

# 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

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**His concubine that was in Shechem**—the Hebrew פִּילְגֶּשֶׁת (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** (אַבִּימֶלֶךְ)—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

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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

**Psalms 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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וּפִילָגְשׁוֹ	אֵשֶׁת	בְּשֶׁכֶם	וְלִדָּהּ	לִּ	גַּם	הָיָא
And his concubine	H834	that was in Shechem	she also bare	H0	H1571	H1931
H6370		H7927	H3205			
בֶּן	וַיִּשֶׁם	אֶת	שְׁמוֹ	אֲבִימֶלֶךְ:		
him a son	he called	H853	whose name	Abimelech		
H1121	H7760		H8034	H40		