



LIFE GROUP STUDY  
JUDGES 9-12

As soon as Gideon died, the people went back to worshipping the Baals. Judges 8:33 says, “Then it came about as soon as Gideon was dead, “that the sons of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-berith their god. Israel again forgot the true God, who had delivered them from their enemies. Ironically they did so in Shechem, the very place where Israel had recommitted themselves to the Lord and swore never to worship the Canaanite gods. In Shechem, Joshua spoke the famous words, “but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Jos. 24:15).

### 1. Abimelech’s Tyranny

Gideon had seventy sons, including Abimelech by a concubine in Shechem. Gideon may have delivered Israel in the short term, but he was a failure as a father and ultimately as a leader of Israel. Abimelech is not called a judge, and God did not raise him up to save Israel. Read 9:1-6 – What happens to Gideon’s sons?

### Jotham’s Challenge

Read 9:17-24

What warning did Jotham give to the people?

### Fulfillment of the Curse of Jotham

The people of Shechem received the king that they deserved (Abimelech) and the king received the subjects he deserved (9:4-5 “worthless and reckless fellows”).

Read 9:49,53

Read 9:56-57

Do you think that God is acting with the law of retribution in mind?

Do nations get the presidents/rulers that they deserve like the people of Shechem did?

## **2. Oppression and deliverance (10:6-12:7)**

In this section the sin of the nation had increased so badly that God Himself refused - at least the first time asked - to save them from their enemies.

### **Sin and affliction for 18 years**

Read 10:6-9

The Israelites were quick learners when it came to sin. What God's were they now worshipping?

Do you think that the God's they were worshipping are any different from the idols/gods that we worship now?

### **Supplication until God could not bear it**

Read 10:10-16

Why and how did God respond?

Are there any false idols that we as individuals or as a country need to repent and turn away from?

## **3. Jephthah (11- 12:7)**

As Israel continued its decline, the Lord had to turn to a very unlikely candidate to lead His people. It is a reminder that it is not human pedigree but divine empowerment that brings success. Jephthah was a judge for Israel six years.

Read 11:1-11

How would you describe Jephthah? Why do you think the Israelites turned to him for leadership?

Read 11: 29-35 (some scholars believe that Jephthah did sacrifice his daughter; while others believe that she was only dedicated to the service of God in a life of celibacy).

What vow did Jephthah make with God?

Why did he make such a foolish vow?

Are we as Christians conditional with God? Do we expect Him to bless us because of our service to Him or do we negotiate with God to try to win His favor?

Read Hebrews 11:32

The Jephthah story shows that God often uses the most unlikely persons. Jephthah is identified in the biblical roll call of faith.

What does this say about Jephthah?

Do we ever shy away from opportunities to serve God because we feel that we are not qualified enough or that maybe God can't use an ordinary person like me? How does the story of Jephthah change this thinking?

#### **4. Close your time in Prayer**