**A Mother Took Action *(The Song Of Deborah)***

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday May 12th, 2019

Text: Judges 5

### Intro

1. Judges 3:1-2: God left Canaanites in the land to test the Israelites, to train them for war, who had not previously known war.
   1. A good lesson for us – Jn. 17:14-16: Jesus said His disciples are not of the world but can’t be removed out of the world.
   2. Saints are “Soldiers of Jesus Christ” and must be ready to fight (spiritual) – II Cor. 10:3-6; Eph. 6:12-13: Our fight is not against flesh and blood but thoughts and ideas!
2. After the death of Joshua many in Israel forgot God and how to fight – *Judges 3:5-8*
3. God answered their prayers with deliverance at the hands of a judge, starting with Othniel, the nephew of Caleb, then with Ehud and Shamgar – *Judges 3:9-31*
4. Judges 4:1-3: A new set of problems plagued the Israelites for 20 years: King Jabin of Canaan
   1. King Jabin of Canaan oppressed the Israelites for 20 years with his commander Sisera.
   2. Sisera was commander of the Canaanite army of King Jabin of Hazor and had nine hundred iron chariots! *(The tanks of the day!)*
   3. Sisera in the Jewish Midrash (a compilation of rabbinic literature): mentions Sisera in terms of legendary status!
      1. Because Sisera's mother cried a hundred cries when he did not return home (Judges 5:28-30), a hundred blasts are blown on the shofar on Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year.
      2. Sisera had previously conquered every country against which he had fought.
      3. His voice was so strong that, when he called loudly, the most solid wall would shake and the wildest animal would fall dead. Deborah was the only one who could withstand his voice and not be stirred from her place.
      4. Sisera caught enough fish in his beard when bathing in the Kishon River to provision his whole army
      5. It is said that thirty-one kings followed Sisera merely for the opportunity of drinking, or otherwise using, the waters of Israel.
   4. Sisera in Archaeology: Archaeologists believe they have found a small bronze head of a chariot wheel linchpin with the face of a Hittite goddess engraved on it that belonged to Sisera’s army!
      1. They say they have solved the riddle of the identity of a 3,200-year-old round bronze tablet with a carved face of a woman, approx. 13 years after it was discovered at the El-ahwat excavation site between Katzir-Harish and Nahal Iron (Wadi Ara) by scientist Oren Cohen of the University of Haifa.
      2. The round, bronze tablet, about 2 centimeters in diameter and 5 millimeters thick, features a carved face of a woman wearing a cap and earrings shaped as chariot wheels.
      3. The Egyptians and Canaanites both created linchpins for chariots with the carved faces of their enemies; the place on the wheels were considered “very undignified” (Like the Jews putting Haman’s name on the soles of their shoes for beating against the floor while the Book of Esther is read aloud).
      4. The woman whose face is depicted on the linchpin found at the site was apparently a Hittite goddess; the Hittites were bitter enemies of the Egyptians (and Canaanites).
5. Judges 5 recounts what happened in Judges 4 and tells of the victory brought about by the Lord when a mother took action, in the Song of Deborah and Barak!

#### Song of Deborah and Barak – Judges 5:1

* 1. Judges 5:1 – “Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying…”
  2. Deborah
     1. Deborah means “Bee.”
        1. Matthew Henry *(Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, Jud. 4:4-9, Paragraph I, pg. 334)* points out some of the qualities of bees that Deborah possessed:
           1. Industrious
           2. Sharp perception
           3. Great usefulness
           4. Sweet to her friends
           5. Sharp to her enemies
     2. **Prophetess** – Judges 4:4
        1. The word “prophetess” suggests that she received direct revelation from the Lord and shared that word with His people.
        2. Deborah is not the only “prophetess” mentioned in the Bible. Others include: Miriam *(Ex. 15:20),* Huldah *(II Kings 22:14),* Anna *(Luke 2:36),* and the four daughters of Philip *(Acts 21:9).*
           1. There is no contradiction between this fact and the fact that God only calls men to lead and preach in the church *(II Tim. 3:1-8).*
           2. God laid His hand on these women and poured His truth through them in an age when there was not a complete Bible (Neither O.T. or N.T.)
           3. It was foretold by the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28) that men and women would prophesy in the church age and Peter said that came true on Pentecost (Acts 2:17; I Cor. 11:5).
           4. In this age, we have the completed word of God, and the Holy Spirit through Paul wrote that women are not to lead and preach in the church *(I Tim. 2:8-15).*
        3. **Her Prophecy** – Judges 4:6-7, 9: Deborah receives word from the Lord and she calls Barak, to take 10,000 soldiers and go to war with the enemy. The Lord promises to defeat Sisera, the Canaanite general. God promises a great victory, if they will simply trust Him and go to war. Because Barak hesitated, the honor of victory would go to a woman!
     3. **Judge** – Judges 4:4-5
        1. **Her Judgment** – Judges 4:4-5: The word “judge” lets us know that she settled disputes among the people of Israel (Judges 4:5). They came to her with their problems and she rendered judgment. *Why wasn’t there a man to lead?* Even Barak, the military leader, was afraid! (Judges 4:8)
        2. She judged under a palm tree “between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim” rather than in the gates of the city, which was customary for judges, leaders, and kings *(Gen. 19:1; Ex. 32:26; II Sam. 19:8; Prov. 31:23; Amos 5:10, 12, 15).*
        3. Deborah was an extremely unique judge: She was different than any of the other judges mentioned in this book about “Judges.”
           1. Unlike several of the other judges in the Book of Judges, there’s not a single word of condemnation about Deborah. The Scriptures speak nothing but praise for her faith and actions in her service to God.
           2. Unlike several of the other judges in the book of judges she isn't called by God to go to war as a military commander. She does go to battle beside Barak, but she wasn't called to lead the army to war. She went as an encouragement to Barak because he asked her to go (She was not directly sent by God)
     4. **Wife and Mother** – Judges 4:4; 5:7
        1. The wife of Lappidoth (nothing more is known of him – where was he during the conflict? Only God knows!)
        2. **Her Action** – Judges 5:7: After twenty years of oppression and no man was willing to rise up and fight, a mother arose and took action!
        3. She had faith in God and God used her to bring about 40 years of peace! *(Judges 5:31)*
  3. Barak
     1. Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali – Judges 4:6
        1. Barak means “Lightning.”
        2. The military commander in Israel, apparently of the forces in the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulon.
        3. Commanded by God through Deborah to assemble ten thousand men to fight Sisera’s army at Mount Tabor.
        4. Judges 4:8-9: **Deborah’s Prophecy** – She delivers God’s word to Barak, and she finds that Barak seems to be afraid to follow that word. He is willing to go to battle, but only if Deborah will go with him. She agrees to go, but tells him that since he depended on a woman, the honor of victory will be given to a woman!
        5. Judges 4:10-24: **Deborah’s Partner** – Barak and Israel go to war with Sisera and the Canaanites. Barak gets 10,000 from his own tribe of Naphtali and the neighboring tribe of Zebulon *(Judges 4:6, 10; 5:14, 18).*
        6. Later, the ranks swelled to 40,000 *(5:8),* with volunteers from Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Issachar *(5:5:14-15).*
        7. Some of the tribes refused to come *(5:15-17),* but those who did saw God give them a great victory.
  4. The Song of Deborah and Barak reminds us that we ought to give God thanks, praise and the glory for the victories and blessings in our lives!

#### Stanza 1: The Lord is Praised – Judges 5:2-5

* 1. The subject of the song is the Lord (5:2-5).
     1. When volunteers obeyed the voice of the Lord He delivered them! (5:2)
        1. The Lord is an avenging God *(KJV: 5:2: “…the avenging of Israel”).*
        2. In both the OT and the NT, He says, “Vengeance is mine. I will repay” *(Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30).*
     2. The Lord is worthy to be praised (5:3).
     3. The Lord is an awesome God (5:4) – invoking the imagery of His power over nature!
     4. The Lord is a sovereign God (5:5) – invoking His terrifying presence at Mt. Sinai, where the people were afraid *(Ex. 19:18; 20:18; Deut. 5:22-25).*
  2. Judges 5:12 suggests that Deborah was singing even before God gave Israel the victory *(II Chr. 20:22: Jehoshaphat and the people sang & praised God, then He saved them!)*
  3. As Christians we should sing more and worry less; We should sing and praise God even in the midst of turmoil in our lives!

#### Stanza 2: Sorrow – Judges 5:6-8

* 1. This is a song of praise but it also strikes a sad note.
     1. 5:6: Speaks of desolation and danger.
     2. It was not safe to travel on the main highways. The Israelites were unable to use the main roads but had to resort to using the byways to get to their destination!
  2. Because her enemies, the Canaanites, had gotten control of the main roads, Israel was severely restricted. It remained this way until “Deborah arose” (5:7).
     1. 5:7: Deborah was a mother and so her first priority was her children. But because of the desperate situation she stepped out and took the lead in a day when most men refused to lead.
     2. ***You don’t mess with Mom!***
     3. Like a mother bear, when her cubs are threatened, mama bear is not intimidated by anything.
     4. A Mother Took Action – Judges 5:7:
        1. The image of a mother generates all kinds of meaningful connotations. But the one that is probably most important is that of life-giver—moms give birth.
        2. Israel is not simply being inspired to act differently, they are being called to take on an entirely new life!
        3. This new life is going to come through responding to her voice, which are Gods’ words.
     5. *New Life comes from God’s Words* (Jn. 14:6; 17:17)
        1. Cast off their fear & idolatry
           1. The Israelites were guilty of committing the sin of idolatry – Judges 5:8: “They chose new gods.” Retribution always followed rebellion – “then was war in the gates” (5:8)
           2. *How did their new gods work out for them?*
           3. **Application:** People today are still called to cast off fear (II Tim. 1:7) and idolatry (I Thess. 1:9; I Jn. 5:21)!
        2. Serve God
           1. “Was there a shield or spear seen among 40,000 in Israel?” (5:8)
           2. The implied answer is “no.”
           3. Considering the fact that Israel had no weapon (5:8), and no standing army, what Barak and Deborah did was an amazing act of faith!
           4. They trusted God and He gave them a great victory! (Judges 5:1, 31: Sang about it)
           5. **Application:** People today are still called upon to serve God with all that they are (I Thess. 1:9; Mt. 22:37)!
  3. When sorrow, because of sin in our lives, strikes, let us repent and turn back to God!

#### Stanza 3: Warriors and Wimps – Judges 5:9-23

* 1. The days of the Judges were days of declension, but conditions were not all bad. Deborah thanked God for the good governors of Israel that offered themselves willingly (5:2, 9, 18-22).
  2. Theirs was a volunteer army – 5:9
  3. Many of the Israelites willingly went forward to fight (5:14-15, 18):
     1. Ephraim – contributes loyal warriors
     2. Benjamin – contribution of warriors with Ephraim
     3. Manessah (Machir – *Jud. 5:14; cf. Num. 32:39-40)* – contributes commanders
     4. Zebulun/Naphtali – contributes administrative staff and warriors
     5. Issachar – take the front lines with Deborah
  4. Then Deborah SINGS about those who did not come, those who did not participate in the mission, those who did not follow God or sacrifice on the battlefield for one reason or another (5:15-17, 23):
     1. Reuben – talked about going but stayed with the sheep
     2. Gad (Gilead – *Deut. 3:12-17)* – did not cross the Jordan to join in the battle
     3. Dan – remained in ships
     4. Asher – sat idly at the seashore
     5. The town of “Meroz” was cursed by the Angel of the Lord because it refused to send volunteers to help (5:23)! *(Lost to history, only place referenced!)*
        1. Notice that their sin was “inaction.”
        2. History has been rife with such people!
     6. It was not for lack of opportunity OR understanding of what the mission was, it was for lack of faith.
  5. The Lord knows who is actively confronting the world and the devil, and who is sitting back and simply watching.
     1. Some Christians are always engaged in the fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil – *II Cor. 10:3-6; Eph. 6:12-13, Jude 3*
     2. There are others are sitting back and watching
     3. There is a time of reward coming, but it is also a time of loss (II Cor. 5:10).
  6. The LORD intervened for His people (Judges 5:19-22).
     1. Judges 4:15: God “routed” Sisera and his armies and chariots.
     2. Judges 5:21: He sent a fearful tempest, and the rain turned the Kishon River into a raging torrent, and plain of Megiddo into a huge mud puddle.
     3. Judges 5:22: Canaanite chariots of iron were no longer an asset but a liability!
     4. Judges 4:15-16: All the soldiers of Sisera were slain! (Psalms 20:7)
  7. Imagine as this song was sung over the years:
     1. The same song about God’s victory would forever bring to mind in some a sense of pride and in others a sense of shame!
     2. *Rev. 20:11-15:* There will be some whose names are written in Book of Life and some who are not! *(Some for honor and others for shame for eternity!)*
  8. God expects His soldiers to stand and fight, not be wimps and run from battle! (I Cor. 16:13-14; I Tim. 6:12; Heb. 10:38-39; Jude 3)

#### Stanza 4: Honor to a Woman – Judges 5:24-31

* 1. Only two women in Scripture have been called “Blessed among women”: Jael & Mary
     1. Luke 1:42: Elizabeth says to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:41), “Blessed are you among women...” *Roman Catholics repeat this Scripture over and over again when they pray to Mary.*
     2. Judges 5:24: But here Deborah and Barak sing, “Most blessed of women is Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite!” *(KJV: “Blessed above women”)*
     3. Jael means “Mountain Goat”
  2. Judges 5:24-27: When Deborah and Barak said Jael “smashed his head” (5:26), they meant Jael smashed Sisera’s head with her hammer! (Judges 4:17-22)
     1. Seeing that his army was defeated, Sisera fled the battlefield on foot. He went to the tent of a man named Heber, who was of the Kenites. The Kenites were a group of people who aligned themselves with Israel *(I Sam. 15:6: Helped Israel after the Exodus; Ex. 18:1; Jud. 1:16: Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, was a Median and a Kenite; I Chr. 2:55: The Rechabites were Kenites!).*
     2. This particular family, though, turned on Israel and sided with Sisera!
     3. Heber’s wife Jael greets Sisera and invites him into her tent.
     4. Sisera asks Jael for a drink of water, she brings him a drink of milk instead in a “lordly bowl” (NKJ: 5:25) – putting him at ease that she would care for him.
     5. While he slept, Jael takes one of the tent nails and drives it through Sisera’s temple, through into the ground, killing him (4:21; 5:26).
     6. Thus, to a woman goes the honor of victory, as God said through Deborah for Barak’s insisting Deborah go with him (Judges 4:8-9).
     7. She was willing to do what God commanded the Israelites to do: Kill the Canaanites *(Deut. 7:1-2),* but they had settled among them *(Jud. 3:5).*
     8. Someone made a shirt that shows a hammer and tent peg and says, “Fight Like Jael!”
  3. Judges 5:28-31: Deborah then mentions Sisera’s mother (A Tale of Two Mothers!)
     1. How would Deborah know this? Because “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” *(II Tim. 3:16)!*
     2. She would wait and wait for the son who would never return!
  4. Judges 5:31: After twenty years of oppression God, through Deborah (and Jael), granted them peace for forty years (double the amount of time of the oppression!).
     1. The “land flowing with milk and honey” was saved by “Bee” and “Mountain Goat!”
  5. The song of Deborah closes out with the promise that the Lord’s enemies will perish but He will exalt those who love Him! *(Mt. 25:31-46; II Tim. 4:6-8)*

## Conclusion

1. Judges 5 was to be a song of Israel to God for His victory over their enemies! (the same theme runs through the O.T. into the N.T. – God will exalt & save the righteous & punish the wicked!)
2. Col. 2:13-15: In Jesus we have a song to sing and a reason to be joyful! (I Thess. 5:16)
3. When a mother took action, God used Deborah and Barak to grant peace to His people! *(Heb. 11:32-33: Barak specifically mentioned and Deborah by the phrase, “prophets”)*
4. Godly men and women are called upon to be “ready for action!”
   1. I Pet. 1:13: “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
5. When the need arises let the men step up like a David *(I Sam. 17)* and be Heroes of faith for God, and let the women be as Deborah and Jael, “She-roes” of faith for God!
6. Ps. 40:1-5: Let us, like David, sing songs of praise to God for all His blessings!
7. No matter how grim the situation around us is, let us be ready for action, to sing and to serve God!
8. If you are not a Christian, you need to be! Repent and be baptized!
9. If a Christian in error, Repent & be renewed. Remember from what you have been saved from!
10. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!

**Sources:**

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