



JUDGES/RUTH YOUTH LESSON 5

Deborah - Israel's Extraordinary Judge Judges 4 - 5

Introduction

Three men had been used by God to free Israel: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. They were military heroes who then became judges. America's first president, General George Washington, was also a military hero. Winning in war is proof of leadership. In America, Andrew Jackson, U. S. Grant, Benjamin Harrison, Teddy Roosevelt, and Dwight Eisenhower were all military heroes who became presidents.

God continues to use unlikely people to demonstrate His power. The fourth judge, Deborah, was no exception. While she served as the judge for Israel, God provided a man named Barak to serve as the military general. Men and women are different, but both are made in God's image. Together, they reflect the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). God demonstrates this truth with His use of Deborah and Barak.

Outline of Judges 4-5

- I. Deborah and Barak - Judges 4:1-10
- II. Sisera and Jael - Judges 4:11-24
- III. Song of Deborah and Barak - Judges 5:1-31

I. Deborah and Barak - Judges 4:1-10

When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel did evil again. Israel had obeyed God for eighty years and the land had enjoyed rest (Judges 3:30). However, without Ehud's leadership, Israel turned away from God and the cycle began again.

Ehud had fought and judged in southern Israel. In the next cycle, trouble came from the north with a Canaanite king named Jabin. He reigned in the city of Hazor, north of Galilee. In the past, Joshua had fought a major battle there (Joshua 11:10). Sisera

commanded Jabin's army. "Jabin" means "the wise" and was probably a title, like the title "Pharaoh." Jabin and Sisera, with their nine hundred chariots, had harshly **oppressed** the Israelites for twenty years until they finally cried out to the Lord.

According to verse four, Deborah was already judging Israel. This was extraordinary. She was a homemaker, the wife of Lapidoth, a mother, and also leading Israel (Judges 5:7). As a prophetess, she knew God's word and declared it to the people because she was gifted by the power of God. People came to her for counsel as she sat under the palm tree. It became known as *the palm tree of Deborah*, and was between the cities Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, the middle section of Israel.

Deborah means "bee." Deborah recognized an enemy force gathering against Israel and, like a 'queen' bee, she summoned for a man named Barak. All we know of Barak is that he was from Kedesh in Naphtali, which was north of Hazor. Deborah knew Barak was the man for the job and delivered God's message to him. *Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun.* This was his area and this was his mission.

Against you I will deploy Sisera...with his chariots and his multitude,... and I will deliver him into your hand. There was bad news and good news. Deborah started with the bad news and told Barak about Sisera's chariots and great number of soldiers in his army. However, the good news was far more important than the bad news. God had guaranteed the victory already. And here is more good news: we have the same guaranteed victory because we have Jesus Christ. Do you get easily discouraged

by things that happen in this world? It can be frustrating to hear that prayer is no longer allowed in the public schools. Hearing about Christians imprisoned in other countries because they believe in Jesus is tragic. But, these are causes for Christians to pray and speak the truth in love. Do not be discouraged, nor look the other way, nor hold back the truth. The apostle Peter says that Christians need to be prepared to give a defense for the HOPE (not the discouragement) that is in us (1 Peter 3:15).

Barak's response might not be what you expected. He didn't jump up and praise God for the promise of victory. Instead he said, *If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.* Barak was willing to go and fight, but he felt the need to have the spiritual support Deborah would provide. He was willing to be the muscle, but not without God's power which could be seen in Deborah.

Deborah agreed to go, but **rebuked** Barak for his lack of faith. She said, *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.* Indeed, Barak would have to share the honor with not only Deborah, but also another woman. However, doesn't all the honor belong to God anyway? After all, Barak appears in what Christians call the 'Faith Hall of Fame.' It is a record of many Old Testament men and women, whose faith is recognized and honored in Hebrews chapter eleven. Barak is said to have been one *who through faith subdued kingdoms* (Hebrews 11:32-33).

II. Sisera and Jael - Judges 4:11-24

Near Barak's hometown of Kedesh lived a man named Heber. He was a Kenite and was a **descendant** of Moses's father-in-law. He and his wife, Jael, lived in a somewhat lonely area. Heber and his wife reported to Sisera that Barak's army had gone up to Mt. Tabor. Sisera moved his huge army and all nine hundred chariots of iron in the direction of Mount Tabor, setting up camp by the River

Kishon. At Deborah's command, *Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand,* Barak charged down the mountain with his ten thousand men and Deborah's words of God's promise, *Has not the Lord gone out before you?*

The battle went as prophesied and Barak won. Sisera leaped out of his chariot and ran away. Barak went after the Canaanite army in total victory. He chased them all the way to Sisera's hometown, Harosh Hagoyim, but he did not find Sisera.

Sisera had fled north and arrived at Heber's tent. He believed that Heber was at peace with King Jabin. Heber was not home, but his wife, Jael, invited Sisera in. She said, *Turn aside my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.* Thirsty and weary, he asked for a drink. She gave him milk and covered him. Before falling asleep, he asked her to keep watch and deceive anyone that might come looking for him.

By God's **providence**, Jael found herself in a position of power. She had the opportunity to get rid of a terrible enemy who intended to destroy the Israelites. Her husband may have had an agreement with King Jabin to keep peace, but she did not. She was used to doing heavy work and handling tent pegs and hammers, because women did the heavy work in the middle east (and still do). With hammer in hand, she drove a tent peg through the side of Sisera's head.

Whatever you may think of her action, it took great courage and it was done for God's people. It was not self-defense, since there was no danger to her. It was to fulfill God's words through his prophetess Deborah *the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.* When Barak arrived, Jael invited him into the tent to see his enemy. Thanks to Jael, Barak's victory was complete. From then on, king Jabin grew weaker, whereas, under Deborah's leadership, the Israelites grew stronger until Jabin was destroyed.

III. Song of Deborah and Barak - Judges 5

There are three songs in scripture that are specifically songs of **triumph**: 1) Moses' Song of Deliverance from Pharaoh in Exodus chapter fifteen, 2) Deborah's Song of Triumph over Jabin in Judges chapter five, and 3) John's Song of Moses and the Lamb in Revelation. What is God doing in your life that you can praise him for right now? Will you sing to the Lord a new song of praise, in your own words, and thank Him for the blessings in your life? Maybe you would like to write down the words to your praise song. Maybe you would like to keep them private between yourself and God. David, the psalmist and king, says he will sing, or directs others to sing more than forty times in the book of Psalms! And, seeing as how God described David as a man after His own heart, it is safe to assume that God loves singing (1 Samuel 13:14)!

In Deborah's song, she compares past triumphs with present conditions. She speaks of a time *When leaders led in Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves* (5:2) under Moses, and the people received the law with signs and wonders. Then, she compares this to her modern day, the time of Shamgar and Jael. She describes the conditions. The highways were dangerous for travelers, and people stayed in their homes. They had chosen new gods, denied the Lord, and war threatened. Deborah decided enough was enough and arose to help Israel's rulers.

Deborah's heart went out to Shamgar and any other leaders who were trying to lead the people back to God. She "put feet to her prayers" which means she took action to make the prayers she spoke reality. *I Deborah arose, arose a mother in Israel.* She did what she could, using the gifts God had given her.

Another part of Deborah's song is spent celebrating the God given victory. *Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, Who sit in judges' attire.* The Lord's people should be quick to proclaim the works of the Lord. Do you recount

at the end of the day how the Lord has been good to you or answered your prayer?

Deborah makes a note of which tribes showed up for the battle and which tribes "sat this one out." She describes the supernatural help, *The stars from their courses fought against Sisera. The torrent of Kishon swept them away.*

Deborah concludes with a glorious prayer, *Thus let all your enemies perish, O Lord! But let those who love Him be like the sun, When it comes out in full strength.*

Calling believers who love God to shine as bright as the sun in full strength is Deborah's challenge to believers. So, go ahead! Let your light shine! ✠

Prayer

Let all your enemies be gone, O Lord! And, let me shine like the sun when it is in full strength, so that everyone may see my love for You!

Memory Verse

Psalm 98:1, 4 *Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory...Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.*

Vocabulary

oppress - to control or rule in a cruel way

rebuke - to criticize sharply

descendant - the offspring of ancestors

providence - God's arrangement of everything that happens

triumph - a victory or success

QUESTIONS FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 5

All questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read all notes and references.

1. What did you learn about Deborah or Barak that interested you?

2. Which part of Deborah's song was your favorite and why?

DAY TWO: Read Judges 5:31-6:10.

3. a. How long was there peace in the land after the victory over Jabin, king of Canaan?

- b. What happened next? Fill in the blanks.

Israel _____ in the sight of the Lord. _____
delivered them into the hand of _____.

4. a. How did the Midianites and Amalekites treat the Israelites? Circle the correct answers.

destroyed their produce kidnapped their children invaded their land
destroyed their livestock made them slaves impoverished them

- b. What did the Israelites have to do to protect themselves? Give verse. _____

- c. What did they finally do out of desperation? Give verse. _____

5. a. What did God do for Israel?

- b. What did God say to Israel? Give four points from verses 8-10.

① _____

② _____

③ _____

④ _____

- c. What did Israel fail to do according to God in verse 10?

DAY THREE: Read Judges 6:11-21.

6. a. What was Gideon doing in verse 11? Why?

- b. Who was Gideon's visitor, according to Judges 6:11 and 14?

- c. What was the visitor's greeting to Gideon?

7. What was Gideon's first response to the visitor's greeting?

8. a. What had Gideon been chosen to do?

- b. Who had chosen him?

- c. What excuses did Gideon make?

- d. ♥(Heart Question) What excuses do you make to God for your sins?

- e. What was the Lord's response to Gideon's excuses? Give verse. _____

9. a. What did Gideon ask for? _____

- b. How did the Lord answer Gideon's request?

DAY FOUR: Read Judges 6:22-32.

- 10.a. What gave Gideon courage?

- b. What instructions did the Lord give to Gideon?

- c. Did he do it? _____

- d. What was his "but..." in verse 27?

11.a. How did the men of the city respond when they saw what Gideon had done?

b. What did Gideon's father have to say about this?

c. What was the second name given to Gideon? Why? (See Bible margin notes for help.)

DAY FIVE: Read Judges 6:33-40.

12.a. Where did the armies gather to face each other? Give verse. _____

b. What advantage did Gideon have?

c. Which person or people gave him support?

13.a. What did Gideon ask of God?

b. What did God do to strengthen Gideon's faith?

14. ? (Thought Question) What is your opinion of Gideon testing God?

15. When is it permissible to test God? (See Deuteronomy 6:16 for help.)

VOCABULARY FOR BOOK LESSON #

***"The more words you know, the more clearly and powerfully you will think...
and the more ideas you will invite into your mind."***

— Wilfred Funk

DAY ONE: Write the definition of each vocabulary word.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

DAY TWO: Write three sentences using three different vocabulary words from this lesson.

1.

2.

3.

DAY THREE: Circle the word's synonym(s). (Synonym is a word/phrase that means the same thing.)

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|
| 1. . | oppress | | persecute | | encourage | | mistreat |
| 2. . | triumph | | conquer | | win | | lose |
| 3. . | rebuke | | reprimand | | praise | | discipline |

DAY FOUR: Match the word to its meaning.

<u>Word</u>	<u>Definition</u>
oppress	to criticize sharply
triumph	God's arrangement of everything that happens
rebuke	victory or success
descendant	to control or rule in a cruel way
providence	the offspring of ancestors

DAY FIVE: Review previous vocabulary words. Try to work from memory.

Wordsearch: Review previous vocabulary word(s). Find the hidden words left, right, forward, backward, and diagonally. Fill in the blank with the correct vocabulary word.

R Z I I S Y E G N X
 E D O M T I C S H M
 R P Q P U J W R Z M
 E J S E M X I D E R
 D M L D B G B N E M
 N N O I L L E B E R
 U D E M E V I T O M
 L P R E P Z N E Y D
 P A U N Z T G C T Q
 C U L T U R E H D K

- _____ - open fighting against authority
- _____ - the most popular trends and traditions that make a period of time different from another period of time
- _____ - someone who robs another person openly and with force
- _____ - kind treatment to someone who has no right to it
- _____ - to tempt or lead away by offering some type of pleasure
- _____ - to speak or act as if unsure
- _____ - something that causes someone to do something
- _____ - something that interferes with movement or progress

WORD BANK

rebellion
 impediment
 plunderer

lure
 mercy

stumble
 culture
 motive