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Judges 5:6-12 (The Song of Deborah, Part II)

The verses today reveal various truths about interacting with God. We can submit a proposition to help understand one of them. Suppose there are two people, both of whom are trying to please God. One is a Muslim, and the other is a Christian.

The Muslim has an internal understanding that he should not have sex outside of marriage. He feels this is correct, and he doesn't want to displease God. He just feels it in his bones that doing so isn't right, and it is his intent to make God proud of him by not doing this.

The Christian knows from the word that he shouldn't have sex outside of marriage. Before he came to Christ, he never really thought about it and did what he wanted to in this regard. After coming to Jesus, he heard that what he was doing was wrong and gave up on those ways.

Both are refraining from sex outside of marriage. However, the Muslim is wasting his time, at least from the aspect of meriting favor with God. The deeds of the Christian, on the other hand, are acceptable and pleasing to God. What is the difference between the two?

Text Verse: *"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, ¹⁶ that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Romans 12:15, 16*

The answer to the question is given by Paul in these verses from Romans. The Muslim has not called on the true God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, he is not sanctified, and his deeds, even if well-intentioned, are unholy. He is tainted with sin and remains separated from God, even if he does right things.

Jesus Christ is the offering that makes man acceptable to God. This is true for Jews and Gentiles. Jews remain unholy and separate from God if they have not come to Him through Jesus. All people, regardless of religion, need what Paul describes as "repentance toward God."

This means "changing the mind toward God." It isn't something one does outwardly but inwardly. People who have not called on Jesus believe something about God, even if it means being atheists and denying His existence.

To have repentance toward God means to think properly about God, accepting that He united with humanity in the Person of Jesus Christ to bring us back to Himself through His cross. Once that happens, the Holy Spirit makes the person acceptable to God, and the deeds that he does can then, likewise, be acceptable.

Jesus is the answer to our greatest need. This truth is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Until I, Deborah, Arose (verses 6-9)

**⁶“In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,
The highways were deserted,
And the travelers walked along the byways.**

bime Shamgar ben Anath bime yael khadlu orakhoth v’holkhe nethivoth yelkhu orakhoth aqalqaloth

As in the last sermon, each clause will be explained independently:

In days Shamgar, son Anath.

Here, Deborah gives a time reference for the people to remember by noting a hero within the land. Shamgar, son of Anath, was noted as a judge of Israel in Judges 3:31. There it said –

“After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.”

As noted then, the derivation of his name is uncertain. However, it is likely this is a reversal of the name of Moses’ son Gershom. If so, then it would be from the words *sham* (there) or *shem* (name) and (stranger). Hence, There a Stranger or Called a Stranger.

His father’s name, Anath, comes from *anah*, a word having four distinct meanings: to answer or respond; be occupied with; to afflict, oppress, or humble; or to sing. Thus, it can mean Answer, Business, Affliction, or Singing. Because of the typology, Affliction is the meaning here. Next, it says...

In days Yael.

This again provides a time reference, noting a heroine in the land. This is the same person noted in Judges 4, Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who struck Sisera, commander of the army of Jabin. It is at the time of these two heroic people that...

Ceased ways.

The *orakh* is a way. It can be literal, as in a path, highway, etc., or it can be figurative, as in the manner (way) of a woman (Genesis 18:11) or in the path of life (Psalm 16:11). It is derived

from *arakh*, to wander or journey. Thus, the meaning in this context is that the main means of travel, such as roads and well-traveled paths, have stopped being used.

Without directly saying it, it is to be understood that it would be too dangerous to take them because of robbers and bushwhackers. Hence, it is a time of lawlessness and fear. Rather than the main roads, it says...

And walked paths, walking ways winding.

There are two new words here. The first is *nathiyv*. It is a noun signifying a path. For example, it is used in Psalm 119, saying –

“Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path [*nathiyv*].” Psalm 119:105

The next is rare, *aqalqal*. It signifies crooked or bent, coming from the verb *aqal*, to bend or twist. The only other use is in Psalm 125, where it is given in a figurative sense, where one’s way are crooked –

“As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways [*aqalqal*],
The Lord shall lead them away
With the workers of iniquity.
Peace *be* upon Israel!” Psalm 125:5

In this case, it is referring to taking backroads rather than the main highways. Therefore, “winding” gets the point while giving an alliterative effect. Out of fear, the people forgo the main roads and stick to the winding ways that are more difficult but safer.

bime Shamgar ben Anath bime yael khadlu orakhoth v’holkhe nethivoth yelkhu orakhoth aqalqaloth –

It is an a/a b/b pattern where an emphatic contrast exists in the “b” section due to the repetition in the final clause.

- (a) In days Shamgar, son Anath,
- (a) In days Yael,
- (b) Ceased ways,
- (b/b) And walked paths, walking ways winding.

The words tell of the state of life during the time of Shamgar and Jael. Adam Clarke pithily sums up the situation –

“The land was full of anarchy and confusion, being everywhere infested with banditti. No public road was safe; and in going from place to place, the people were obliged to use unfrequented paths.” Adam Clarke

This tells us that there is overlap in the judging of Shamgar and Deborah, at least in the state of the land in their times of judging. That continued until the battle was engaged by Barak and ended in the heroic deed of Jael.

Some find the words here impossible to reconcile with the statements that come at the end of Ehud’s time of judging –

“So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

³¹ After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.” Judges 3:30, 31

It is assumed that Ehud judged, there followed eighty years of peace, then Shamgar judged (or he is ignored as not really being a judge) in a time of strife that lasted until the time of Deborah. This fails to account for the fact that the rule of judges necessarily overlapped at times.

It further fails to consider what it means for the land to have rest. It does not mean that there was complete peace and harmony, but that there was no war. Shamgar fought the Philistines, probably at the time of Ehud. After that, war ceased, but the people remained in a state of vexation due to lawlessness.

War again took place at the time of Deborah. The sad description of the state of things between these times of war continues with...

**⁷ Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Arose a mother in Israel.**

khadlu p’razon b’yisrael khadlu ad shaqamti d’vorah shaqamti em b’yisrael

Ceased peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel – ceased.

Here, a word is introduced, the meaning of which is rather uncertain, *p’razon*. It is found only here and in verse 11. It is a masculine singular noun from the same root as *p’razah*, an open region or a hamlet, often translated as unwallled villages. That ultimately is derived from a root meaning to separate, as in deciding the chieftain of a village.

Therefore, two possible translations are generally decided upon. The first is something like mighty men or rulers. The second is something to do with those in villages. The reason for the variation is based on what it said in the previous verse.

There were first mentioned the brave people, Shamgar and Yael. Next, the state of the paths and ways was noted. Therefore, it is either referring to brave people like Shamgar and Yael or to the state of those living in those villages who became so frightened that they no longer conducted such simple pastoral life.

The next words are simple to translate, but they don't help with the correct meaning of the word *p'razon*...

Until I arose – Deborah.

The distressing issue addressed in the first clause is alleviated through the coming of Deborah. However, that issue could still be either of the two possibilities:

- There was no proper local leadership in the land to handle the dire situation until Deborah arose or
- There was no peaceful pastoral life in the land until Deborah arose.

Either way...

I arose mother in Israel.

The meaning of this is to be derived from the first words of Chapter 4 –

“When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. ²So 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. ³And 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.” Judges 4:1-3

The sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. The Lord sold them because of this, as if they were no longer sons. But needing to be led by a parent, they cried out to the Lord for relief from their oppressors, and He sent them Deborah to be as a mother to them, bringing them back to a state of sonship through her, His appointed judge.

This still does not resolve the actual meaning of *p'razon*. But either way, the effect is the same. Either proper local leadership of the unwallled villages was restored, or the peaceful state of those within the unwallled villages was restored. The result is what matters. That is seen in reviewing the entire verse...

khadlu p'razon b'yisrael khadlu ad shaqamti d'vorah shaqamti em b'yisrael –

It is an emphatic a/a b/b pattern where the words “ceased” and “until” provide a contrast.

(a/a) Ceased peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel – ceased.

(b) Until I arose – Deborah.

(b) I arose mother in Israel.

The reason for the ceasing is next stated...

⁸**They chose new gods;**

Then *there was* war in the gates;

Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

It is singular, speaking of Israel as an individual: *yivkhar elohim khadashim az lakhem sh'arim magen im yeraeh va'romakh b'arbaim eleph b'yisrael*

He chooses gods, newbies.

Speaking of Israel, the meaning is clear. But it is remarkable how many variations in translation or interpretation there are. A few are –

God shall choose a new thing. (Peshitta)

God chose new leaders. (NET)

The LORD will choose new things. (Lamasa)

The Lord chose new wars. (Douay-Rheims)

They chose new gods. (WEB)

They hath chosen a new thinge. (Coverdale)

When the people chose new gods. (GWT)

Cambridge claims that the words yield no certain meaning. The varied translations and seeming confusion are remedied by a return to Deuteronomy 32 where the same words were used –

“They are sacrificing to the demons, not God.

‘Gods’ [*elohim*] no they knew.

Newbies [*khadashim*], from near they came.

No have they dreaded, your fathers.” Deuteronomy 32:17 (CG)

Right in the Song of Moses, it explains exactly what the people would do. From there, it told what the Lord would do in return by spurning them, hiding His face from them, and seeing how things would go for them. As for this time in Israel’s history, the result was...

Then war, gates.

It is a noun found only here in Scripture, *lakhem*. It is derived from the verb *lakham*, to fight or do battle. Hence, it means conflict or war. The meaning is that because of their turning from the Lord, war hems them in at their gates. They had already abandoned their villages, but things only progressively got worse.

The gates are where rulers gather to judge the community. With war at the gates, a properly functioning community would break down, and chaos would ensue.

As an interesting side translation, without the vowel pointing, the word translated as war (*lakhem* – לַחֶם) is identical to bread (*lekhem* – לֶחֶם). Further, the word translated as gates (*sh'arim* – שַׁרְיִם), without the pointing, is spelled like barley (*s'orim* – שֹׁרִים). Hence, some translations say something like, “Then the barley bread.”

That may sound odd at first, but if combined with the translation of the other clauses, it makes sense – “God shall choose a new thing and then bread of barley, and a sword and spear will not be seen among forty thousand of Israel” (Peshitta).

In other words, God turns away from Israel so that there is no bread to eat during the siege and no weapon with which to fight against the attacking enemy. That would then match what it later says in Isaiah concerning the siege of Jerusalem, where there was a lack of battle-ready men and a lack of food –

“But if you say to me, ‘We trust in the Lord our God,’ *is it* not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You shall worship before this altar?’⁸ Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them!⁹ How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?¹⁰ Have I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? The Lord said to me, ‘Go up against this land, and destroy it.’

¹¹ Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, ‘Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it*; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall.’

¹² But *the* Rabshakeh said, ‘Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?’” Isaiah 36:7-12

Although the words do match what could be expected of a siege, the rendering of war at the gates rather than that of barley bread is the more likely rendering. This is because the subject of the first clause is Israel, not God, as was determined from the words of Deuteronomy 32. With that, the final clause says...

Shield, if seen, and spear in forty thousand in Israel.

The meaning, though debated, is that there were no truly offensive weapons available within any given city. When warfare is waged against a walled city, the natural implements to use would be shields to protect from arrows and spears directed at the foes.

It doesn't say there were no swords, and that is just what was used, as is described in Chapter 4 in the battle fought by Barak. Swords are used for close-in fighting. But for a siege, unless the walls are breached, they are of no offensive value.

The number forty thousand, not mentioned in Chapter 4, is derived from the numbers four and ten, or forty and ten. The meaning of each, as defined by E.W. Bullinger, is –

Four is the number of creation. It “is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of *material completeness*. Hence it is the *world number*, and especially the ‘city’ number.”

Ten signifies the perfection of Divine order: “Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number *ten*. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

Forty “is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8). This is certainly the case where forty relates to a period of evident probation. But where it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10, and in harmony with their signification.”

yivkhar elohim khadashim az lakhem sh'arim magen im yeraeh va'romakh b'arbaim eleph b'yisrael –

It is an a/b/c pattern where b explains a and c describes the state under b.

- (a) He chooses gods, newbies.
- (b) Then war, gates.
- (c) Shield, if seen, and spear in forty thousand in Israel.

Israel did just what the Song of Moses said they would do. The Lord, in turn, responded just as the Song said would happen. But, at the people crying out and Deborah prophesying, things began to change...

*Awake! Awake to righteousness
Come alive through the power of God in Christ
Without Him, your life will remain a mess
This is how the soul is priced*

*We can be of no value at all because of sin
Or we can become a jewel of infinite worth*

*Without Jesus, we will be eternally done in
But through calling on Him, we receive the new birth*

*Come to God through the giving of His Son
Such a glorious, marvelous thing He has done for us
Through Christ, the battle over sin is won
Thank God for our Lord, our Savior – Jesus!*

II. Awake! Awake! (verses 9-12)

**⁹ My heart is with the rulers of Israel
Who offered themselves willingly with the people.
Bless the Lord!**

The words are hard to literally translate because verbs are being used as nouns: *libi l'khoqe Yisrael ha'mitnadvim ba'am barakhu Yehovah*

My heart to inscribers Israel.

Pretty much every translation renders the verb as a noun, such as princes, lawgivers, governors, etc. But the word is a verb, *khaqq*. It means to cut in, inscribe, etc. As such, it indicates to make a decree. Figuratively, one could say something like “prescribers.”

The point is that her heart went out to those who decreed the words of her prophecy to the people to incite them to action. That is exactly the result obtained in the next clause...

The volunteering in the people.

Almost all translations render this as a continuation of the previous clause, making the subject the same in both clauses. The NKJV says –

“My heart is with the rulers of Israel
Who offered themselves willingly with the people.”

This is possible, but the word “who” has to be inserted. The word “to” in the first clause seems to be addressing those described by the verb in each clause. Hence, they are addressing two different categories –

My heart to:
Inscribers Israel.
The volunteering in the people.

As in verse 2, the word *nadav*, to incite or impel, is used. Upon hearing the decree of the inscribers, these now being described were internally impelled to act. Thus, they are the

volunteering among those who heard. Therefore, Deborah goes ballistic once again, as she did in verse 2 –

Bless Yehovah!

At the thought of what has occurred, one can again see her throwing her arms toward heaven and shouting a proclamation of blessing toward the Lord. The reason I would make the first two clauses different categories is because this verse is given as a mirror to the words of verse 2 –

“In freeing freemen in Israel.
In volunteering – people.
Bless Yehovah!”

“My heart to inscribers Israel.
The volunteering in the people.
Bless Yehovah!”

The people were freed, those who were impelled then volunteered, and Deborah sent forth her blessing of Yehovah. The inscribers made their decree, those who were so impelled volunteered, and Deborah again sent forth her blessing of Yehovah. As such, the same structure as verse 2 is again seen, a complementary a/b pattern followed by a note of praise.

libi l'khoqe Yisrael ha'mitnadvim ba'am barakhu Yehovah

My heart to:
(a) Inscribers Israel.
(b) The volunteering in the people.
Bless Yehovah!”

After verse 5:2, her words followed with praise from self – “I will sing praise...” Now, she implores the people to speak out, saying...

¹⁰ “Speak, you who ride on white donkeys,
Who sit in judges’ attire,
And who walk along the road.

The NKJV, following the KJV, ruins the emphatic nature and highly anticipatory mood of the words: *rokhve atonoth ts'khoroth yoshve al midin v'holkhe al derekh sikhu*

Riders, donkeys tawny.

The word translated as donkey is *athon*, a female donkey. That comes from the same as *ethan*, perennial, ever-flowing, or permanent. The sense is that of the ever-patient nature of the animal, being very docile.

The adjective translated as tawny is found only here in Scripture, *tsakhor*. It comes from *tsakhar*, a noun found only in Ezekiel 27:18, also meaning tawny. It comes from a root signifying to dazzle. Thus, they are donkeys that possess a bright coat instead of the typically bland colors of a donkey a commoner would ride on.

The only reason why the word white is used is because the Greek was translated that way for the benefit of the Roman and Greek audiences that understood white animals as representing nobility, wealth, power, etc. The words speak of the leaders of the people, whether wealthy, noble, etc. That thought certainly continues with the next clause...

Sitters upon measures.

Of this clause, the Geneva Bible says, “yee that dwel by Middin.” Middin is a city named in Joshua 15:61, but this is not the meaning. First, it says “upon,” not “by.” Secondly, there is no other mention of the name in Scripture.

That, on my part, is a bit of an argument from silence, but Deborah is referring to something the people would understand pertains to wealth or nobility. If Middin was filled with such people, Scripture would certainly have indicated this.

Rather, the word *midin* is the plural of *mad* (or *med*). It signifies a measure or extent, normally of cloth or garment. A garment is made to the measure of a man. In this case, it is a measured cloth. Of this cloth, there are two reasonable possibilities. One is the cloth laid upon a donkey like a saddle. The other would be a measured cloth used by people for sitting on as we use cushions today.

The quality of the measure would indicate the status of the person, from poor to wealthy or maybe even to indicate a profession. Thus, it could go so far as to be a symbol of authority or judgment.

Translating this with the known root, measures, leaves open both possibilities. Either way, the thought runs parallel to that of the previous clause, signifying something that sets these people apart as classy. I would take it to signify someone who sits on a garment in a set location as a sign of wealth. The reason for this is because of the next words...

And walkers upon road.

This is what people commonly do if they don't have a donkey or if their donkey is used for carrying a large load. Thus, this verse is referring to three classes of people: riders, sitters, and

walkers. Regardless of which person is being referred to, the final word of the verse, a word of strong emphasis, is...

Soliloquize!

It is a new verb to Scripture, *siakh*. It comes from the noun *siakh* which means to complain or babble to oneself, meditate, etc. To understand more completely, Strong's notes that it is from a primitive root, meaning to ponder.

Thus, by implication, it means to converse aloud with oneself. As such, and to provide a word that means exactly that, I have translated it as soliloquize. The exclamation point is provided to indicate the emphatic nature of Deborah's words.

In other words, and to paraphrase the verse, "You who ride on dazzling donkeys, you sitters upon measures, and you walkers along the road, think about what I am telling you and repeat it as a memory tool." It thus forms an a/a/a pattern accompanied by an emphatic directive: *rokhve atonoth ts'khoroth yoshve al midin v'holkhe al derekh sikhu –*

(a) Riders, donkeys tawny,
(a) Sitters upon measures,
(a) And walkers upon road –
Soliloquize!

With that, Deborah next states...

**¹¹ Far from the noise of the archers, among the watering places,
There they shall recount the righteous acts of the Lord,
The righteous acts *for* His villagers in Israel;
Then the people of the Lord shall go down to the gates.**

Of this verse, the Pulpit Commentary states (and I can attest to their words), "A very difficult verse, and very variously rendered."

miqol m'khatstsim ben mashabim sham y'tanu tsidqoth Yehovah tsidqoth pirzono b'yisrael az yardu lasharim am Yehovah

From voice dividers between troughs.

The word "from" can, and often does, signify "more than." To paraphrase it, we would say, "Above the sound." These people were told to soliloquize. They will do so loudly enough to overcome the distraction around them.

The word *khatsats* signifies to divide. Some translations say "arrows" because of the similar word *khets*, meaning an arrow. There is no need to accept this. The next word is found only

here in Scripture, *mashav*. It comes from *shaav*, to draw water. Thus, being plural, it would signify troughs.

What is going on at the place of troughs where people draw water? Lots of talk and fun chatter. The dividers are those who are cutting into the thoughts and words of the person's soliloquy. Therefore, the person who was instructed to soliloquize is told to do so above the noisy chatter of the people there to draw water. At this place...

There they celebrate righteousnesses Yehovah.

Here is another new and rare verb, *tanah*. It is identical to another verb of the same spelling, meaning "to hire." Both come from a primitive root signifying to attribute honor. One hires that which is good in his eyes.

In the case of this word, it would mean to commemorate, but in a positive sense. To get the proper idea of what is being said, one must go to the only other use –

“And it was a custom in Israel, ⁴⁰ that the daughters of Israel went yearly to celebrate [*tanah*] the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.” -Judges 11:39, 40

This soliloquized celebrating is concerning the righteous acts of the Lord. This then must be considered both in His judging and selling off Israel as well as His returning to them upon their crying out to Him. With that, Deborah next says...

Righteousnesses His peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel.

Some translations make this out to be an emphatic repeat of the previous verse. Thus, it would be referring to the righteousnesses of the Lord, such as “Even righteousnesses toward His people...” However, that doesn't appear to be the case.

Instead, it is referring back to verse 7, where the only other use of *p'razon* is seen in Scripture, “Ceased peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel – ceased.” Until Deborah arose, these people ceased their doings. However, after she arose, verse 9 explained their conduct –

My heart to:

(a) inscribers Israel.

(b) The volunteering in the people.

Bless Yehovah!”

With the righteousnesses of the Lord brought forth on behalf of the people, the people then performed their own righteousnesses. It is the same thought expressed in Revelation 19, where a similar plural noun construct is used –

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts [*dikaiōmata*, lit: righteousneses] of the saints.” Revelation 19:7, 8

Apart from the Lord, there can be no acts of righteousness. Only when living in accord with His will, can the deeds of the people be considered as righteous.

Then they shall descend to the gates, people Yehovah.

This returns to the words of verse 8, “Then war, gates.” The gates are where people go in and out of the city. It is the place of making legal decisions. However, most notably, the gates are the place where judgment is rendered.

This doesn’t merely mean legal decisions like transferring deeds and obtaining marriage licenses, but where judgment of the moral nature takes place. It is why this is recorded in Revelation –

“Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” Revelation 21:25-27

The gates are always open because those who can enter have had a not-guilty verdict rendered. As for the people of the Lord in Judges, they can safely come to the city without fear. They have been forgiven of their past through humbling themselves and calling out to Yehovah. The words form a clause concerning the unlimited mercy of the Lord upon those who call out to Him in faith. The verse forms an a/a b/b pattern.

miqol m’khatstsim ben mashabim sham y’tanu tsidqoth Yehovah tsidqoth pirzono b’yisrael az yardu lasharim am Yehovah

- (a) From voice dividers between troughs,
- (a) There they celebrate righteousneses Yehovah,
- (b) Righteousneses His peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel,
- (b) Then they shall descend to the gates, people Yehovah.

With that, the verse rushes into a beautiful exclamatory note that forms a bridge between this section and the next...

¹² **“Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing a song!**

**Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away,
O son of Abinoam!**

uri uri d'vorah uri uri dabri shir qum baraq u-shaveh shevykha ben avinoam

Awake, awake, Deborah!

This takes the reader back to the second paragraph of the narrative in Chapter 4 –

“Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵And 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. ⁶Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him...” Judges 4:4-6

She is poetically detailing what it was like to receive the revelation from the Lord concerning Israel’s coming deliverance. It is as if the Lord is rousing her, “Awake, awake, Deborah!” With that, He gives her the instruction to prophesy, here called a song...

Awake, awake, speak a song:

Rather than sing a song, she is told to speak. Though spoken, the words are as a song, nonetheless –

“Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded...” Judges 4:6

The words would be music to their ears. They are words of decision coming from the mouth of the Lord God...

Arise, Barak.

This sums up the command of the Lord that was expressed in her next words to Barak –

“Go and deploy *troops* at Mount Tabor;
take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun;
⁷and against you I will deploy Sisera,
the commander of Jabin’s army,
with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon.” Judges 4:6-7

And lead captive your captivity, son Abinoam.

This tells of the victory that lay ahead. Those who held Israel captive, inclusive of Barak (your captivity), would be led captive. It is reflected in the closing words of her initial statement to him –

“and I will deliver him into your hand?” Judges 4:7

With this bridge between stanzas complete, we note the interesting a/a followed by a word of instruction and then a b/c-d/c pattern:

uri uri d'vorah uri uri dabri shir qum baraq u-shaveh shevykha ben avinoam

(a) Awake, awake, Deborah!

(a) Awake, awake!

Speak a song:

(b/c) Arise, Barak

(d/c) And lead captive your captivity, son Abinoam.

What has been done is that the two c's are divided by two commands. Instead of saying, “Arise and lead captive your captivity, Barak, son of Abinoam,” she poetically divides them for emphasis. As such, it truly forms a song instead of simple prose.

The words of Deborah will continue in the next sermon. Until then, we can consider the overall typology in relation to what was seen in Chapter 4. Deborah typologically anticipates the New Testament. Israel was under law and unable to please God because the law only forms an impossible wall between the two.

However, with the coming of the New Testament and the grace of God revealed there, man can once again be restored to complete and total fellowship with God. This has been hinted at in several ways in the passage today.

The Lord has brilliantly used real people and real circumstances to show us what He will do in the sending of Jesus. Through Him, we become righteous. Because of this, our deeds can now be considered in the same light. God no longer sees our sin.

Therefore, the things we do, even if they are exactly the same in nature as what others in the world do, are now acceptable. At the same time, the deeds of those not in Christ cannot be reckoned as acceptable. The difference is not in what is done, but in who makes what is done acceptable, meaning Jesus.

The point is that we cannot buy off God with good deeds. Our sin separates us from such a notion. But our good deeds, when done in Christ, can rise to God like acceptable sacrifices. Jesus is what makes all the difference. Don't try to earn what He gives freely through grace. Accept the gift, and then do what is pleasing to God.

Closing Verse: *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”² And do not*

be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:1, 2

Next Week: Judges 5:13-23 *Everybody will say ooh, ahh! It’s so niftee...* (The Song of Deborah, Part III) (15th Judges Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who judges His people according to their deeds. So, follow Him, live for Him, and trust Him, and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

(The Song of Deborah, Part II)

6 In days Shamgar, son Anath,
In days Yael,
Ceased ways,
And walked paths, walking ways winding.

7 Ceased peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel – ceased.
Until I arose – Deborah.
I arose mother in Israel.

8 He chooses gods, newbies.
Then war, gates.
Shield, if seen, and spear in forty thousand in Israel.

9 My heart to:
Inscribers Israel.
The volunteering in the people.
Bless Yehovah!”

10 Riders donkeys white,
Sitters upon measures,
And walkers upon road –
Soliloquize!

11 From voice dividers between troughs,
There they celebrate righteousnesses Yehovah,
Righteousnesses His peasantry [or magistracy] in Israel,
Then they shall descend to the gates, people Yehovah.

12 Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake!
Speak a song:

Arise, Barak

And lead captive your captivity, son Abinoam.

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word

Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You

May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown

Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...