

## **230111-4 Judges 4, 5, Deborah, the Fourth Judge & Her Victory Song—CThurman**

In the previous chapter, first we read in vss. 1-4, that, though the nation of Israel had failed to drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the Lord would leave them here to keep the succeeding generations of Israel 'battle-tested.'

Then we read that Israel did precisely what the LORD said they would do. They made covenant arrangements with the nations of the Gentiles, intermarried with them, and worship their gods. And as the LORD said that He would do He when they sinned against Him, he brought judgement upon the nation. (Read Deu.31.14-30) So, in vss. 5-31, for sin the LORD brought against Israel Chushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, and left them under this oppressive regime for the next eight years. Then, when Israel repented of their evil ways, the LORD heard them and gave them a deliverer. The first judge was named Othniel. He was nephew to Caleb, son of Jephunneh. Under Othniel's leadership *the land* had rest for forty years. But again, Israel sinned against the LORD. So, the LORD raised up Eglon, king of Moab, a very fat man. And for the next eighteen years Israel suffered under the oppressive rule of Eglon. Then when Israel repented for sin against the LORD He gave Israel another deliverer, named Ehud. Ehud was a left-handed man and son of the tribe of Benjamin. Under his leadership *the land* had rest for eighty years. And there was in this chapter one other judge. His name was Shamgar. He was noted for killing six hundred Philistines with a goad used to prod oxen.

This third chapter covered a period of at least 146 years. (8 Mesopotamian oppression + 40 rest + 18 Moab oppression + 80 rest = 146)

### **Chapter 4**

***1 ¶ And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead.***

The cycle is that after the death of each judge Israel would apostatize.

The simple statement is: the children did evil. This means that judgment is on the way.

**2 And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor;**

*sold*, the Hebrew verb מָכַר, mah-kar, tss. *to sell, to sell away*. (cf. Jud.2.14; 3.8; 4.2, 9; 10.7)

The city of Hazor is north of the Sea of Galilee and west of the Jordan River.

**the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.**

It could be that *Harosheth of the Gentiles* refers to an just on the east side of the River Kishon, and appears to be inside of Zebulon's lot (cf. Jos.19.11)

Joshua also met with a king named Jabin, king of Hazor. This place was destroyed and this king was slain. (Jud.11.1-13) Here we are nearly 200 years later and the city is rebuilt. As for the name Jabin, it is suggested that perhaps it is a title for kings, like 'The Discerning One,' or 'The Understanding one,' or 'The Intelligent One.'

Jabin, יָבִין, *to understand, perceive, consider, discern, instruct*, etc. Robert Young, *intelligent*; Alexander Cruden, *he will understand*.

(cf. 1Sa.12.9; Ps.83.9)

**3 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.**  
forcibly

*mightily*, חֶזֶק, *chez-qah*, a fem. noun, six times in the OT, and tss. *mightily, strength* and so *forcibly*.

*oppressed*, of the Hebrew verb לָחַץ, lah-chatz, tss. *to oppress, to hold fast, to afflict, to crush, to force, to thrust*. Jud.1.34, Qal fut., **And ... forced**, Jud.4.3, Qal part. **oppressed**, Jud.2.18, Qal part, **that oppressed & 6.9, that oppressed you**.

**4 ¶ And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.**

The **fourth judge** of Israel is Deborah, meaning *eloquent* or *bee*. (Cruden) As we shall in the sixth verse, she prophesied concerning the man that should deliver Israel. (v.6) Very unusual things indeed.

The LORD raised a woman to judge Israel. It seems that the times called for the LORD to raise up a women in Israel to judge them. This appears to be so because Barak lacked the fortitude to lead Israel.

It is easy for us men to complain about how many women are usurping the roles of men today. But isn't some of this because men generally refuse to take their roles as leaders? To be leaders in the home, leaders in the church, leaders at work, leaders in the country?

**5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim:**

the hill country of mount Ephraim.

Ramah in the south and Bethel in the north, both cities located in the lot that belongs to the tribe of Benjamin. Evidently there was a place noted for a particular *palm tree*, and it was dedicated to Deborah.

עָלָה

**and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.**

ascended

*judgment, מִשְׁפָּט, mish-paht, a masc. noun tss. judgment, ordinances, fashion, cause, order, charge, custom, manner, etc.*

Deborah's reputation developed so that the children of Israel knew they could come to her and receive a righteous judgment. We don't know how long she judged for Israel like this.

**6 And she sent and called Bárak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali,**

Barak was in the far north of Canaan, in the city of Kadesh that belongs to the tribe of Naphtali. This city is about ten miles south of the city of Dan, the place where some of the tribe of Dan had migrated into the north, where they took Laish or Lashem.

***and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded,***

Evidently the LORD had given her a prophecy concerning Barak.

***saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand***  
walk, follow

*draw, מִשַׁךְ, mah-shak, a verb tss. to draw, to stretch out, to be long, to extend, to prolong, etc. (v.7)*

***men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?***

Barak, take so many of the the warriors and come down to Mount Tabor.

It does appear that others of the tribes entered into the conflict. At the same time Ephraim, Benjamin and Machir, probably referring to the half-tribe of Manasseh on the other side of Jordan, in the north fought against the Amalekites. (cf. Jud.5.14, 15) But others refused to come, Reuben, Dan and Gilead (probably referring to God), and Asher failed to help their brethren. (Jud.5.16, 17)

When we know what the will of the LORD is we should do it. If we wait for unanimity we never do much of anything. Almost no matter what it is that we do there will usually always be someone that disagrees.

***7 And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's***  
***army,***

chief, prince,  
master, keeper

***with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.***

יֵלֵךְ

**8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go:**

walk, follow, proceed  
v.24, prospered

**but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.**

Here is a man, a prince of Israel, that the LORD had commanded to muster the forces of 10,000 men and he won't go except a woman goes with him. This is why I think the LORD raised up a woman to judge Israel.

אֶפְסָ, masc. noun

**9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou**

only, way

the end of this is

with כִּי, as here, functions as adverb

יֵלֵךְ

**takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand**

walk, excellence  
follow

honour, תִּפְאָרָה, fem. noun tss. beauty, honour, glory, excellent, comely, bravery, fair.

יֵלֵךְ

**of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.**

walked, followed

Deborah went far north into Canaan to where Barak was presently, which was at Kadesh-naptali.

עָלָה

**10 ¶ And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten**

ascended

עָלָה

**thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.**

ascended

**11 Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.**

**12 And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone**  
(the Kenites)

**up to mount Tabor.**

**Vss. 11, 12** – Heber is probably something like the great or great, great grandson to Hobab. Hobab is likely Moses’ father-in-law, and father to Zipporah, Moses’ wife. (cf. Ex.2.18) But the friendship between Moses and Hobab was such that it made a lasting impression, at least on the children which came after him.

We read that Heber separated from the Kenites, his kinsmen. Evidently he didn’t share in the animosity that they had toward the Israelites. On the one hand we read that the Kenites warned Sisera that Barak had come down to mount Tabor. On the other we’re going to read how Heber’s wife identifies with Israel in the conflict. (cf. v.21)

**13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.**

Sisera probably assembled his troops along some part of the River Kishon which formed a natural boundary for Zebulun’s southernmost border.

**14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee?**

יָרַד

**So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.**  
descended

**15 And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host,**  
troubled camp

*discomfited*, the verb **חָמַם**, hah-mam, tss. *to destroy, to vex, to break, to crush, to trouble (Ex.14.24, the Egyptians), to discomfit (so, thwarted or defeated).*

*host*, **מַחֲנֵה**, mah-ch<sup>a</sup>-neh, a common noun tss. a *band, company, host, camp.*

***with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.***  
descended  
retreated

*fled*, **נָס**, noos, verb, tss. *to flee, to abate, to flee away.*

**16 But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host,**

*pursued*, the verb **רָדַף**, also tss. *to pursue, to follow, to chase, to persecute, to put to flight. (Jud. 1.6, and they pursued; 3.28, follow; 4.16, pursued; 4.22, pursued; 7.23, 25, and pursued; 8.4, yet pursuing; 8.5, am pursuing; 8.12, And ... he pursued; 9.40, And ... chased him; 20.43, chased them)*

***unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of***  
to

***the sword; and there was not a man left.***  
- not was left even one. -

**אָהַל**

**17 ¶ Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.**

Jael , **יַעֲלָ**, Yah-[g]al, means *to do good, to profit, to forward.*

Heber managed to have peace with Jabin while maintaining allegiance for the people of Moses. But it was because of this peace that Sisera fled to the tent of Heber's wife to find shelter.

**18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him,**  
come upon

to meet, קָרָא, qah-rah, tss. to meet, to be against, to befall, to come.

**Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her**  
Turn aside don't be afraid

turn in, סוּר, soor, a verb also tss. to depart, to go, to take away, to put away, to remove.

fear, יָרָא, yah-reh, also tss. to reverence, to dread, to be terrible.

**into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.**

mantle, שֶׁמֶיֶכָה, s<sup>e</sup>-mi-kah, a fem. noun only this once in the OT; it is said to be like a rug or coverlet, a bedspread.

**19 And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.**  
skin-bottle

opened, the verb פָּתַח, pah-thach, also tss. to set forth, to draw out, to draw, to loose, to ungird, to go free; **Jud.3.25 and opened; 4.19, And she opened; 19.27, and opened.**

bottle, נֹאֵד, a masc. noun always tss. bottle. It is the same as those that came to Joshua from Gibeah with old wine bottles to make it appear to him that they had been from a very far country; so 'skins.'

**20 Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.**

There is not.

**21 Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer**  
tent peg, stake

*nail*, יָתֵד, yah-theh, a fem. noun tss. *a pin, paddle, nail, stake.*

*hammer*, מַקְבֵּת, maq-qeh-veth, a fem. noun once tss. *hammer* (Jud.4.21), and once *hole* (Is.51.1); in ch.5.26 the Hebrew is הַלְמוֹת, hal-muth, *to hammer*, but this also is only once in the OT.

**in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples,**  
in secret struck

*softly*, a masc. noun, only once in the OT, לָאֵט, lah-at; see the adv. טָא, tss. *gently, softly, secret.*

*smote*, הִקַּע, a verb tss. *to pitch, to blow, to strike* (Jud.4.21), *to fasten*. In Jud.5.26, the Hebrew הִלַּם & מִחַק are tss. *smote*.

*temples*, a fem. noun, רִקְהָ, raq-qah, and always tss. *temple* (5)

**and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.**  
earth in a deep sleep faint

*fastened*, חָצַן, a verb tss. *to light* (Jos.15.18; Jud.1.14, when Achsah dismounted the donkey), and this one other time, *to fasten*.

*fast asleep*, חָרַם, a verb also tss. *a deep sleep* (Dan.8.18; 10.9), *a dead sleep* (Ps.76.6), etc.

*weary*, עוּף, [g]oof, a verb also tss. *to be faint, to fly, to fly away, to be set*. etc.



*prevailed, קָשָׁה, an adj. also tss. hard, cruel, stubborn, rough, heavy, grievous, obstinate.*

*destroyed, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb כָּרַת, kah-rath, also tss. to make, to cut down, to hew, to perish, to free, to fail.*

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Song of Deborah**

**1 ¶ Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,**

**2 Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.**

**3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.**

**4 LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchest out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.**

**5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.**

**6 ¶ In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.**

The main passageways were dangerous routes to travel.

**7 The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.**

**8 They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?**

Israel had been forced by their conquerors to disarm.

**9 My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the LORD.**

**10 Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.**

Perhaps the governors of Israel should not the price that was paid so that they might officiate in the nation, among their brethren.

**11 They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.**

**12 ¶ Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.**

Deliver the children of Israel from the oppressive regime of King Jabin.

**13 Then he made him that remaineth**

Barak

(of the oppressed Israelites)

**have dominion over the nobles among the people:**

(of the Canaanites)

**the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.**

In the next verse Deborah acknowledges that of the tribes that helped in the battle.

**14 Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.**

While this battle was being fought Ephraim, Benjamin and even Manasseh on the other side of the Jordan made an assault against the Amalekites. Issachar joined forces with Zebulun and Naphtali.

**and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer** – Every able-bodied man went to war. Even to them that were accustomed to handling the pen took weapons of war to fight with Barak.

**15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak:**

Then Deborah also acknowledges those that did not help their brethren in the battle ...

***he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.***

*thoughts*, חֲקֵק, cheh-qek, a masc. noun tss. *thoughts* (1), *decrees* (1).

***16 Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.***

*divisions*, פְּלִגָּה, p'lag-gah, a fem. noun twice *divisions*, and once *rivers* (Job 20.17).

*searchings*, חֲקֵר, cheh-qer, a masc. noun tss. *searchings*, *finding out*, *to search out*, *searchable*.

Reuben seems to be ambivalent about entering the warfare and therefore never does. Don't you just love someone that 'straddles the fence?'

***17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.***

So Deborah's complaint is that Reuben, Gilead, probably more specifically the tribe of Gad, Dan (located by the Med. Sea), and Asher failed to help in the conflict.

***18 Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.***

***19 The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in***  
(of Israel)

***Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money.***  
Manasseh's city, Jos.17.11

waters of Megiddo would be another way to refer to the River Kishon as it meanders by the plain of Megiddo down to the Med. Sea.

gain, **בְּצֵעַ**, beh-tza[g], a masc. noun tss. *profit, covetousness, gain, lucre, dishonest gain.*

**20 They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.**

Aback of Israel was the assistance of an unseen force of an heavenly host. The result ...

**21 The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.**

**22 Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.**

**23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.**

The city of Meroz is said to be the same as Merom. Merom is located in the heart of Zebulun. The inhabitants of this city refused to come to help their own tribe. For this the angel of the LORD had Deborah prophecy a curse concerning them.

**24 ¶ Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.**

**25 He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish.**

**26 She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.**

smote, the Hebrew **הִמָּח** (to hammer) & **מָחָה** (to smash) are tss. smote. In Jud.4.21, **עָקַח**, is also tss. smote, a verb also tss. *to pitch, to blow, to strike, to fasten.*

This does seem to say that, not only did Jael drive a tent peg through the temples of Sisera, but after that she had firmly fastened his head to the earth she cut off his head.

**27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.**

**28 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?**

**29 Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself,**

Sisera's mother and her wise ladies tried to comfort themselves why he was long to return.

**30 Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?**

Of course they know that he has fallen in battle.

**31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him**  
(the LORD)  
**be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.**

So to speak, 'let nothing hinder those that love the LORD, let nothing stand in their way.

**And the land had rest forty years.**

*your enemies, is a verb!*, אַיָּב, ah-yav, also tss. *foes*. (**Jud.2.14 (twice), 18; 3.28; 5.31; 8.34; 11.36; 16.23, 24**)

Mesopotamian oppression (v.8)	8 years	(ch.3)
Othniel peace (v.11)	40	
Moab's oppression (v.14)	18	
Ehud's peace (v.30)	80	
Shamgar (unknown)	---	
Canaanite's oppression	20	(ch.4)

<u>Deborah's peace</u>	<u>40</u>
Total	206 years

Note: Caleb was 85 when he went to battle against Hebron and took it, killing the three sons of Anak, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi. (cf. Nu.13.22; Jos.14.10; 15.14; Jud.1.10)