

# Broken Heroes: The Lure of Power and Control

## Abimelek

By Brett Hilliard, June 21, 2020

Now Abimelek 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 Abimelek, for they said, "He is our brother." And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith with which Abimelek 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 Abimelek king, by the oak of the pillar at Shechem.

Judges 9:1-6

Abimelek ruled over Israel three years. And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelek and the leaders of Shechem, and the leaders of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelek, that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid on Abimelek their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers. And the leaders of Shechem put men in ambush against him on the mountaintops, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way. And it was told to Abimelek. And Gaal the son of Ebed moved into Shechem with his relatives, and the leaders of Shechem put confidence in him. And they went out into the field and gathered the grapes from their vineyards and trod them and held a festival; and they went into the house of their god and ate and drank and reviled Abimelek. 28 And Gaal the son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelek, 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?"

Judges 9:22-28

And Abimelek 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. When all the leaders of the Tower of Shechem heard of it, they entered the stronghold of the house of El-berith. Abimelek was told that all the leaders of the Tower of Shechem were gathered together. And Abimelek went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who were with him. And Abimelek took an axe in his hand and cut down a bundle of brushwood and took it up and laid it on his shoulder. And he said to the men who were with him, "What you have seen me do, hurry and do as I have done." 49 So every one of the people cut down his bundle and following Abimelek 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. Then Abimelek 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 Abimelek came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower to burn it with fire. And a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelek'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 9:45-54

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What power or authority has God entrusted to you and what precautions can you take to limit its corrosive effect on your soul?
2. How can you establish a pattern of servant leadership and keep the grip on power in check?