

Deborah: Strength through Sound Judgment

Introduction:

In Judges, we have a recurring cycle of sin, suffering, petition, deliverance, and the death of the deliverer. This era could largely be described as a time of lawless & rebellion against God. See Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25. By the time we reach Judges 4 – Israel has already had 3 judges. In Judges 4:1-2 – God hands the Israelites over to a Canaanite king. His domination lasted 20 years.

I. Bible Characters in Judges 4-5. Time period: ~1200 BC.

- A. Jabin. King of Canaanites. Ancestors defeated by Joshua a century before.
- B. Sisera.
 - 1. Sisera probably very skilled in battle & brave – which is why he elevated to this position by Jabin.
- C. Lappidoth. The husband of Deborah.
- D. Deborah. “Honeybee.”
 - 1. She judged Israel under a palm tree (4:5). People come to her to settle disputes. She was also a prophetess. A wife, a mother.
- E. Barak. “lightning.” At the summons of Deborah – makes war against Jabin.
- F. Heber the Kenite. Descendent of Hobab. (Hobab = Moses’ bro-in-law.)
 - 1. Kenites were known for “riding the fence” w/their allegiance.
- G. Jael. The wife of Heber. Killed Sisera w/a tent peg while he slept. (4:17-22)

II. What can we learn from this story?

- A. Deborah’s position as prophetess is not proof that women may serve in leadership capacities today.
 - 1. Prophetess referred to 9 times in scripture.
 - 2. Each time a prophetess seen in scripture – is in close relation to a man.
 - 3. Deborah led – but in such a way to promote male leadership – keeping a subordinate role.
- B. Some men need to wake up & get going spiritually. (4:6)
 - 1. Barak had to be reminded of his responsibility.
 - 2. Men...wake up – seize the responsibility God has called you to!
- C. A comparison between Sisera & Barak.
 - 1. Sisera – had a great deal of faith – but in the wrong things.
 - 2. Barak – Not great faith – but little faith.
 - 3. **Little faith, rightly directed, is far superior to great faith in the wrong object.**
 - 4. Heb. 11:32 – ironic? Why wasn’t Deborah listed?
 - a) 11:34 - *Gained strength in weakness.*
 - 5. Barak – who was weak in his faith became strong. Deborah is the primary reason why his faith became strong.
- D. The outcome of Deborah’s influence: 4:23-24
 - 1. 5:2 - A turning point in the relationship between Israel & Canaan.
- E. It is no different today! Has God called you to serve? To lead?
- F. **Trust in God – work through your weakness in a way that makes you strong.**

Conclusion: How is your faith today? Your relationship w/God?