

I. The Conspiracies Continue (vv 22-29).

- A.** Abimelech's fifteen minutes of fame and reign of terror (v 22)
- B.** The providence of God at work to confound wicked rulers (vv 23-24)
 - 1)** What is meant by evil spirit? (1 Sam 16:14)
 - 2)** What is the purpose of this evil spirit?
 - 3)** Answering the Objection: How is it that an evil spirit can be sent by God? To this let us compare Scripture with Scripture (2 Sam 24:1; 1 Chr 21:1; WCF v.4; Psa 50:21):
 - 4)** Doctrines and Application from the Point
 - a)** God is never truly absent, but is ever active, in His providence.
 - b)** We may take good heart as the Church that the Lord will work out the downfall and destruction of wicked regimes (Psa 125:3)
 - c)** This should, at the same time, fill us with trepidation, as exiles in Babylon, and earnestly pray and seek for repentance in our land (Psa 125:4-5)
- C.** Shechem's subversion of Abimelech (v 25)
- D.** The beginnings of a rebellion (vv 26-29)

II. The Crushing of a Rebellion (vv 30-49).

- A.** Word gets to Abimelech
 - 1)** This is an important reminder to us, let us be sparing with our words, and let us be ready to give an account before God at any moment (Mt 12:36-37)
 - 2)** Certainly, we have all sinned with our words and are worthy of judgment.
- B.** Abimelech launches a surprise ambush at dawn, surrounding the merry men of Shechem on every side (vv 32-34; Titus 1:15).
- C.** Zebul tries to deceive Gaal (vv 35-38).

- D.** Abimelech pursues Gaal (vv 39-45; 1 Kgs 12:25).
- E.** The Tower of Shechem is burned (vv 46-49).

III. The Fall of Abimelech (vv 50-57).

- A.** The destruction of Shechem was not enough for Abimelech (vv 50-52).
- B.** Defeated by a woman (v 53).
 - 1)** Here, again, is a wonderful picture of the work of Church, together with Christ's singular care for Her!
 - 2)** Here a great encouragement to simple, daily faithfulness, content with being unknown by any.
- C.** Abimelech's hardened heart and horrific end (vv 54-55).
 - 1)** The hardness of heart of the Anti-Judge
 - 2)** The self-murder of Abimelech
 - a)** The action of self-murder is a sin.
 - b)** The action of self-murder demonstrates a greatly hardened heart (Jms 1:15; 2 Cor 7:10)
 - c)** We do not get to determine how we are remembered after we have died, even though we may even give (or in this case, take) our life to that particular end (2 Sam 11:21)
 - 3)** The disappointing fruits of sin
- D.** Concluding reflections on the Rise and Fall of Abimelech (vv 56-57)
 - 1)** There is but one true King, the Lord Christ, and all usurpers shall be made His footstool.
 - 2)** God will not permit sin to go unpunished, for they shall assuredly find you out.
 - 3)** Yet God is merciful - for the evil of the sins of all who look to Jesus Christ have been poured out on Him, and He has taken the curse of the One greater than Jotham upon Himself.