

JUDGES AND RUTH: FACING GROUP APOSTASY AS INDIVIDUALS
Part VII: Assuming Responsibility As SUBORDINATES To Support God's Leaders
(Judges 8:33-10:18)

I. Introduction

- A. God holds Christian leaders more accountable than their subordinates for their actions, James 3:1.
- B. However, just because leaders are **more** accountable does not mean subordinates are **not** accountable! Judges 8:33-10:18 shows God holds subordinates accountable for how they treat His leaders as follows:

II. Assuming Responsibility As SUBORDINATES To Support God's Leaders, Judges 8:33-10:18.

- A. When the people of Israel departed from following God (Judges 8:33), they failed to be considerate to God's leader in Gideon and his family regardless of the great deliverance they enjoyed from Midianite oppression due to Gideon's leadership, Judges 8:34-35.
- B. This lack of consideration helped to sprout great trouble for Gideon's family, Judges 9:1-6:
 - 1. Abimelech, an illegitimate son of Gideon's, asserted a plan to destroy the rest of Gideon's sons in an effort to grab the leadership spotlight and be king of the people of Shechem, Judges 9:1-3.
 - 2. In this way, Abimelech publicly slaughtered all but one of Gideon's other sons, Judges 9:4-6.
- C. As a result, the people of God reaped the whirlwind in terms of God's discipline, Judges 9:7-10:18:
 - 1. Gideon's youngest son who escaped by hiding himself pronounced judgment on the people who supported Abimelech for mistreating Gideon's household in spite of Gideon's ministry to them, 9:7-21.
 - 2. That judgment came as war that destroyed the followers of Abimelech along with Abimelech himself:
 - a. God stirred up strife between Abimelech and some of his followers at Shechem, Judges 9:22-24.
 - b. This led to civil war where Abimelech was pitted against those who rebelled against him and who followed a Canaanite usurper of his rule, Judges 9:25-33.
 - c. In the end, the city of Shechem was destroyed (Judges 9:34-49) and Abimelech was slain, 9:50-55.
 - 3. Judges 9:56-57 concludes this tragedy was God's judgment for the mistreatment of Gideon's family.
 - 4. As a result, the people of Israel fell ever deeper into apostasy and its lack of God's blessing, 10:1-9:
 - a. The people experienced some deliverance in the rule of the judge, Tola in Judges 10:1-2.
 - b. Next came Jair who became vain by putting his many sons on donkeys for prestige, Jud. 10:3a-4a, and whose sons each ruled a city, Judges 10:4b. However, his reign was inconsequential, Jud. 10:5.
 - c. Eventually, the decline in good spiritual leaders led to the people serving foreign gods outright, 10:6
 - d. Accordingly, God turned the people of Israel over to foreign domination, Judges 10:7-9.
 - 5. In desperation, Israel cried out to the Lord for deliverance, Judges 10:10.
 - 6. Yet, the Lord at first refused to help because of the repeated apostasy of the nation, Judges 10:11-14:
 - a. God replied to this call for help that He had already delivered them from many oppressors, 11-12.
 - b. However, their replacement of worshipping God with the worship of idols, which apostasy was in part signaled by their mistreatment of Gideon's family, led God to refuse to help anymore, 10:13a.
 - c. In fact, God urged the people to go and cry unto their false gods for deliverance, Judges 10:13b-14!
 - 7. Hence, only when Israel finally turned from her idols did God intervene to help, Judges 10:15-17.
 - 8. However, when the people were ready to follow God, there was a shortage of godly leaders, the same problem that existed when God first called Gideon to lead Israel to victory, Jud. 10:18 with 5:1-6:15!

Lesson: *God held the PEOPLE of Israel responsible for sin when they disrespected their godly leader, Gideon through mistreating his sons, for their mistreatment led to God's judgment and a lack of good leaders to Israel's eventual own harm!*

Application: *God's people who are in SUBORDINATE roles are accountable to GOD to follow His leading THROUGH His human leaders, and to treat these leaders with consideration. Specifically, (1) God wants His people not to forget how he has used human overseers to provide spiritual victory for them so as to protect and honor their family members along with them, cf. Judges 9:16-20, 56-57. (2) God wants His people to view His human leaders NOT as men to be DISHONORED (Judges 8:5-7), neither to be exalted as innately superhuman (Judges 8:22-23), but as mere men who trust God and are thus used of Him to their OWN great blessing, cf. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 4:1-6 and 2 Corinthians 4:7.*