



Sermon Notes

August 5, 2007

Tim Strickland

Journey Through Judges #5

Deborah
Judges 4-5

Judges 4:1-10 ¹And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud died. ²And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim. ³Then the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

⁴Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali and said to him, "Has not the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 from the people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun. ⁷And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand?'" ⁸Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go." ⁹And she said, "I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰And Barak called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah went up with him.

Introduction:

Deborah & Barak – the story (ch. 4) and the soundtrack (ch. 5)

Isaiah 55:8-9 (ESV)

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.
[9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

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1. Here We Go Again: The Cycle Continues (4:1-5)

- a. Israel does evil in the sight of the Lord
 - *And the Lord sold them in to the hand of Jabin king of Canaan...the commander of his army was Sisera...he had 900 chariots of iron*
- b. Israel cries out to the Lord
- c. Lit. *Deborah, a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she was judging Israel*
 - Not unheard of for a woman to be a prophet(ess) – Miriam (Ex 15:20-21), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Neh. 6:14, false prophet), Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 8:3), daughters who prophesy (Ezekiel 13:17-19, false prophets), Anna (Luke 2:36), Philip's daughters (Acts 21:8-9), Corinthian Women (1 Cor. 11:5)
 - Unusual that a woman was judging Israel
 - *I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel (5:7) – see 2 Sam 20:16-22*

2. Deborah and Barak: The Conversation (4:6-9)

- a. Deborah: *Has not the LORD, the God of Israel commanded you, 'Go gather your men at Mount Tabor...I will draw out Sisera...to meet you by the river Kishon...and give him into your hand'*
- b. Barak's response: *If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go.*
- c. Deborah's prophecy: *I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.*
 - A dishonourable way to die – see Judges 9:53-54

3. Deborah, Barak & Sisera: The Battle (4:10-16, 5:12, 19-22)

- a. Barak with poorly equipped troops & Sisera with his army and 900 chariots prepare for battle (4:10, 12-13, 5:8b)
- b. Deborah: *Up! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the Lord go before you?(4:14)*
- c. The LORD Defeats Sisera's Army
 - *And the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak by the edge of the sword (4:15)*
 - *...the clouds dropped water...the stars fought...The torrent Kishon swept them away (5:4, 20-21)*

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4. Jael and Sisera: The Tent Peg (4:11, 17-22, 5:24-30)

- a. Sisera runs away to the tent of Jael the Kenite
- b. Jael wins his trust, and then she hammers a tent peg through his temple while he sleeps
 - Like Ehud (ch 3), all the gory details are included
- c. Barak arrives to see Deborah's prophecy fulfilled
- d. Sisera's mother vainly watches for his return (5:28-30)

5. Lessons from the Story of Deborah

- a. God is Sovereign and in complete control of history
 - **the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin** (12)
 - The Lord speaks through Deborah to call Barak (6-7, 14)
 - The Lord providentially arranged the Kenites' move (11)
 - The Lord gives a miraculous victory (5:20-21)
 - The Lord works in ways and in people we may not expect
- b. God Desires Courageous Leaders and Willing Followers
 - The need for leaders to step out in faith (6-7, 14, 5:2,9)
 - Deborah – A Great Woman of Faith, Courage, Wisdom, & Exhortation
 - Barak - Despite a rough start, he is commended for his faith – 1 Sam. 12:11, Heb. 11:32-34
 - The need for God's people to respond to His leaders in faith
 - Praise for the volunteers (freewill offerings) 5:2,9
 - Praise for the tribes who came (5:14-15a, 18)
 - Ephraim – ready for battle
 - Benjamin – leading the charge
 - Machir (Manasseh) – strong leadership
 - Zebulun – leaders and risk-takers
 - Issachar – Leaders and faithful
 - Naphtali – fought on the toughest ground
 - Shame for the 'no-show' tribes (5:15b-17,23)
 - Reuben – All talk, no action
 - Gilead (Gad) – Too far, not my problem
 - Dan & Asher – Too busy, not my problem
 - Meroz (unknown city) – *did not come to the help of the Lord* – no reason given
- c. The Judgment and Mercy of God
 - This victory leads to more victory, Jabin destroyed (23-24)
- c. The Judgment and Mercy of God
 - God sees sin and judges it
 - God hears the cries of His people and sends a saviour

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Our Response

1. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, repent of your sins and put your faith in Him today. (see also Luke 13:1-5)

Judges 5:31 *"So may all your enemies perish, O Lord!*

But your friends be like the sun as he rises in his might."

Isaiah 55:7 *let the wicked forsake his way,*

and the unrighteous man his thoughts;

let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him,

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

2. When it comes to stepping out in faith and obeying God - Be a willing volunteer, not a no-show. Be ready to stand up and fight the spiritual battles that you will encounter, knowing that God is in complete sovereign control over all things, and His power is at work in you.

Ephesians 6:13 *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*

Questions for Application

1. Why do we often fall repeatedly into the same patterns of sin?
2. How do we see God's sovereign hand in the story of Deborah?
3. How did God use Deborah to 'save the day'? Why was this unexpected? Describe a time in your life when you have seen God work in a different way than you might have expected?
4. Which tribe can you most relate to for its excuses for not stepping out in faith and obeying the Lord?
5. Which tribe can you most relate for its reasons for stepping out in faith and obeying the Lord?
6. Pray together as a group for faith in God's strength to fight the spiritual battles we all face, and for the Spirit's working in our church as we study Judges together.

Questions, Comments? - inthebeginning@look.ca

If you have questions or comments about today's message, please drop me an email to the address above. Thanks,

Tim



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