



05 Judges 4&5 – God Desires our Wills More than Our Skills

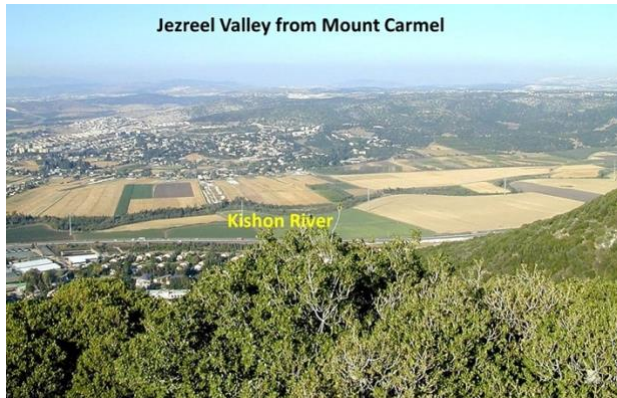
Judges shows us how God can take failure and work hope, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and love in the middle of it all. Recently when I was talking about the “messes we get into our lives” one of the folks here at

the Grove said, “God takes our messes and He makes messages out of them”. I added on, “not only does He make messages, but He can make a masterpieces out of the mess that we have made.”

This morning, we will look on as Israel once again distances herself from God, and God sends a unique deliver. By worldly standards she was unqualified to lead Israel. She was a wife and a mother, but she had what it took to do God’s work; she had faith. The text tells us that she also was a prophetess, meaning that God spoke to her and she relayed His Word to the people. She judged over the people in settling their disputes. And, she was a mighty and fierce warrior. She lived south of Jerusalem in the hills of Ephraim, and it was from there that she summoned Barak to boldly speak God’s battle plan to once again liberate His people. After Ehud, Israel had 80 years of peace and then they slipped back into sin.

Deborah

4 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.



⁴ Now Deborah (means "honey bee") , 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.

The word tells us that she sat under a palm tree that was named after her. I think that is pretty cool. I'm not sure how she ended

up being a person that people went to visit with their troubles, but she arose in Israel. She made herself available, and God used her. Her ministry was between Ramah and Bethel right in the middle of the land. She was one of the maybe ten woman in the Bible who were called "prophetesses" (remember Miriam the sister of Moses and Aaron, Huldah during the reign of Josiah, Anna in Luke 2, and four prophetesses in Acts 21:9). The text tells us that Deborah was the "wife of Lapidoth". That is pretty much all we know about her. Let's read as God speaks through her.

And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 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?'" 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!"



She told him to deploy troops at Mount Tabor. The view to the left is from Mt Tabor looking out onto the Jezreel Valley. It is right at the northern tip of the Valley of Armageddon. The Lord wanted Barak to come down out of the hills to attack Jabin's troops and chariots. On Wednesday night we

talked about why he refused to go to battle unless Deborah accompanied him. One of our ladies suggested that Barak knew that if Deborah were in it, success would come. Why? Because God had his hand on Deborah.

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.

Deborah seems to be scolding Barak somewhat for refusing to go without her. Barak knew that God wanted him to launch the attack, but he hesitated. When God wants you to do something, He wants you to do something. You may feel like it's too much work or you're not equipped to do it. If you say no, God will pick someone else. And YOU will miss out on the blessing. Remember the calling of Isaiah? When the question was asked, "Who will go for us?" Isaiah answered, "Here I am Lord! Send me!" Sometimes we answer more like, "Here am I Lord, send someone else." Remember the story of Esther in the palace in Persia. When she heard about the King ordering that all Jews were to be killed, she was trying to determine what to do.

Mordecai her uncle came to her and told her that if she remained silent, relief and deliverance for the Jews would come through another. In Esther 4:14 we read Mordcai's words, *"¹⁴ For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (NKJV)*. I think it's important for each of us to remember that perhaps the Lord brought us to where we are "for such a time as this".

That is EXACTLY what we go through. When you step into serving the Lord it will be THE BEST JOURNEY YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE. Russell Cushman used to say that "when you're in the center of God's will, life is like a magic carpet ride." God raised up Barak and Deborah for such a time as this, and He's raised you up for such a time as this as well.

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.

So this Kenite named Heber lived out in the Galilee and he had made peace with the Canaanite people. He was camped out by an oak tree, and apparently he passed on vital information about Jabin's battle plans and battle movements to Deborah and Barak.

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 (means "the woodlands of the nations") 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.

The text tells us that "the Lord routed Sisera". This was God's doing. So why did Sisera jump down from his chariot and run off on foot? We see a hint of the reason in the next chapter. The chariots were getting mired in the mud. Remember Baal was the "storm god". So, this was a failure on Baal's part. So, Sisera took off on foot. In Judges 5 we read, ²⁰ *They fought from the heavens; the stars from their courses fought against Sisera.*²¹ *The torrent of Kishon swept them away, that ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. (Judges 5:20,21 NKJV)* So obviously there was some sort of great storm with lots of flooding that contributed to the rout of the Canaanite armies.

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.

She tucked him in and hid him under 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.' "

I think it was probably slightly fermented (like kefer), and it probably just relaxed him and put him to sleep. So she basically gave him a sedative. At this point it's hard to imagine what all must have been going on in Yael's mind. Here he was, Israel's greatest enemy, asleep in her tent under a blanket. She eased on over to where he was and in one tremendous blow, she stuck a huge tent peg through his temple and I suppose pinned him to the ground. She basically nailed his head to the ground. Well, after this, Barak came walking up and Yael told him to come on over and she'd show him the man



he was looking for. And just as Deborah had prophesied, a woman had the honor of taking Sisera's life that day.

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. 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.

Flavius Josephus, the historian¹, tells us details about the battle including the storm mentioned in Judges chapter 5. Jabin had all kinds of calvary and chariots and he grossly outmatched Israel. He dominated the northern part of what we now know as Israel. Israel had no chariots. They did not use horses. But what Israel had was the Spirit of the Lord and the right hand of the Lord. Here the words of the prophet Isaiah, *"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Isaiah 54:17 NKJV*

As we studied last Sunday, even when we're in our sin and we cry out to the Lord for deliverance, His heart is moved. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthian church, *"And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*

¹ <https://gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link52HCH0005>

(2 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV). Serve the Lord with delight, and realize that His strength will be made perfect in your weakness. You were brought to where you are for “such a time as this”. Open your eyes and your heart to what God might be calling you to do. It can be simple or it can be a task that you feel incapable of doing. Know this. His strength will be made perfect in your weakness. Deborah was an unlikely leader, but God called her and she answered the call. “Living in a world driven by material success and accomplishment, it’s easy to forget that it isn’t so much our skills God wants as it is our wills.”²

² <https://israelmyglory.org/article/deborah-a-mother-in-israel/>