is no fellowship in evil; evil has no lasting cohesion; it does not care for its own (it only *uses* its own).”<sup>1</sup>
    - b. “He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made.  
<sup>16</sup>His mischief returns upon his own head, and on his own skull his violence descends.”  
Psalm 7:15-16

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<sup>1</sup> Parenthesis original to the quote. Dale Ralph Davis, [\*Judges: Such a Great Salvation\*](#), Focus on the Bible Commentary (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 125.

### III. Minor Judges: Tola & Jair (10:1-5)

### IV. Lessons in Judgment and Mercy (Judges 10:6-18)

- A. The Canaanization, Judgment, and Cry of the People: Cycle steps 1-3 (10:6-10)
- B. A Deviation from the Pattern in God's Response (vv. 11-16)
  - 1. "Go cry out to the gods whom you have chosen"  
"God in his grace had chosen them (cf. Ps 135:5; Deut 32:8), but they had done the unthinkable: they had transferred their allegiance to other gods, whom they had selected for themselves (cf. Jer 2:9-13). In effect he says: 'Show some consistency'"<sup>2</sup>
  - 2. There is such a thing as *worldly sorrow* that masquerades as repentance (see 2 Cor. 7:10)
    - a. Godly sorrow is concerned with God: our relationship to him, and his glory
    - b. Worldly sorrow is concerned with avoiding consequences.
  - 3. The People Cry out Again (vv. 15-16)
- C. The Cliffhanger – The need for deliverance (10:17-18)
- D. Application
  - 1. God is both just and merciful. Some of us are prone to disregard one or the other.
  - 2. Mercy can be redefined as something God owes us.
    - a. We assume we don't really need to worry with asking God to search us and know us and see if there is any wayward way in us.
    - b. We think surface work is enough.
  - 3. Others might be tempted to only think of God's justice.
    - a. We must see that God saves because of his mercy and grace. God is rich in mercy (Eph. 2)
    - b. So, keep confessing, and don't doubt his kind intention to you.

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Isaac Block, [Judges, Ruth](#), vol. 6, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 347.