

~BRAMBLE (145)

[Hebrew, 'a-tadh']

- The Hebrew word is identified as referring to the **bramble** or the **buckthorn**, *Rhamnus*, in *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by Brown, Driver, and Briggs (1980, p. 31).
- The Palestinian **buckthorn**, *Rhamnus palaestina*, is a straggling bush, growing about 1 to 2 meters (3 to 6 feet) high, **its twigs lined with sharp, strong prickles**. Though frequent in the lower warmer regions of the country, it is also found in mountainous regions, as at Jerusalem.
- Walter Baumgartner identifies 'a-tadh' as the **boxthorn** or, *Lycium europaeum*, a thorny shrub growing about 1 to 2 meters (3 to 6 feet) high, blossoming with small violet flowers and bearing small, round, edible red berries. [Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament, Leiden, 1967, p. 36]

See Also THORN

- The **bramble** appears most prominently in the account of;
- Once upon a time the trees went to anoint a king over them. So they said to the olive tree, Do be king over us. (**Judges 9:8**)
- But the olive tree said to them; Must I give up my fatness with which they glorify God and men, and must I go to wave over the other trees? (**Judges 9:9**)
- Then the trees said to the fig tree; You come, be queen over us. (**Judges 9:10**)
- But the fig tree said to them; Must I give up my sweetness and my good produce, and must I go to wave over the other trees? (**Judges 9:11**)
- Next the trees said to the vine; You come, be queen over us. (**Judges 9:12**)
- In turn the vine said to them; Must I give up my new wine that makes God and men rejoice, and must I go to wave over the

trees? (**Judges 9:13**)

- Finally all the other trees said to the **bramble**; You come, be king over us. (**Judges 9:14**)
- At this the bramble said to the trees; If it is in truth that you are anointing me as king over you, come, seek refuge under my shadow. But if not, let fire come out of the **bramble** and consume the cedars of Lebanon. (**Judges 9:15**)
- In which the olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine are contrasted with the lowly **bramble**. As the rest of the chapter makes evident, the valuable plants represent those worthy persons, such as Gideon's 70 sons, who did not seek the position of kingship over their fellow Israelites, while the **bramble**, useful only for fuel, represents the kingship of Abimelech, the murderer of all, except one, of the other sons of Gideon, his brothers.
- In time Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to the brothers of his mother and began speaking to them and to all the family of the house of his mothers father, saying; (**Judges 9:1**)
- Speak, please, in the hearing of all the landowners of Shechem, Which is better for you, for seventy men, all the sons of Jerubbaal, to rule over you or for one man to rule over you? And you must remember that your bone and your flesh I am. (**Judges 9:2**)
- So the brothers of his mother began speaking all these words about him in the hearing of all the landowners of Shechem so that their heart inclined toward Abimelech, for they said; He is our own brother. (**Judges 9:3**)
- Then they gave him seventy pieces of silver from the house of Baal-berith, and with them Abimelech proceeded to hire idle and insolent men, that they might accompany him. (**Judges 9:4**)
- After that he went to the house of his father at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, upon one stone, but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left over, because he had hid. (**Judges 9:5**)
- Subsequently all the landowners of Shechem and all the house of Millo gathered together and went and made Abimelech reign as

king, close by the big tree, the pillar that was in Shechem.
(Judges 9:6)

- And now if it is in truth and in faultlessness that you have acted and that you went making Abimelech king, and if it is goodness that you have exercised toward Jerubbaal and his household, and if you have done to him as the doing of his hands deserved.
(Judges 9:16)
- When my father fought for you and went risking his soul that he might deliver you out of Midian's hand. (Judges 9:17)
- And you, for your part, have risen up against the household of my father today that you might kill his sons, seventy men, upon one stone, and that you might make Abimelech, the son of his slave girl, king over the landowners of Shechem just because he is your own brother. (Judges 9:18)
- Yes, if it is in truth and in faultlessness that you have acted toward Jerubbaal and his household this day, rejoice over Abimelech and let him too rejoice over you. (Judges 9:19)
- But if not, let fire come out of Abimelech and consume the landowners of Shechem and the house of Millo, and let fire come out of the landowners of Shechem and the house of Millo and consume Abimelech. (Judges 9:20)
- Jotham's suggestion that the other figurative trees seek refuge in the shadow of the **bramble** was doubtless ironic, as the low-growing **bramble** obviously could not provide shadow for trees, especially the stately cedars mentioned.
- The warning was given by Jotham that fire might come out of the **bramble** and consume the cedars of Lebanon, perhaps alluding to the ease with which the dry and leafless plant might catch fire during the hot summer months.
- Before your pots feel the kindled **bramble**, the live green as well as the burning, he will carry them off as a stormy wind. (Psalms 58:9)
- Also refers to the use of **brambles** for fuel.
- The Hebrew word '*a-tadh*' also appears as the name of a place at;

- Then they came to the threshing floor of **Atad**, which is in the region of the Jordan, and there they carried on a very great and heavy wailing and he kept up the mourning rites for his father seven days. (**Genesis 50:10**)

See Also BRIER