

THE WAY HE WENT ABOUT IT

“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.” (Judg 4:9)

Here are the facts (See Judges 4:1 - 24).

- Because Israel sinned God sold them into slavery to the Canaanites.
- Sisera was the commander of the Canaanite army and had 900 iron chariots.
- Because of the cruelty they endured, Israel cried out to God for help.
- God chose Barak to defeat the Canaanites. Deborah, the prophetess, sent for him and gave him this command: **“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. 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.'” (Judg 4:6-7).**
- Barak responded: **“If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go.” (Judg 4:8)**
- Then Deborah said, **“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.” (Judges 4:9).**
- Remember! Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).
- Apparently God looked into Barak’s heart and saw something He didn’t like!
- Let us learn from his mistake!

There was obviously something about the way Barak “went about it” that God didn’t like! It seems like Barak surrendered “if” when he should have surrendered “all”. In the final analysis, you either surrender or you don’t! If you really do surrender, then how to you have the right to dictate terms?

Every parent can tell the difference between submission and defiance. The submissive child may ask questions and seek for clarification, but never delivers an ultimatum. Jesus, the Son of God, asked questions but never swerved from doing God’s will and not His own. Job too had questions but concluded that even if God chose to slay him, he would still trust Him (Job. 13:15). Gideon also sought for confirmation, but never dared to challenge God or demand a change of plans. Paul was content even though he was being poured out like a drink offering (2 Tim. 4:6. Peter too could die with a happy heart because he was being submissive to the plan that God had laid out for him many years before (Jn. 21:19; 2 Pet. 1:14).

Barak, however, offered to God a conditional surrender. He didn’t ask for mercy or plead for a change of circumstances. He made a demand! God commanded him to take 10,000 men to Mt. Tabor and promised him victory over Sisera. Barak agreed to do it, but only on his own terms.

The rebuke of God was gentle. The ground did not open up to swallow him as it did during the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Nu. 16:31 - 34). Nor was he rejected like King Saul (1 Sam. 15:22, 23). God merely chose to give his honor to a woman. How humiliating!

When a well known man quit his job with a prominent organization, a co-worker teased him by saying: “Don’t worry, we have hired a part-time girl to take your place!” Touche!

So when Barak chose to ascend the throne and dictate policy, God chose to give his honor to a woman. When Deborah composed the song of victory, it was this diminutive housewife whose name was immortalized. **“Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite . . . she struck Sisera and crushed his head” (Judges 5:24, 26).**

So, it is not only necessary to obey God, it is also necessary to do it in the “right way”.