

“Girl Power”

Judges 4

Scripture Ref: Judg 5:7-8; Judg 5:4; Judg 5:21

Enemy	Years of Bondage	Judge	Deliverance and Rest	Scripture Ref
Mesopotamia	8	Othniel	40	3:7-11
Moab	18	Ehud	80	3:12-31
Canaan	20	Deborah	40	4:1-5:31
Midian	7	Gideon	40	6:1-8:28
Ammon	18	Jephthah	6	10:6-12:7
Philistia	40	Samson	20	13:1-16:31

- 1. When I was a teen, I started drifting into trouble – and my parents began to intervene**
 - a. I wished they would just leave me alone,**
 - b. I knew some of the things I was doing were wrong, but I wanted them to just let me do my own thing!**
 - c. But now that I have kids, I understand; You cant leave them alone, not if you love them! You MUST intervene!**
- 2. I wonder if the Israelites felt that way - “God just leave us alone to do our own thing!”**
 - a. I know I have felt that way –**
 - b. But just as any parent that loves their children cannot just leave them alone**
 - c. God, who loves his children, will not just leave Israel alone!**

The Cycle Repeats

When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. 2 So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. 3 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

- 3. We are not going to belabor the cycle – the leader dies, the people begin doing evil. (Ehud dies – Israel strays!)**
 - a. This time it is after 80 years of freedom, and this time they come under oppression by King Jabin the Canaanite, and his commander Sisera.**
 - b. This guy Sisera was tough – 900 chariots of iron – this is called “having superior firepower”**

- c. **For twenty years they endured the oppression before they called out to the Lord.**
- d. **Seems like things are getting worse – “harshly oppressed” – waiting twenty years.**

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

4. During this time a woman arose on the scene... don't know a lot about her, but we can surmise a few things:

#1 - Given the twenty years of oppression, Deborah would have lived part of her life in the rest after Ehud, and part during the oppression of Jabin.

- a. **IOW she watched the decline...**
- b. **She even notes this in her song:**

Judg 5:7-8

7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel. 8 They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

#2 - She was recognized by the people as someone called, anointed, and willing to walk in her calling as a judge – one who judges.

#3 - She would set up in the shade of a tree, and people would come from all around for her to judge their disputes and problems.

#4 - Deborah not only a judge, she was a prophetess

- c. **was not the only prophetess: Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Anna (Luke 2:36), and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:8-9)**

6 Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; 7 and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?"

5. Deborah is not giving this word to Barak,

- a. “Has not...” seems to be confirming something that God has already communicated to Barak and to Deborah (she was a prophetess!)
- b. I think maybe she is even exhorting him “why aren’t you going?”

8 And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"

6. Now what kind of response is this? What kind of man is this Barak? He won’t go unless she goes with him? Is he a man or mouse??
- a. One the one hand, it’s not unreasonable for Deborah to go with them
 - i. I recall when Joshua went to war against Amalek, and Moses stood on the hill, and whenever his hands were up – Israel was winning!
 - ii. Maybe Barak was hoping that having Deborah might give that type of assistance.
 - b. But on the other hand, him demanding it – and threatening to not even go if she didn’t...
 - i. That causes me to think that Barak trusted more in Deborah’s relationship to God, rather than his own.

Spiritual Encouragement

7. There are times when we would like someone more “spiritual” to be with us...
- a. We need some encouragement, we need some security
 - b. Is that bad??? We have to remember that God is sovereign, and that He knows the heart and needs of people.
 - c. Maybe you are the kind of person that God gives you a calling, and you just go.
 - d. Like Joshua, it doesn’t matter what anybody else thinks – you are going to follow God.
 - e. Or maybe you are more like Barak – you’ll go, but you need some encouragement along the way
 - f. You need a Deborah...

God can use Both Types!

8. Some people will follow God, will obey God, will accomplish great things for God, they just need a little exhortation.
- a. They need someone to speak strength to them
 - b. They need someone to say “Go and do it!”
 - c. And guess what – God uses both of these types of people.

- i. **God will gift one with a gift of exhortation – to call people out, to encourage them on.**
- ii. **God will use another that is more of a follower, maybe needs encouragement, but once they get it they'll move out!**

9 So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.

10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.

9. Deborah agrees to go, but the one price he would pay – Barak would not get credit for the kill - God would deliver Sisera to the hand of a woman.

10. So Barak does that he moves out, and Israel destroys the army of Sisera.

The Battle At Kishon

11 Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which is beside Kedesh.

12 And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. 13 So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

14 Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. 15 And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. 16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

Deborah Sets Things in Motion

11. So Deborah calls Barak – “cowboy up” – and Barak leads the army into battle – and there is a great victory.

12. Some have a misconception that Deborah lead the army, and she did so because no man would

- a. **Not entirely accurate – Deborah did not lead the army, Barak did.**
- b. **Barak did obey God, and he stepped out and gathered the army and brought them to Mt Tabor**
- c. **And we'll see that he led the army into battle**
- d. **But he apparently needed Deborah's presence to encourage and strengthen him. He could not have done it without her!**

13. They say that “behind every successful man is a woman”, and in many cases that is true

- a. I believe that in our own families, the husband needs the encouragement and support of the wife – his “Deborah” – to be all that he can be.**

14. We see later in Judges that God used a heavy rain to hinder the chariots

Judg 5:4 LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth trembled and the heavens poured, The clouds also poured water;

Judg 5:21 The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon.

- a. IOW Israel came down from the highland, Mt Tabor, Sisera was in the plain where the river was**
- b. And God brought a huge rainfall that got the ground all muddy and the chariots could not function**
- c. And then apparently many were swept away by what might have been a flash-flood.**

The Fate of Sisera

17 However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear." And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.

19 Then he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. 20 And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall say, 'No.'"

21 Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

15. Now we see Deborah’s prophecy fulfilled, but not in the way that we expected.

- a. Sisera was killed by Jael – not Deborah.**

16. This is an interesting twist.... Heber was aligned with Jabin

- a. Heber was not part of the nation – he had separated himself**
- b. He also had made peace with Jabin**
- c. He also had communicated to Sisera the location of Israel’s army.**
- d. And... where was he when this happened?**
- e. Apparently there was disagreement between Heber and his wife on his relationship with Jabin and Sisera!**

17. Also interesting because Jael broke her promise to Sisera, and killed the commander of the man her husband had made peace with.

- a. Sisera certainly deserved to die – he provided muscle to the man who heavily oppressed others, and was fighting against God’s people.**
- b. But Jael could be viewed as a treacherous woman – going against her husband and her own word.**

18. So what do we make of this?

- a. First – Jael I believe was answering to a higher call – to God and His people. She was joining WITH God, instead of fighting against God.**

Acts 5:29 We ought to obey God rather than men.

- b. Second – Jael was not sinless – but God uses imperfect people!**
- c. (Gods perfect will was for Barak to kill Sisera, but as we saw – he forfeited)**

22 And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into her tent, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

23 So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

19. Lastly – even though they killed Sisera, it still took a while to destroy Jabin.

- a. But this battle was key in that it strengthened them, and weakened the enemy.**
- b. Sometimes that is our strategy – instead of an instant victory, we are strengthened, and the campaign lasts a while**
- c. But with the Lord, we are ultimately victorious!**

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