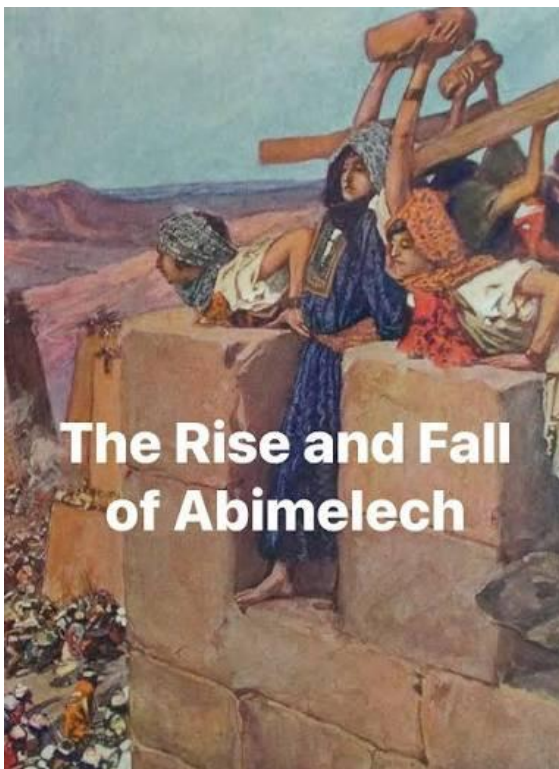


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The Rise and Fall of Abimelech

8:33 to 9:57



Verses 8:31-35 transition from **Gideon** to **Abimelech**; then **9:1-57** is a sequel to the **Gideon** story. There are two explicit statements where the author provides the theme of the sequel. The first occurs in **9:23-24**, at a crucial point in the plot: **And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech. God was punishing Abimelech for murdering Gideon's seventy sons, and the citizens of Shechem for supporting him in this treachery of murdering his brothers (9:23-24 NLT).** We see the second in **9:56-57**, after the climax has been reached with the death of **Abimelech**: **In this way, God punished Abimelech for the evil he had done against his father by murdering his seventy brothers. God also punished the men of Shechem for all their evil. So the curse of Jotham son of Gideon was fulfilled (9:56-57 NLT).** These two

statements complement each other and point to retribution as the key to the rise and fall of **Abimelech**: **God** caused the evil that **Abimelech** and **the men of Shechem** did, to rebound on **their** own heads.²¹¹ **And he who rolls a stone down onto others, it will crush you instead (Proverbs 26:27).**