

**Monday, April 29**

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**Judges 9:22 - 10:18**

**9 22** After Abimelech had ruled over Israel for three years, **23** God sent a spirit that stirred up trouble between Abimelech and the leading citizens of Shechem, and they revolted. **24** 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. **25** The citizens of Shechem set an ambush for Abimelech on the hilltops and robbed everyone who passed that way. But someone warned Abimelech about their plot. **26** One day Gaal son of Ebed moved to Shechem with his brothers and gained the confidence of the leading citizens of Shechem. **27** During the annual harvest festival at Shechem, held in the temple of the local god, the wine flowed freely, and everyone began cursing Abimelech. **28** "Who is Abimelech?" Gaal shouted. "He's not a true son of Shechem, so why should we be his servants? He's merely the son of Gideon, and this Zebul is merely his deputy. Serve the true sons of Hamor, the founder of Shechem. Why should we serve Abimelech? **29** If I were in charge here, I would get rid of Abimelech. I would say to him, 'Get some soldiers, and come out and fight!'" **30** But when Zebul, the leader of the city, heard what Gaal was saying, he was furious. **31** He sent messengers to Abimelech in Arumah, telling him, "Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers have come to live in Shechem, and now they are inciting the city to rebel against you. **32** Come by night with an army and hide out in the fields. **33** In the morning, as soon as it is daylight, attack the city. When Gaal and those who are with him come out against you, you can do with them as you wish." **34** So Abimelech and all his men went by night and split into four groups, stationing themselves around Shechem. **35** Gaal was standing at the city gates when Abimelech and his army came out of hiding. **36** When Gaal saw them, he said to Zebul, "Look, there are people coming down from the hilltops!" Zebul replied, "It's just the shadows on the hills that look like men." **37** But again Gaal said, "No, people are coming down from the hills. And another group is coming down the road past the Diviners' Oak. " **38** Then Zebul turned on him and asked, "Now where is that big mouth of yours? Wasn't it you that said, 'Who is Abimelech, and why should we be his servants?' The men you mocked are right outside the city! Go out and fight them!" **39** So Gaal led the leading citizens of Shechem into battle against Abimelech. **40** But Abimelech chased him, and many of Shechem's men were wounded and fell along the road as they retreated to the city gate. **41** Abimelech returned to Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem. **42** The next day the people of Shechem went out into the fields to battle. When

Abimelech heard about it, **43** he divided his men into three groups and set an ambush in the fields. When Abimelech saw the people coming out of the city, he and his men jumped up from their hiding places and attacked them. **44** Abimelech and his group stormed the city gate to keep the men of Shechem from getting back in, while Abimelech's other two groups cut them down in the fields. **45** The battle went on all day before Abimelech finally captured the city. He killed the people, leveled the city, and scattered salt all over the ground. **46** When the leading citizens who lived in the tower of Shechem heard what had happened, they ran and hid in the temple of Baal-berith. **47** Someone reported to Abimelech that the citizens had gathered in the temple, **48** so he led his forces to Mount Zalmon. He took an ax and chopped some branches from a tree, then put them on his shoulder. "Quick, do as I have done!" he told his men. **49** So each of them cut down some branches, following Abimelech's example. They piled the branches against the walls of the temple and set them on fire. So all the people who had lived in the tower of Shechem died—about 1,000 men and women. **50** Then Abimelech attacked the town of Thebez and captured it. **51** But there was a strong tower inside the town, and all the men and women—the entire population—fled to it. They barricaded themselves in and climbed up to the roof of the tower. **52** Abimelech followed them to attack the tower. But as he prepared to set fire to the entrance, **53** a woman on the roof dropped a millstone that landed on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. **54** He quickly said to his young armor bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me! Don't let it be said that a woman killed Abimelech!" So the young man ran him through with his sword, and he died. **55** When Abimelech's men saw that he was dead, they disbanded and returned to their homes. **56** In this way, God punished Abimelech for the evil he had done against his father by murdering his seventy brothers. **57** God also punished the men of Shechem for all their evil. So the curse of Jotham son of Gideon was fulfilled.

**10 1** After Abimelech died, Tola son of Puah, son of Dodo, was the next person to rescue Israel. He was from the tribe of Issachar but lived in the town of Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. **2** He judged Israel for twenty-three years. When he died, he was buried in Shamir. **3** After Tola died, Jair from Gilead judged Israel for twenty-two years. **4** His thirty sons rode around on thirty donkeys, and they owned thirty towns in the land of Gilead, which are still called the Towns of Jair. **5** When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon. **6** Again the Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. They served the images of Baal and Ashtoreth, and the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Philistia. They abandoned the LORD and no longer served him at all. **7** So the LORD burned with anger against Israel, and he turned them over to the Philistines and the Ammonites, **8** who began to oppress them that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites east of the Jordan River in the land of the Amorites (that is, in Gilead). **9** The Ammonites also crossed to the west side of the Jordan and attacked Judah, Benjamin, and

Ephraim. The Israelites were in great distress. **10** Finally, they cried out to the LORD for help, saying, “We have sinned against you because we have abandoned you as our God and have served the images of Baal.” **11** The LORD replied, “Did I not rescue you from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, **12** the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites? When they oppressed you, you cried out to me for help, and I rescued you. **13** Yet you have abandoned me and served other gods. So I will not rescue you anymore. **14** Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen! Let them rescue you in your hour of distress!” **15** But the Israelites pleaded with the LORD and said, “We have sinned. Punish us as you see fit, only rescue us today from our enemies.” **16** Then the Israelites put aside their foreign gods and served the LORD . And he was grieved by their misery.**17** At that time the armies of Ammon had gathered for war and were camped in Gilead, and the people of Israel assembled and camped at Mizpah. **18** The leaders of Gilead said to each other, “Whoever attacks the Ammonites first will become ruler over all the people of Gilead.”

#### **Luke 24:13 - 53**

**24 13** That same day two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. **14** As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. **15** As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. **16** But God kept them from recognizing him. **17** He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?” They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. **18** Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.” **19** “What things?” Jesus asked. “The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said. “He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. **20** But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. **21** We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago. **22** “Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. **23** They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! **24** Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.” **25** Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. **26** Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” **27** Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining

from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. **28** By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, **29** but they begged him, “Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.” So he went home with them. **30** As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. **31** Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared! **32** They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” **33** And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, **34** who said, “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter. ” **35** Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.**36** And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. **37** But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! **38**“Why are you frightened?” he asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt?**39** Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.” **40** As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. **41** Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he ate it as they watched. **44** Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” **45**Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. **46** And he said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. **47** It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’ **48** You are witnesses of all these things. **49** “And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.” **50** Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them. **51** While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. **52** So they worshiped him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy. **53** And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God.

### **Psalm 100:1 - 5**

**100** **1** Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! **2** Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. **3** Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his.

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. **4** Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. **5** For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

**Proverbs 14:11 - 12**

**14 11** The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the godly will flourish. **12** There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.