

Gender Bias

(Definitely)

Regulated Expansion

To assist the people of Israel, on their way to a more stable understanding of the mission that the LORD was burning into the fabric of their culture; the LORD sent them some assistance. It is worth noting that the LORD did not punish their ignorance by neglecting them. God did not say, of the people; that they would just have to return to the law of Moses, and do their best to re-establish their devotion to it. As before, with the priests and prophets, the LORD sent them assistance. To appreciate this assistance, let us go back to the time that it first appeared, in the time of Moses. Actually, we will show that it appeared in two parts: one political and the other spiritual. The political part is seen in this communion that occurred between two servants of God.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?

And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.

And Moses' father in law said unto him,

The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee:

Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.

(Exodus 18:13-22)

The spiritual part is seen in this communion among several servants of God, and the LORD, as negotiated on the nation's behalf by Moses.

And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

(Numbers 11:24-25)

Even though there were only seventy men in the original call; for the LORD'S people, this is an open means of service. Moreover, it is not a type of service that has any geographical or political boundaries of confinement, necessarily. To illustrate that, the LORD extended the episode of the call of the seventy, thusly.

But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp.

And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp.

And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them.

And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

(Numbers 11:26-29)

Later, the people lost sight of the power that they could access through these two groups of men. In that day, they drifted into the "seat of the pants" type of outreach to the LORD. This happened in both the political and the religious senses. The religious transformation in the trajectory of Israel came in the following way. (Yes, this does, too, have a political flavor, but it is primarily designed to send a strong call to worship.)

And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their

enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.

(Judges 2:10-17)

A cyclical pattern was starting to develop; in that, the influence of the judges disappeared after they died, and new judges had to be sent to bring the people to repentance.

And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

(Judges 2:18-19)

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The political apparatus of the congregation of Israel did not lose sight of the power that they could accrue from attaching themselves to the religious portion of the LORD'S grace. An example of their understanding of the power that rested in their sister area of religious service is seen in the following incident. This is as much an attempt to obtain the LORD'S protection, as it is a way of serving God.

*And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.*

*And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son.*

*And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.*

*Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image*

*and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.*

*And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.*

(Judges 17:1-5)

Why do we say that it was more about protection, than being about worship? One place that we see the answer to that question starting to develop is when the man, Micah, did this.

*And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.*

*And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou?*

*And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place.*

*And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals.*

*So the Levite went in. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.*

*Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.*

(Judges 17:7-13)

If this had been an isolated event, it would not give a clear picture of the expectation of protection that the priestly order provided. To give us further insight, here is added evidence of the protection expectation, as highlighted by an encounter with the children of Dan. To move this to a protection mode, we see, here, the turmoil that provided the need for protection in this action of the Danites.

*And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war. And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim. And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.*

*Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.*

(Judges 18:11-14)

The underlying principle of the soldiers is the same as what occurred with the Ark of the Covenant, during a pivotal encounter with the Philistines, in the time of Samuel and the priests, Hophni and Phinehas. As at that time, these soldiers of Israel, in the tribe of Dan, were looking for a similarly motivational source of motivation for battle.

*And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him. And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war.*

*And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?*

*And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?*

*And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.*

(Judges 18:15-21)

The finished evidence of the protection expectation is seen in the encounter of Micah and the Danites. In that encounter, both of them indicate that the priest was for their protection, and not as a steward of the oracles of the LORD, nor as a teacher and reminder of the need to follow God's commandments.

*And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan. And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?*

*And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?*

*And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household.*

*And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.*

(Judges 18:22-26)

The priestly reputation of the Levite did not translate into protective ability for the detached citizen. Therefore, on both sides of the societal divide, the people started to understand that there was a constant need for protection, and for regulation. Because they needed an advocate, the detached citizen welcomed the activity of the judges. However, such dependence can become limiting, as it did in the politics of Deborah. The lesson starts when Deborah tells one of the captains of the people that he needed to show his commitment to his office because the LORD had commissioned him to perform certain actions; not, her.

*And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.*

*And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.*

(Judges 4:4-7)

Barak the son of Abinoam really needed to take the lead, as had been done in prior times; such as, during the time of Moses. For instance, if he had recalled this event of his past, the memory would have served him well in his, then, present time, requirement for active duty

*And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.*

*And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*

(Exodus 14:10-14)

Unfortunately, Barak tried to water down his obligation to serve. Instead of taking up the charge, and performing the work of the LORD, Barak decided that he would hide behind the connectedness of Deborah. In that action, Barak was trying to insure that Deborah's authority was also a part of the dynamics of the situation. So, to move things along, Deborah gave Barak

what he wanted, but, not without significant price to the mission of the military.

*And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.*

*And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.*

*And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.*

*And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.*

(Judges 4:8-10)

In that time, the military, as well as the detached, non-military individual leaned on the judges. Wherefore the judges served as the first step in the regulated expansion of Israel. The judges were also a pivotal position for loosening the gender bias of the people of Israel, as we see with Barak. It does not seem that Barak ever considered the gender of Deborah, here.

*Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. And they showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.*

*And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee?*

*So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.*

(Judges 4:11-15)

Though this was a great victory for the people of the LORD; still, it was not a completed victory, yet. The timidity of Barak needed to be addressed, as an example of what to avoid. Because of Barak's fixation on the presence of Deborah, the victory would include a bit of siphoning off of the glory of the LORD that was capable of being expressed through the victory. There would be a missing measure of glory that Israel could have achieved for the LORD, if the warrior had applied full faith, in dependence only on the LORD.

*But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left. Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the*

*house of Heber the Kenite.*

*And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.*

*And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.*

*And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.*

*Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.*

(Judges 4:16-20)

Yes, regulated expansion was moving forward, but the work of the judges was only an interim step in the process. The dependence on the judge, Deborah, needed to be set aside by the chosen ones of the LORD. But Israel needed motivation to proceed; and it needed to understand that, because Israel's fixation was on a human agent, the result depended on certain circumstantial happenings.

*Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.*

*And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest.*

*And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.*

(Judges 4:21-22)

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Today, this sort of things continues. Today, there are many places that are still engaging in the misuse of Deborah. Among these places are many centers of worship. In this misuse, a significant challenge to the gender bias of Scripture is being pressed forward. We did say that there was a loosening of the gender bias of the world of Scripture, but we did not say it was eliminated. We still need to dismiss the challenges to Scripture that try to totally disavow the bias. These challenges to Scripture depend on the power of the public for their authority. They are of the sort that is described in this portion of the writings of the apostle Paul.

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching

ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

(2 Timothy 4:1-4)

There are many entities that really need to refresh their understanding of the place of Deborah in the development of the nation of Israel, and in the extension of that example. These entities need to go back to viewing Deborah as being a judge. In the church, they must recall that Deborah was not a priest; nor was she a priestess. This is where the separation of church and state needs to be rigorously applied.

The recognition of the distinct election differences for priests, prophets and judges must be carried into the present, and respect for the LORD'S differentiation must be ever present in our presentations and representations. This is true, even when the differentiation introduces gender bias. Let us give such women as Deborah their due, but let us not extend this into the promulgation of religious mandates to allow variance from other direct statements about other ambassadors of the LORD.

There is no need for us to fixate on designating situational values to the various calls for service to the LORD, among the people of the LORD. This is true, both for imputed fame of individuals, and for selective elevation of certain stations of service. All stations, in the LORD, are important. All stations, in the LORD, are essential. The LORD has already given us the rules for the regulated expansion of the church, in the world. We must not establish any auxiliary, human-formed corollaries or postulates. Scripture is fact of faith; not, a theory of potential human interaction.

If yours is a call that is such as Deborah's, you surely have your place in this blessed expansion. We need to be able to depend on you to support us in our struggle to obey the LORD God. We need your help to continue our adherence to these words to us, as passing through the apostle Paul. We can obey God while respecting the rule of man, without compromising our witness for the LORD. Let us keep the rule of man in its rightful place, as delineated here.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.

Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good.

But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom

honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

(Romans 13:1-8)

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**--- NEXT IN Gender Bias, Definitely --**  
**Delegation**  
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