

ISRAEL'S JUDGES: DEBORAH & GIDEON

Tonight we continue our study of Israel's judges as we look at two of Israel's major judges.

DEBORAH (4:1-24; 5:31b)

Keys to Understanding Deborah's story:

(1) Key Players: Deborah – “BEE”; Jael – “MOUNTAIN GOAT”; BARAK – “LIGHTNING BOLT”

– Jabin & Sisera – Canaanite King and General

(2) Deborah's Flaw: She was A WOMAN

Q: How is this a flaw?

> Deborah did what the MAN WOULDN'T DO ... lead Israel into battle.

> Both Deborah and Jael demonstrate this “flaw:” Sisera was killed BY A WOMAN!

– It was considered a disgrace for a soldier to be killed by a woman. (see Judges 9:52-53)

Q: How do later Biblical authors recollect this story?

> Read 1 Samuel 12:11 and Hebrews 11:32

> Who gets the glory? Why?

(3) Can we think of a time when Deborah's “flaw” affects us?

→ While men and women's roles are largely CULTURAL, are there some Biblical mandates?

– 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-33 elaborate

→ What happens if I don't “answer the call” of God to do something He asks?

**** Final Thought:** Again, despite Israel's lack of faithfulness (4:1), in their distress they cry out to God and He shows MERCY and GRACE! (Mercy – not receiving the punishment you deserve; Grace – receiving the good that you don't deserve) All of this ... and there is no evidence of repentance on Israel's behalf. If God will “bail us out,” why strive for obedience? What's the point?

– see Luke 11:24-26

GIDEON (Judges 6-8)

We will break Gideon's story into 4 major events, each with very practical implications!

Part 1: The CALL (6:11-16)

Q: What happened when the Israelites cried out to God to relieve their oppression?

Q: How does the angel of the Lord address Gideon (v.12)? What is humorous about this episode?
(Hint: compare Gideon's title with his present actions)

> Gideon's Response: DOUBT. Why? CIRCUMSTANCES

→ Key instructions: "Go IN THE STRENGTH YOU HAVE and save Israel ..."

> Note the contrast between the angel of the Lord's words and Gideon's response:
"STRENGTH" vs. "WEAKEST" "LEAST"

> cf: Mt. 17:20

> What "leadership" traits was Gideon missing? The right HERITAGE; the right POSITION
* I.e., we might ask, what did Gideon believe was necessary for him to lead Israel?

> What was the angel's response to Gideon's doubts?

(1) Am I not SENDING YOU?

(2) I will be WITH YOU

Keys:

→ Maybe our difficult circumstances aren't a result of God's missing presence ... might they be an opportunity for God to show His presence! (ill: Apollo 13)

[NASA Director](#): *This could be the worst disaster NASA's ever faced.*

[Gene Kranz](#): *With all due respect, sir, I believe this is gonna be our finest hour.*

→ Jesus and me ... a MAJORITY!

Part 2: The FLEECE (6:36-40)

→ Consider how we use the concept of "laying a fleece before God."

→ Consider the irony: Visited by the angel of the Lord, Gideon asks for a SIGN!
(see vv.22-23)

> Why would this be necessary? Gideon couldn't BELIEVE.

> The fleece is not a MODEL for us ... rather, it demonstrates DOUBT.

> See v.17 ... 3 TIMES Gideon seeks signs.

→ When are signs good? When are they unnecessary?