Times of the Judges

LACK OF FAITH

Wednesday, November 11

Reading: Judges 4-5

> ***Judges 4:6*** *[Deborah] sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor.* ***7*** *I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'"* ***8*** *Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go."* ***9*** *"Very well," Deborah said, "I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh,*

Deborah and Barak are a study in contrast. Deborah was judge during the oppression of King Jabin and his general Sisera. At God's command, she sends for a leading man in the community and gives him God's instructions for defeating Jabin's army. He is told where and when to attack and is assured that God Himself will lead Sisera into the trap. Barak has been promised victory! All he must do is step out in faith and trust God. But he won't! He has been promised that the Lord will be with him, but he won't go unless Deborah comes along too. His confidence was not so much in God as it was in God's spokeswoman.

As a result of his lack of faith, Barak would not get credit for the victory. With Deborah at his side, Barak leads the troops into battle and as promised, God gives them victory. Sisera's army is destroyed by Israel's army and a God-directed flooding of the Kishon River (5:20-21). However, General Sisera himself escapes.

He seeks refuge in the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite; a place where he believes he is among friends and safe from Israel's search parties. However, Jael lulls the general to sleep and then drives a tent peg through his skull thus ending the threat. The story ends with Deborah's song of praise to the Lord. While Barak gets mentioned (5:12, 15), Jael is the real hero of this song (5:6, 24-27).

LESSON ONE: Barak lost more than credit for the victory because of his weak faith. He lost the opportunity to see God work personally in his life. He had more confidence in the presence of Deborah than in the presence of the Lord. Do you ever look for strength from other people instead of in the Lord? Serving with others is important, but the Source of our confidence and strength must always come from the Lord (Ephesians 6:10).

LESSON TWO: Do you ever act like Barak? You know exactly what God wants you to do (witness, serve, reach out, etc.). And you have all God's power available to you but, either from lack of faith or ignorance, you refuse to use it. How can we conquer the cowardice in our lives to do what we know God has called us to do?

LESSON THREE: How would you respond to this quotation from D. L. Moody?

> "The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him. I will try my utmost to be that man."