

# Judges 8:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

## Analysis

**His concubine that was in Shechem**—the Hebrew פִּילְגֶּשׁ (pilegesh, 'concubine') refers to a secondary wife with lower status than a full wife. That she was **in Shechem** suggests she remained in her father's household rather than Gideon's in Ophrah. **She also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech**—(אַבִימֶלֶךְ) —the name means 'my father is king' or 'father of a king,' a supremely ironic choice given Gideon's rejection of kingship (v. 23).

This naming reveals Gideon's true ambitions. Though he denied wanting to establish a dynasty, he names his son 'father of a king.' Abimelech's Shechemite connections (his mother's hometown had Canaanite inhabitants) and his inferior status as son of a concubine created the perfect storm for the murderous rivalry described in chapter 9. When leaders say one thing publicly but signal different ambitions privately, they create confusion and competition that devastates the next generation. Names matter in Scripture—they prophesy destiny, and Abimelech fulfilled his ominous name in the most horrifying way.

## Historical Context

Shechem was a Canaanite city with a temple to Baal-berith (9:4), located in the territory of Manasseh. Its mixed Israelite-Canaanite population made it a center of religious syncretism. The city had significant covenant history (Joshua 24:1-28), making its apostasy particularly tragic. Concubines' sons often had inferior inheritance rights, creating rivalry with sons of full wives.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How do the mixed messages you send create confusion and harm in the next generation?
2. What ambitions lurk beneath your public denials, revealed in your private choices?
3. In what ways do compromised family arrangements set up future tragedy?

## Interlinear Text

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וְיַאֲגֹם	לְזִ	יְלִדָּה	בְּשֶׁכֶם	אֲשֶׁר	וּפְלִגְשָׁוֹ	And his concubine	H834	that was in Shechem	H7927	she also bare	H3205	H0	H1571	H1931
הָיָם	בְּ	אַתָּה	יְدַעַת	שְׁמָה	אַבִּימְלָךְ	him a son	H1121	he called	H7760	whose name	H8034	H40	Abimelech	H853

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