

JUDGES AND RUTH: FACING GROUP APOSTASY AS INDIVIDUALS

Part IV: Overcoming The Fear Of Failure As God's Male Leaders

(Judges 4:1-5:31)

I. Introduction

- A. 1 Timothy 2:9-15 reveals God wants **men** to lead in their marriages, homes, churches, businesses and governments: regardless what opposing "politically correct" ideas float about, God wants **men to lead**.
- B. However, men may not assume responsibility simply because they fear they may not get a following if they assume their headship, or might fail due to human lack, keeping them from filling these proper roles.
- C. Judges 4:1-5:31 is a study in **how** one handles the fear of a lack of followers in God's male leaders:

II. Overcoming The Fear Of Failure As God's Male Leaders, Judges 4:1-5:31.

- A. In Judges 4:1-3, Israel needed a strong leader to deliver her from oppressors who had 900 iron chariots!
- B. However, not a single **adult male** had the **FAITH** in God so God could use him to lead the nation, 4:4-8:
 1. At this time, the **woman**, Deborah, judged Israel, Judges 4:4-5.
 2. The reason a **woman** judged Israel in spite of its **patristic** culture arose from a fear men had that they would not get a following or be successful in trying to overthrow the powerful Canaanites, Jud. 4:6-8:
 - a. As a prophetess of God, Deborah received a message from the Lord to urge a man named Barak to lead the people of Israel to deliverance from Jabin's oppression, Judges 4:6-7.
 - b. However, Barak agreed to fight **providing** the prophetess, **Deborah** came **WITH him** to ensure his success, Judges 4:8! **Barak lacked the faith that God would use HIM or that GOD would cause ISRAEL to FOLLOW HIM to OVERTHROW the powerful Canaanites!**
- C. Since Barak depended on the woman, Deborah, though God would give Barak victory, Deborah predicted the **honor** of the victory would go to a **woman** who would kill the Canaanite commander, Sisera, Jud. 4:9.
- D. Then, in the rest of the account, including Deborah's victory song following Israel's deliverance, the theme of the **need** for male leaders to **trust** God for total leadership blessing repeatedly surfaces:
 1. Barak attacked Jabin's forces with Deborah's encouragement, and Jabin the Canaanite was put to flight in spite of his superior weaponry of 900 iron chariots, Judges 4:10-16 with 4:3b.
 2. In the process, God used a Kenite woman, a **Gentile woman** of a **nomadic tribe** that was **historically neutral** to turn on Jabin's commander, Sisera, and kill him by stealth, 4:17-22; Z.P.E.B., v. 3, p. 783.
 3. Sisera's fall encouraged Israel to defeat eventually Jabin himself, Judges 4:23-24.
 4. Thus, the prophetess, Deborah along with Barak composed a song to commemorate the cause of this victory, and it provides a great lesson for men who are hesitant to assume responsible leadership:
 - a. By way of introduction, Deborah's song gives praise to **God** for raising up Israel's **followers** to help in the battle victory, Judges 5:1-2. This not only recognized God's use of male warriors, but also focused on God's use of a Kenite **woman** to turn the tide by destroying Sisera herself!
 - b. Then, this theme is variously portrayed in the rest of the song: (a) Negatively, the song details the great intimidation of males in Israel at the time, 5:3-11. (b) Positively, the acts of faith in Deborah and Barak are mentioned, 5:12-15b. (c) Negatively, Deborah detailed the faithless fear that kept some of the tribes from joining Balak to overthrow Jabin's forces, 5:15c-17. (d) However, the heroic exploits of the men of Zebulun and Naphtali are mentioned, 5:18. (e) Negatively, the town of Meroz in the area of the battle did not help Israel, so Deborah cursed it, 5:23. (f) Positively, God's own interventions to help Israel are listed, 5:19-22. (g) In closing, Deborah contrasted the great deed of the Kenite woman who slew Sisera with the fear of Sisera's mother, 5:24-27, 28-31a. (f) With this final emphasis on two **women**, a **subtle critique** on the **faithlessness** of **Israel's men**, the chapter closes in announcing Israel enjoyed peace for the next forty years, Judges 5:31b.

Lesson: When God wanted to **USE Balak** to deliver Israel, his fear of a lack of **FOLLOWERS** or his own human **LACK** for the job hindered him from total obedience, so he lost some reward in the victory!

Application: (1) If we **MEN** do not assume our **GOD-ASSIGNED** leadership roles for fear of how our **FOLLOWERS** will respond, or because we think we **HUMANLY** lack for the role in question, we **SIN** in **UNBELIEF** in **GOD!** (2) We must confess our unbelief, **TRUST GOD** and **ACT** for total blessing!