

## Chapter 9

*Abimelech Gedeons concubins fonne killeth his brethren, 7. onlie the yongest escapeth, & by a parable expoſtulateth the iniurie donne to his fathers houſe. 23. Shortly the Sichemites deteft Abimelech. 26. Gaal conſpireth againſt him, but is ouercome. 50. Finally Abimelech is wounded to death by a woman.*

**A**nd <sup>a)</sup>Abimelech the fonne of Ierobaal went into Sichem to his mothers brethren and ſpake to them, and to al the kinred of the houſe of his mothers father, ſaying: <sup>2</sup> Speake to al the men of Sichem: whether it is better for you, that ſeuentie men haue dominion ouer you al the fonnes of Ierobaal, or that one man haue dominion ouer you? and withal confider that I am your bone, and your fleſh. <sup>3</sup> And his mothers brethren ſpake of him to al the men of Sichem, al theſe wordes, and inclined their hartes after Abimelech, ſaying: He is our brother. <sup>4</sup> And they gaue him ſeuentie weight of filuer out of the temple of Baalberit. Who hyred therewith vnto him ſelſ needie men and vagaboundes, and they folowed him. <sup>5</sup> And he came into his fathers houſe in Ephra, and murdered his brethren the fonnes of Ierobaal ſeuentie men, vpon one ſtone: and there remayned Ioatham the yongest fonne of Ierobaal, and was hidde. <sup>6</sup> And al the men of Sichem affembled together al the families of the citie of Mello: and they went & made Abimelech king, beſide the oke, that ſtood in Sichem. <sup>7</sup> Which being told to Ioatham, he went, <sup>b)</sup>and ſtoode in the toppe of mount Garizim: and lifting vp his voice, he cried, and ſaid: Heare me ye men of Sichem, ſo as God may heare you. <sup>8</sup> <sup>a)</sup>The trees went

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<sup>a</sup> This fonne of Gedeon by his ſeruant prefigured Antichriſt who wil perfecute the Church and reigne for a while: but in the end ſhal be deſtroyed. *S. Beda c. 6. qq. in Iudic.*

<sup>b</sup> True paſtores in the time of Antichriſt wil ſtill auouch the truth and the right of the Church.

to anointe a king ouer them: and they said to the <sup>a</sup>oliue tree: Reigne ouer vs. <sup>9</sup> Which answered: Can I forsake my fatnes, which both goddes do vse, and men, and come to be promoted among the trees? <sup>10</sup> And the trees said to the <sup>b</sup>figge tree: Come, and take the kingdome ouer vs. <sup>11</sup> Which answered them: Can I forsake my sweetnes, and my most sweete fruites, and go to be promoted among the other trees? <sup>12</sup> And the trees spake to the <sup>c</sup>vine: Come, and reigne ouer vs. <sup>13</sup> Which answered them: Can I forsake my wine, that chereth God and men, & be promoted among the other trees? <sup>14</sup> And the trees said to <sup>d</sup>the rhamnus: Come, and reigne ouer vs. <sup>15</sup> Who answered them: If in deede you make me your king, Come, and rest vnder my shadow: but if you meane it not, let there fyre issue forth of the rhamnus, and deuoure the ceders of Libanus. <sup>16</sup> Now therefore, if you haue wel, and without finne appointed Abimelech king ouer you, and haue dealt wel with Ierobaal, and with his house, and haue requitted him the like for his benefites, who fought for you, <sup>17</sup> and put his life in dangers, that he might deliuer you from the hand of Madian, <sup>18</sup> who now are risen against my fathers house, and haue killed his sonnes feuentie men vpon one stone, and haue made Abimelech the sonne of his handmaide king ouer the inhabitantes of Sicheim, because he is your brother. <sup>19</sup> If therefore you haue dealt wel, and without fault with Ierobaal, and his house, reioyce this day in Abimelech, and reioyce he in you. <sup>20</sup> But if vniustly: let there fyre issue forth from him, and confume the inhabitantes of Sicheim, and towne of Mello: and let there fire goe forth from the men of Sicheim, and from the towne of Mello, and deuoure Abimelech. <sup>21</sup> Which thinges when he had said, he fled, and went into Bera: and dwelt there for

Brierre, bramble, or thistle.

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<sup>a</sup> Oyle spiritually signifieth the grace of the Holie Ghost, making peace of conscience in mens foules towards God.

<sup>b</sup> The swetnes of Gods law producing good workes.

<sup>c</sup> Contemtable in outward shew, but bringing forth liquour of meruelous force; which sorte of workes God is most delighted withal: and men most admire. *Pfal. 85.*

<sup>d</sup> The rhamnus signifieth base and ambitious men.

feare of Abimelech his brother. <sup>22</sup> Abimelech therefore reigned ouer Ifrael three yeares. <sup>23</sup> And our Lord sent <sup>a</sup>a verie euil fpirit between Abimelech and the inhabitantes of Sichem: Who began to deteft him, <sup>24</sup> and to lay the wickednes of the murdering of the feuentie fonnes of Ierobaal, and the fheading of their bloud vpon Abimelech their brother, and vpon the reft of the princes of the Sichemites, that had holpen him. <sup>25</sup> And they fette an ambuſhment againft him on the toppe of the mountaines: and whiles they taryed for his coming, they committed robberies, taking prayes of them that paſſed by: and it was told Abimelech. <sup>26</sup> And Gaal the fonne of Obed came with his brethren, and paſſed into Sichem. At whoſe coming the inhabitantes of Sichem taking courage, <sup>27</sup> iffued forth into the fieldes, waſting the vineyardes, and treading the grapes: and gathering companies of muſicians went into the temple of their god, and in the bankettes and cuppes curſed Abimelech. <sup>28</sup> Gaal the fonne of Obed crying: Who is Abimelech, and what is Sichem, that we ſhould ferue him? Is he not the fonne of Ierobaal, and hath made Zebul his feruant prince ouer the men of Emor the father of Sichem? Why then ſhal we ferue him? <sup>29</sup> Would God that ſome man would geue this people vnder my hand, that I might take Abimelech out of the way. And ſome ſaid to Abimelech: Gather together a multitude of an armie, and come. <sup>30</sup> For Zebul the prince of the citie, hearing the wordes of Gaal the fonne of Obed, was very wrath, <sup>31</sup> and ſent meſſengers ſecretely to Abimelech, ſaying: Behold, Gaal the fonne of Obed is come into Sichem with his brethren, and rayſeth the citie againft thee. <sup>32</sup> Arife therefore in the night with the people, that is with thee,

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<sup>a</sup> God doth fuggeſt only good cogitations: as remorse of conſcience in the Sechemites, for their ingratitude towards Gedeon and for ſo wicked and cruel a murder of his fonnes. Whereupon they began to deteft Abimelech and, ſo hatred grew between him & them, which is a moſt euil ſpirit. But their former finne, not God, was the caufe therof. *S. Aug. q. 45. in Iudic.*

and lie hidde in the field: <sup>33</sup> and betimes in the morning at funne ryfing, fette vpon the citie. And when he iffueth forth againft thee with his people, do to him what thou fhalt be able. <sup>34</sup> Abimelech therefore arofe with al his armie in the night, and laide ambuſhmentes nere to Sichem in foure places. <sup>35</sup> And Gaal the fonne of Obed went forth, & ftoode in the entrance of the gate of the citie. And Abimelech rofe, and al his armie with him from the place of the ambuſhmentes. <sup>36</sup> And when Gaal had ſeene the people, he ſaid to Zebul: Behold a multitude cometh downe from the mountaines. To whom he answered: Thou feeſt the ſhadowes of the mountaines as it were heades of men, and with this error thou art deceiued. <sup>37</sup> Againe Gaal ſaid: Behold there cometh downe people from the nauel of the land, and one troupe cometh by the way, that looketh to the oke. <sup>38</sup> To whom Zebul ſaid: Where is now thy mouth, wherwith thou didſt ſpeake? Who is Abimelech that we ſhould ferue him? Is not this the people, which thou didſt deſpiſe? Goe forth, and fight againft him. <sup>39</sup> Gaal therefore went, the people of the Sichemites looking on, and fought againft Abimelech, <sup>40</sup> who purſewed him fleeing, and driue him into the citie: and there were ſlaine of his part manie, vnto the gate of the citie: <sup>41</sup> and Abimelech fate in Ruma: but Zebul expelled Gaal, and his companions out of the citie, neither did he ſuffer them to abide in it. <sup>42</sup> Therefore the day folowing the people went forth into the field. Which being told to Abimelech, <sup>43</sup> he tooke his armie, and diuided it into three troupes, ſetting ambuſhmentes in the fieldes. And ſeeing that the people came out of the citie, he arofe, & ſet vpon them <sup>44</sup> with his owne troupe, oppugning and beſieging the citie: and two troupes ſcattered through the field purſewed the aduerſaries. <sup>45</sup> Moreouer Abimelech al that day oppugned the citie: which he tooke, & killed the inhabitantes therof, and deſtroyed it, ſo that he <sup>a</sup>ſowed falt in it. <sup>46</sup> Which when they had heard that dwelt

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<sup>a</sup> For more reuenge he ſowed the citie with falte, which maketh ground barren. *Theod. q. 17. in lib. Iudic.*

in the towre of Sichern, they entered into the temple of their god Berith, where they had made a couenant with him, and therof the place had taken his name, which was exceeding wel fenced. <sup>47</sup> Abimelech also hearing that the men of the towre of Sichern were gathered together, <sup>48</sup> he went vp into mount Selmon with al his people: and taking an axe, he cut of the bough of a tree, and laying it on his shoulder & carying it, he said to his companions: That which you see me do, doe ye out of hand. <sup>49</sup> They therefore cutting of boughes from the trees, euerie man as fast as he could, folowed their captaine. Who compaffing the forte burnt it: and so it came to passe, that with the smoke and the fyre a thousand persons were flaine, men and wemen together, of the inhabitantes of the towre of Sichern. <sup>50</sup> And Abimelech departing thence came to the towne of Thebes, which compaffing he befieged with his armie. <sup>51</sup> And there was in the middes of the citie an high towre, to the which were fled both men and wemen together, and al the princes of the citie, the gate being shut very strongly, and they standing vpon the batlementes of the towre by the bulwarkes. <sup>52</sup> And Abimelech coming nere the towre, fought manfully: and approching to the doore, endeuoured to put fire vnder it: <sup>53</sup> and behold one woman casting from aboue a peece of a milstone, <sup>a</sup>dashed it against the head of Abimelech, and brake his brayne. <sup>54</sup> Who called by and by his esquire, and said to him: Draw out thy sword, and strike me: lest perhaps it be said that I was flaine of a woman. Who doing as he was commanded flew him. <sup>55</sup> And when he was dead, al that were with him of Ifrael, returned into their feates: <sup>56</sup> and God repayed the euil, that Abimelech had done against his father, killing his feuentie brethren. <sup>57</sup> The Sichernites were also rewarded for that which they had wrought, and the curse of Ioatham the sonne of Ierobaal came vpon them.

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<sup>a</sup> Euels shall betide the vniust man to destruction. *Pfal. 139.*

## ANNOTATIONS

8 The trees went to annoint a king.) According to the hiftorie Ioatham Gedeons youngeft fonne, by a parable iuftly expoſtulateth the iniurie donne by the Schemites to his fathers houſe, in preferring a baſe bound womans fonne, and cruelly murdering the reſt of his ſonnes: who with much trauel, and manie dangers of his owne life, had deliuered them from feruitude. But in the ſpiritual ſenſe, which (as the ancient fathers note) is chiefly intended, Idolaters and Heretikes are reproued, who rather accept of vniuſt vſurpers, that wil ferue their licentious appetites, and maintaine vice and wickednes, then to be ruled by iuſt and lawful Superiors, appointed by Gods ordinance, indued with grace of the Holie Ghoſt (ſignified by *the oliue tree*;) ſuch as bring forth wholfome fwete vertues (ſignified by *the figge tree*;) and are replenifhed with admirable fortitude (ſignified by the vine tree) and in their places ſet vp baſe, ambitious, cruel, and crabbed ſpirites, ſignified by the bramble, or breere. Thus Nemrod, Abimelech, Mahomet, and innumerable other tyrantes haue benne aduanced, & eſpecially Antichriſt *shal be extolled aboue al that is called God, or is vvorſhipped*, and ſhal moſt cruelly perfecute al Catholiques, that wil not conforme them ſelues to his proceedings. But in fine (as here is prefigured in Abimelech) *fire ſhal riſe againſt this bramble Antichriſt, and ſhal deuoure him and al his together. S. Beda. qq. in lib. Iudic. c. 6.*

2. Theff. 2.

Vngratful people render iniuries for benefites.

Infidels promote wicked men to authoritie.

Abimelech a figure of Antichriſt.