

DAILY READING

2026 NEW TESTAMENT READING

ACTS 23:1-11

SUNDAY SCHOOL READING PLAN

JUDGES 9:22-41

ABIMELECH'S PUNISHMENT

9 ²² When Abimelech had ruled over Israel three years, ²³ God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem. They treated Abimelech deceitfully, ²⁴ so that the crime against the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come to justice and their blood would be avenged on their brother Abimelech, who killed them, and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him kill his brothers. ²⁵ The citizens of Shechem rebelled against him by putting men in ambush on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed everyone who passed by them on the road. So this was reported to Abimelech.

²⁶ Gaal son of Ebed came with his brothers and crossed into Shechem, and the citizens of Shechem trusted him. ²⁷ So they went out to the countryside and harvested grapes from their vineyards. They trampled the grapes and held a celebration. Then they went to the house of their god, and as they ate and drank, they cursed Abimelech. ²⁸ Gaal son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelech and who is Shechem that we should serve him? Isn't he the son of Jerubbaal, and isn't Zebul his

officer? You are to serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem. Why should we serve Abimelech? ²⁹ If only these people were in my power, I would remove Abimelech.” So he said to Abimelech, “Gather your army and come out.”

³⁰ When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal son of Ebed, he was angry. ³¹ So he secretly sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, “Beware! Gaal son of Ebed, with his brothers, have come to Shechem and are turning the city against you. ³² Now tonight, you and the troops with you, come and wait in ambush in the countryside. ³³ Then get up early, and at sunrise attack the city. When he and the troops who are with him come out against you, do to him whatever you can.” ³⁴ So Abimelech and all the troops with him got up at night and waited in ambush for Shechem in four units.

³⁵ Gaal son of Ebed went out and stood at the entrance of the city gate. Then Abimelech and the troops who were with him got up from their ambush. ³⁶ When Gaal saw the troops, he said to Zebul, “Look, troops are coming down from the mountaintops!” But Zebul said to him, “The shadows of the mountains look like men to you.”

³⁷ Then Gaal spoke again, “Look, troops are coming down from the central part of the land, and one unit is coming from the direction of the Diviners’ Oak.” ³⁸ Zebul replied, “What do you have to say now? You said, ‘Who is Abimelech that we should serve him?’ Aren’t these the troops you despised? Now go and fight them!”

³⁹ So Gaal went out leading the citizens of Shechem and fought against Abimelech, ⁴⁰ but Abimelech pursued him, and Gaal fled before him. Numerous bodies were strewn as far as the entrance of the city gate. ⁴¹ Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers from Shechem.