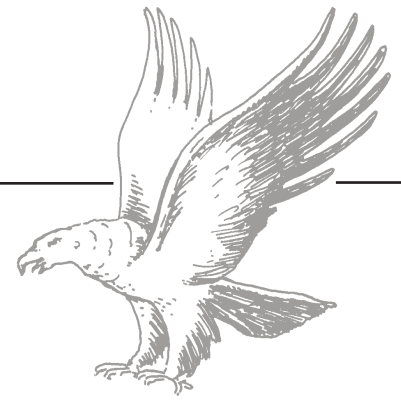


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Women Rule Over Them

History and Scripture agree that in a world cursed by sin, men are the natural leaders. When men become weak and effeminate, all of society suffers.

“As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths” (Isa. 3:12).



It's tempting to use this passage as a jumping-off point for a discourse on the limited role of women in positions of leadership, whether in the pulpit, politics, or business. But if we stick to the context, we'll discover that the prophet has a deeper message in view—not for women, but for men.

The whole third chapter of Isaiah is concerned with the poor quality of leadership that existed in Judah in that day. God laments the lack of “the man of war, the judge, the prophet, the elder,” a failure as devastating as the lack of bread and water (v. 1-3). The situation was so bad that the few individuals who were qualified to lead refused to accept the job, protesting “I cannot cure your ills” (v. 6-7). The nation was descending into chaos for lack of strong leadership at every level of society. The day was fast approaching when God would

“enter into judgment with the elders of His people and His princes” for their dereliction of duty (v. 13-14).

So when God speaks of women ruling over them (v. 12), He is not referring to female rulers or CEOs. Rather, the language is intended as an insult to the men who were the nation's leaders. Just as a group of guys today will tease one another with “you throw like a girl,” God is here rebuking the nation's leaders as being weak and effeminate. Instead of being strong leaders who could enforce high standards of integrity and decency, these men were letting emotional impulses guide their decision-making.

The earlier statement (“children are their oppressors”) reinforces this idea. Like a parent who cannot stand up to the demands of their little brat, Judah's leaders were sniveling weasels being pushed around by the whims of the people. Their gutlessness left the nation adrift in a sea of sin, on the verge of destruction.

Certainly women can be effective leaders. Deborah judged Israel during a crucial period (Judg. 4-5); Lydia was a successful businesswoman (Ac. 16:14-

15); even Mary the mother of Jesus had no problem ordering servants around (Jn. 2:5). But those exceptions do not negate the historical rule that the mantle of leadership falls on society's men. When men step up to their role as leaders in their homes, businesses, communities, churches, and nations, things generally tend to go better. When men merely wear the titles but shirk the hard work of leading, things go downhill in a hurry. If it gets bad enough, women may even have to step in and do the job for them (as Deborah had to do). That's not a criticism of the women but a curse on the men, who are shirking their responsibility as the builders of civilization.

The message for men here is simple: Step up and do your job. Accept the duty that comes with your gender, and be the kind of leader that God wants you to be. Be a strong husband, father, employee, and neighbor. Get involved in your community, your church, your nation. If you stand aside in any of those areas, content to let women do it for you, God will hold you responsible for your failure. And your children will despise you.

– David King