

# Deborah

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on 2021-08-22

This is the 17th sermon in our series on Women of Faith. And we will be looking today at Deborah - a most interesting woman who gives us many lessons for our own day. Let's read the first few verses of her story in Judges 4:4-10.

## Introduction - life shredded and restored

CBS news told a brief story about a Utah couple by the name of Ben and Jackee Belnap. They had been saving up money all year to reimburse his parents for season football tickets. That weekend they were planning to take the envelope to his parents' house. So as not to forget, they put the envelope (which had \$1060 inside of it) onto the top of the counter. They were getting ready to leave, and went to pick up the envelope, and it was not there. They frantically searched everywhere and could not find it. With a sickening feeling, Jackee remembered that the previous day her two year old son had helped her shred paper. And she thought, "Surely he wouldn't do that today without my being there." She rushed over to the shredder, and sure enough, he had somehow found the envelope and helped mommy out by shredding it into a zillion little pieces. After looking at the shreds of money in shock and disbelief, Jackee finally said, "This will make a great wedding story someday." Ben was not humored. They didn't get mad at the kid because he was two years old and didn't know what money was - and he had after all been given permission by mommy to shred paper the day before. So it was a huge loss. It looked like it was a total loss.

On a whim, Ben Belnap contacted the Treasury Department, which, he discovered, actually *has* a "Mutilated Currency Division." They "redeem" (that's the word they use - they redeem) currency that is burned, rodent-chewed, or deteriorated as a free service to the public. And apparently they handle around 30,000 claims a year, redeeming more than \$30 million in mutilated cash. They told Ben to send the shredded money to Washington in Ziploc bags. So a sickening story actually ended wonderfully well.

Brothers and sisters, we live in a culture that has completely shredded the Christian values of our forefathers. Only, unlike the Belnap's two year old son, this was done very deliberately and with a high hand - as Psalm 2 words it, our nation has been a casting off the bonds of Christ. It is very disheartening; it is sickening. But thankfully the Bible tells us that redemption is still possible. Jesus delights in redeeming mutilated lives, families, and even cultures. He can redeem your shredded life, and he can use you to bring redemption back to our shredded culture. And Deborah shows you how.

## The times of Deborah were tough (Judges 3:31; 4:1-3; 5:1-31)

Deborah was a woman who was disheartened over her own shredded culture, and God used her faith, her courage, and her prophetic messages to restore things for a generation. Judges is a book that repeats this cycle of shredding and redemption. It doesn't have to repeat, but it tends to.

And for those of you who think, “Hey, I am only a mother; I can’t do much,” I want to read Judges 5:7. It says, “Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel.” We will look later at what it means to be a mother in Israel. It is a phrase filled with meaning. You can’t imitate everything that Deborah did. You are certainly not a prophetess. But you can be a mother in Israel. But first, let’s look at Israel’s shredded culture.

### Israel was oppressed by a tyrant - Jabin (Judges 4:1-3)

Verses 1-3 indicate that during the first 20 years after Ehud’s Judgeship, Israel was being harshly ruled by Jabin the Canaanite. He ruled over most of Israel (other than some Philistine holdings in the West) between the years 1298 and 1278 BC. Any time strong leadership is absent (as it was when Ehud died), liberty does not flourish - contrary to the theory of anarchism. There is always a tyrant to fill the gap. It’s human nature, and anarchism and most forms of libertarianism completely miss the implications of the doctrine of total depravity - *at least as it applies to politics*. Fallen humans will always need strong leadership - not tyrants, but strong godly leadership.

But there is a deeper reason why this tyrant came, and verses 1-3 give us that reason. This was not a fluke of geopolitical meanderings. It says,

Judg. 4:1 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.

This was not some fluke of history. This was God *Himself* disciplining Israel because of their evil ways. *He* sold Israel into Jabin’s hands. Verse 3:

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.

I fear that increasing oppression will come to America for exactly the same reason - the church’s backsliding. The church keeps praying for deliverance from tough times, but without repentance, deliverance will not happen. And repentance will not happen until the church once again brings the Bible to bear in the public arena. The story of Deborah is a story about the power of inspired revelation - yes, even in the hands of a mother.

### The population was completely disarmed (Judges 5:8b)

Well, what kind of oppression did Jabin bring? Chapter 5:8 says that he completely disarmed Israel. That is one kind of oppression. It says,

They chose new gods; [That’s the reason for the oppression, and then comes Deborah’s war] Then there was war in the gates; [but here was the problem:] not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

They were completely disarmed. So what did they fight with? I believe for the most part it was makeshift weapons. For example, glance at chapter 3:31. That shows that when Shamgar was stirred up by God to fight in this war (it *was* at the same time), he used an ox goad (a sharp pointed stick) to kill 600 men. So sometimes you have to make do with

improvised weapons when weapons are confiscated. I picture Shamgar as a Jackie Chan just flying around these soldiers with his pointy stick. But even there - even if he was expert in martial arts, it had to have been a miracle - he took on and killed 600 Philistines. That's astounding. In any case, all weapons had been confiscated.

In every age, weapon-control attempts are attempts to be like Jabin - to control the population. That way Jabin could raise taxes as high as he wanted, demand that people work on his projects, and divert all Israel's governmental functions to serve him rather than serving the people. His confiscation of food reserves (because tyrants think you are an obvious danger to society if you store up reserves of food - his confiscation of food reserves) resulted in people starting to steal and starting to engage in highway robbery, making the roads unsafe. But because local officials were conscripted for *Jabin's* security, not Israel's, they were *not* deployed to make the roads safe. It was a mess. The Israelite leaders were not doing much of anything good.

## Travel was not safe (Judges 5:6) and villages were abandoned (5:7)

So chapter 5, verses 6-7 say,

6 "In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael [ so the Jael of our story and Shamgar lived at the same time], the highways were deserted, and the travelers walked along the byways. 7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel.

So during the first 20 years after Ehud, everyone was under the boot of Jabin and life was not good. Crime went up, burglaries were rampant, making people leave the villages and go to more fortified towns. Travel on the main roads was no longer safe, so people would travel off-road through the woods to escape detection. She lived in tumultuous times. But it is interesting that those tumultuous times didn't keep her from going outdoors. In Judges 4:5 she judged cases under this palm tree. She did not live in fear. She was a courageous woman.

## Where were the Israelite men during the years 1298-1278 BC?

### In the west, only one man stood up - Shamgar (3:31; 5:6-7)

And you might ask, "Where were the Israelite men during these years?" And the answer is that most just went along to get along. Even the leaders of Israel just did whatever Jabin wanted them to do. It was easier to make money that way. If they did resist, it wasn't very effective. Shamgar was the notable exception, though Floyd Nolan Jones believes that he only rose up when Deborah and Barak did. He was one of the valiant ones fighting in the West while they were fighting on the other fronts - especially the east. So some commentators believe that he was biding his time as well prior to this war. Chapter 3:31 says,

Judg. 3:31 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.

It doesn't say *when* in that twenty year period that Shamgar arose, but the verse we just read in chapter 5:6 makes most commentators believe that Shamgar was a contemporary of Deborah and Barak, and some believe he either died in this battle or shortly afterward. Josephus says he died a year later. But what was Shamgar doing during the previous 19 years? *That's* the question.

## In the east, Barak was a governor who wasn't doing his job well (Judges 5)

We will shortly see in chapter 5 that Barak was also a governor who was allowed to continue to rule under Jabin. But he wasn't doing his governor's job very well - at least not on behalf of Israel. One of Deborah's tasks was to push and push the men to lead, and when they did lead, she praises them saying, "When leaders lead in Israel... bless the LORD" (5:2). We will see that part of being a mother in Israel is not taking over the man's job, but helping the men and encouraging the men, and sometimes even goading the men into leading. This was what Deborah was doing.

## Other leaders of Jewish tribes were just getting along with Jabin (5:2-3,9,14,15)

Let's look at the pathetic job that other Jewish male leaders of the tribes were doing. They had lost their manhood. Look at chapter 5 and the first phrase of verse 3. "Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!" There were kings and princes who needed to hear the Word of God. She was just a delivery girl for God, but she *did* deliver God's messages. In verses 6-8 she blames the bad situation in Israel on the leaders who did nothing. In verse 9 she praises the few who did join with them in this battle. She says,

My heart is with the rulers of Israel who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the LORD!

Verse 14 and the first part of verse 15 also praises the leaders of some tribes who came down to join in battle. But apparently they hadn't been making much of a difference before, and there were still some rulers who simply would not make the sacrifices needed to establish freedom. We won't get into it much today, but if you study the life of Jael you will see that Jael's husband was being passive as well. The men were not leading; they were taking the easy path of just getting along. Starting in the last clause of chapter 5, verse 15:

Among the divisions of Reuben there were great resolves of heart. [But resolves without action is useless - that is, if action is lawful. Verse 16] 16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, to hear the pipings for the flocks? The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart. 17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, and stayed by his inlets.

They were more interested in pursuing their own agendas than in helping to restore a shredded nation. Their priorities were not right. And Deborah is not shy to point out these misplaced priorities. That too is what it means to be a mother in Israel - you don't just ignore the sin of the men; you encourage them to lead in righteousness.

But the point is that many of these verses speak of the *presence* of Jewish princes, nobles, and tribal governors during that 20 year period. They existed; their bodies were present;

but where were they in terms of true courageous leadership? They were AWOL - Absent Without Leave. They were not doing what they should have been doing - or at least that seems to be the implication of Deborah's words in chapter 5. And we will see that initially Barak himself started out being very fearful of engaging in interposition - the subject of my newly expanded book, *The Divine Right of Resistance*. But when men won't lead, it sometimes takes Deborahs to goad those men into action.

### **The courts of Israel (judicial judges) were worthless (5:10-11)**

And you might wonder why people came to Deborah the prophetess in order to get their cases judged by her. There was a good reason. Chapter 5:10-11 is one hint among many that the established judges in the land were worthless during those twenty years. You need to remember that only the chief Judge in a land both ruled and judged court cases. He was like an appeals court. There were many other judges who just judged cases and didn't rule. Chapter 5 verse 10 refers to some of these wealthy judges. And the song says that now that roads are safe and there is no more danger, you have no more excuse but to speak, and to judge by God's justice. She says, "Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, who sit in judges' attire, and who walk along the road." Please, speak! You have the opportunity now. But the command to speak implies that they *previously* were *not* giving good justice. So that's the context in which Deborah lived.

### **God sent Deborah to fix the problem. Who she was:**

And God sent Deborah to fix this problem. And we will look first of all at who she was and then we look at who she was not. And once we have a good picture of exactly who she is (and we do have to spend a fair bit of time on that), we will look at how she models to women today of how to be a mother in Israel. Yes, this will be a controversial sermon for both feminists *and* hyperpatriarchs. But God valued Deborah's actions, and so should we.

### **She was an inspired prophetic judge who judged individual cases (Judges 4:4ff)**

Chapter 4:4 says, "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time."

### **She was a prophetess (Judges 4:4b-5)**

First of all, she was a prophetess. There are eight passages in the Bible that mention good prophetesses and two that mention false prophetesses in Biblical times - not good prophetesses who once in a while made a false prophecy, but they were false prophetesses.<sup>1</sup> Just like prophets, prophetesses could be judged as true or false by whether

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<sup>1</sup> The eight passages that mentioned godly prophetesses are: Miriam in Exodus 15, Deborah in Judges 4, Huldah in 2 Kings 24, Isaiah's wife in Isaiah 8, Anna in Luke 2, the women who were predicted to prophesy in Joel and Acts 2, the four virgin daughters who prophesied in

any of their prophecies had any error whatsoever in them. Just like true prophets, true prophetesses received inerrant, inspired, infallible revelation directly from the Lord for the people. 2 Peter 1:21 says that this was true even when they *spoke* a prophecy. If there was any error whatsoever in their prophecies, they were automatically considered a false prophet or false prophetess. Well, this means that God gave inspired revelation through Deborah.

*But it also puts the stamp of approval on what she was doing here.* This is what many conservatives miss. Like we saw with Anna last week, whatever it was that Deborah did, it had the stamp of God's approval upon it. Too many people write off Deborah as being an anomaly in history that has no relevance for us today. They are refusing to deal with Deborah. No, we need to learn from her life. We can't just write her off as a weird anomaly. We need to value the mothers in Israel from our own day.

### **She was the wife of Lapidoth (Judges 4:4)**

Second, verse 4 says that she was the wife of Lapidoth. In her day-to-day affairs she was operating under authority. And we can praise God when men allow their wives to serve the broader kingdom. He obviously did not feel insecure in the fact that she was more gifted than he was, and more popular than he was, and more influential than he was, and was more sought out than he was. Lapidoth was secure in his position and gives no evidence that he had anything but approval for what she did.

I think we men can learn from Lapidoth in this. Gifted women need to be able to use their gifts in God's ways. Now, feminists take this off in a bad direction and have women operating in ways that undermine their femininity. They are no longer mothers in Israel; they are trying to be fathers in Israel. They misread Deborah. But as we will also see, hyperpatriarchs go too far in the opposite direction by hemming women and women's gifts into an unbiblical box. Lapidoth was a man who was secure in his wife's enormous gifts. And she was able to use those gifts. So a lot of today's sermon is going to be clearing away the underbrush and rubbish that has accumulated in the books on both extremes before we can see the beautiful ways in which Deborah models how women can be used to restore shredded homes and cultures. It is unfortunate that we will have to deal with the negative so extensively, but we do have to.

### **As a prophetess she judged cases for individuals (Judges 4:4-5)**

The next thing that we see is that she "was judging Israel at that time," and verse 5 specifies what that meant. We will see shortly that she wasn't ruling. Instead it says,

And 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.

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Acts 21:9, and the women prophets mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:5. That doesn't mean that there weren't more. There are two false prophetesses: Noadiah in Nehemiah 6 and Jezebel in Revelation 2.

When the uninspired judges of Israel were giving bad judgments, enriching themselves with bribes, or in other ways were self-serving, it was refreshing to find a person who not only was not self-serving, but who always gave infallible judgments. Who wouldn't want to go to her (unless of course you were in the wrong). She gave judgments by inspiration. How cool is that?

Now, there are some who say that at a minimum Deborah models how women can serve as civil judges. But let me explain why this actually misses six important facts.

First, it makes their deduction concerning Deborah to flat out contradict repeated commands in Scripture that civil judges had to be male. I have fifteen passages in my notes here that make civil office a male-only office (Ex 18:21; Dt 1:13; 16:18; 17:14–20; cf. 2 Sam. 23:3; 2 Chron. 19:5-7; Neh. 7:2; Prov 16:10; 20:8,28; 29:14; 31:4-5,23; Is. 3:12; Rom. 13:1-6). And the same Holy Spirit who inspired Deborah and who inspired the law of God would not contradict Himself. But since the Holy Spirit obviously authorized Deborah to do this, we ought to look for an interpretation that does not contradict the earlier passages but still takes Deborah's work seriously.

Second, she is not called a judge, deliverer, or savior as the other judges were. Yes, she rendered judgment or made decisions, as the word could be translated, but this could be done in three ways - divine guidance, private arbitration, or public judgment. Only the last way would contradict the law of God. But it is significant that she is not called a Judge. Indeed, Fruchtenbaum's commentary gives thirteen contextual arguments that clearly distinguish her from all other judges.<sup>2</sup> In addition to those thirteen, others argue that this is

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<sup>2</sup> Fruchtenbaum says, "But there are some arguments against the view that Deborah was Israel's deliverer. First, the word *shophet*, as noted in the introduction, allows for a variety of meanings and even within the Book of Judges, it is used more than one way. Second, Deborah is not introduced as the one "whom God raised up." Third, there is no reference to her being empowered by the Holy Spirit. Fourth, she needed Barak to accomplish the deliverance. Fifth, the verb *yashav* is never really applied to her in the sense of ruling. Sixth, she states that God will deliver Sisera into the hand of a woman, but she does not say "into my hands." Seventh, the text states that she went up with Barak, but does not state that she was the head of the troops. Eighth, she states that "this day God has delivered Sisera into your hands (meaning Barak's), not into "my" hands (meaning Deborah's). Ninth, she is totally absent from the description of the actual battle, and she never meets up with Jabin or Sisera. Tenth, she is referred to as the mother in Israel, never as the "savior" of Israel. Eleventh, the author does not use the term *kum* (to raise up) or state that God is the cause of the subject when it talks about Deborah's rise. Twelfth, in later lists of deliverers of Israel, it is Barak's name that appears, not Deborah's name (1 Sam. 12:9–11; Heb. 11:32). Finally, in this passage, she functions in the traditional role of a judge in settling disputes, not in the sense of delivering Israel. The word is *lamishpat*, which was not a role assigned to the other judges where the role is defined as "deliverers." For them, the word carries the meaning of to govern. She does not function in the same role as the other judges, and so no duration of her judgeship is given. It does not say she judged Israel for so many years as it does with all the other judges. The forty years in Judges 5:31 is attributed to God and

the only place in Judges where this form of the word “to judge” is used, indicating a different kind of judgment.

Third, the text is quite clear that she did not make her judgments in the gates of a city or in the gates of a town. And this is very significant because *the law of God required all official civil judges to judge their court cases at all times in the official gates of a town or city*. There could be no private judgment. Secret Star Chambers or constantly moving courts were considered tyrannical. The gates were the official and required places for civil judgment. For example, Deuteronomy 16:18 says, “You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.” Deuteronomy 17:5 says that the execution or punishment that followed a judgment *also* had to be enforced in the official gates of the city and could not be done in private. Zechariah 8:16 commands the males to “Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace.” All civil court cases had to be public (not private), in the same official place (not a randomly changing place), and be done by males. (Compare also Prov. 31:23; Ruth 4:1-2)

Look at Judges 4:5 and see the deliberate contrast with these laws of God that regulated official civil judges. It says, “And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim.” It was a palm tree, not the gates of the city. It was the plam tree *of Deborah*, emphasizing her private area, not the public area of a city. So this makes it a private place. And it is explicitly said to be outside the two nearest towns - “between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains.” In other words, these judgments of Deborah were clearly and deliberately done in a setting that was different from that of the official civil judges of Israel in chapter 5. The writer goes out of his way to make it clear that she was not one of the civil judges that chapter 5 will reference. She is clearly being distinguished.

This makes her judgments fit one of two possibilities: 1) As one commentator worded it, prophetic guidance for a nation in distress<sup>3</sup> or 2) second (and this is the way I take it)

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Israel’s collective power in Judges 4:23–24, not to Deborah. So, Deborah is a judge in its traditional role of helping to settle disputes. She was a prophetess, and so received direct revelation from God, but she was not the moshia; she was not the savior of Israel, as was the case with the other judges. The savior, in this case, was actually Barak.” Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel’s Bible Commentary: The Books of Judges and Ruth*, 1st ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2006), 63–64.

<sup>3</sup> “This “suggests that a particular issue was at stake, not a series of cases or a routine fulfillment of professional duties.”<sup>2</sup> What issue? The answer is found in what preceded and followed. The Israelites were oppressed > they went to her for the judgment > she called for Barak to deliver them. “The context makes it clear what that issue is: the oppression of Israel at the hands of Jabin and the Canaanites.”<sup>3</sup> Israel went to the prophetess to hear God’s word. Deborah means “bee,” but it also sounds like the Hebrew for “word,” *deber*. Deborah presented the *deber* of God.” George M. Schwab, *Right in Their Own Eyes: The*



engaging in conflict resolution, arbitration, and/or binding arbitration. So then the question comes, “Could women use Scripture to engage in conflict resolution, arbitration, or binding arbitration that all parties have agreed to ahead of time?” I see that as far less problematic. But even *that application* fails to account for the next clearly stated clarification in the text.

The fourth clarification is that the Hebrew grammar of verse 4 shows that it was *as a prophetess* that Deborah made these judgments. She was giving *God’s* judgment, not her own judgment. As such she was a passive vehicle for God’s Word to speak through her. And we will see that more clearly in a bit. But there are no inspired prophetesses today.

And fifth, by sitting way out in the remote mountains of Ephraim (about as remote as you could get) and between the only two towns, it is clear that she was doing this ministry for *individuals*.

And sixth, the fact that the children of Israel came to her voluntarily rather than being brought to her by force shows that this is in the realm of either guidance or arbitration, not civics. So there are a lot of hints in verses 4-5 that help us to understand this.

All of this shows that she was not a civic judge. I think the view that she was judging cases via binding arbitration is the most likely - where parties had contracted themselves to be bound by her inspired decisions. And if people want to let a woman engage in binding arbitration today, I have no issues with that. That would be a private transaction much more akin to what Deborah was involved in. Neither the church nor the state can overstep your right to do that. Just be aware that no woman today will give you the infallible judgments that Deborah did. There isn’t a one-to-one parallel.

## As a prophetess she had authority to command leaders to do things (Judges 4:6-7)

But the next unusual thing about Deborah is that in verses 6-7 we also see that as a prophetess she had the authority to command *leaders* to do things. What’s with that? Is that not exercising authority over a man? That’s what feminists conclude. But it wasn’t the *woman* Deborah who was giving the command; it was the *prophetess* Deborah. What difference does that make? It was God speaking the command through her. A similar situation can be seen when Samuel was a child, and God gave strong prophecies through him to Eli. Eli was an authority over Samuel. The fact that Samuel gave God’s rebuke to Eli by inspired revelation did not mean that the child Samuel was ruling over Eli. He was simply the delivery boy. Let me show how that was the case with Deborah in chapter 4, beginning to read at verse 6.

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 [this is God speaking

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*Gospel according to the Book of Judges*, ed. Tremper Longman III, *The Gospel according to the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 78.

- “[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?”

Notice the operative words: “Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded” and then she gives him a verbatim message from the Lord. This in no way shows a woman’s authority over a man. 1 Peter 3:1 says that when women share God’s Word with their husbands today, they are not violating the principle of submission - so long as they don’t nag. They are just sharing what God has said. But in the case of Deborah, it is even more obvious since it shows the beauty of prophecy. 2 Peter 1:21 talks about those Old Testament prophets and said, “prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke [notice that this is not just talking about the Bible - they spoke] as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” So her prophecies did not come by her own will, which means that her will was not in any way over men. She was simply the vehicle through whom the Holy Spirit spoke. Well, that means there is no one-to-one parallel with even binding arbitration today.

Nevertheless, this was a true gift to Israel, but it was also a rebuke to Israel. The men were refusing to live by the inspired Word of Moses, so God was going to give new revelation through a woman that would put them in their place. But she would do it without in any way violating her role as a mother in Israel.

## What Deborah was not

But I think we can understand who Deborah was better if we understand what she was not. Feminists of today are *not* acting as mothers in Israel. They are acting as fathers of Israel. They act as if Deborah was a father in Israel when they insist that she justifies women being pastors, civil judges, governors, presidents, soldiers, Generals, or anything that they want to be. But that is reading way more into this passage than is there. And it is also ignoring her prodding of men to be men. We can hugely benefit from Deborah and encourage women to be true mothers in Israel when we understand what she was not.

## She was not told by God to lead the armies. God commanded Barak to lead the armies (4:6; 5:15), which he did indeed do (4:12,14-16,22)

First, she was not told by God to lead the armies. Praise God! You women don’t have to serve in the army. The exact opposite is true. Chapter 4:6 commands *Barak* to do so. We’ve already read that. And chapter 5:15 says that he did *indeed* act as commander of the armies. She rightly refused the job of General. And the enemy general, Sisera, saw Barak as the leader of the army in chapter 4:12. In all of those verses Barak is clearly the leader of the armies and she is clearly not. Even during the time of fighting this is made clear. Look at chapter 4, verses 14-16. You will see here that it is Barak, not Deborah who leads the armies. She certainly didn’t fight.

Judg. 4:14 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 [notice its not women; 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.

If you flip down to verse 22, you will see the same.

Judg. 4:22 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.

So it was Barak who led the armies, not Deborah.

By the way, though Jael wasn't in the army, God has nothing but praise for her for not allowing Sisera to escape. She had a supportive role, but was not as an active soldier. The law of God repeatedly made the military a male-only domain. I have twenty passages in my notes here that show that only men were allowed in the army (Numbers 31:3-4; Joshua 1:14; 6:3; 8:3; Judges 7:1-8; 20:8-11; 1 Samuel 8:11-12 (contrast verse 13); 11:8; 13:2; 14:52; 24:2; 2 Samuel 24:2; 1 Chronicles 21:5; 27:1-15, 23-24; 2 Chronicles 17:12-19; 25:5-6; 26:11-14; 2 Kings 24:14-16; and Nehemiah 4:14). But that doesn't mean that women cannot shoot to kill when defending themselves or their home. I think women should be taught how to use weapons for self-defense. And even beyond that, Judges 4-5 shows that during time of war, women are allowed to kill enemy combatant soldier when the need arises. But none of that was being part of the army. The protection of a nation and the protection of a home is primarily the man's job, and Deborah definitely reinforces that with her inspired commands. She didn't even want to be on the *battlefield*, and though she reluctantly followed Barak there, she implied that he should be ashamed of himself. But it was Barak alone (of the two of them) who went into battle. So don't let people say that this justifies female soldiers or Generals.

### **She was not even involved in drafting an army - Barak was (4:10)**

Chapter 4:10 shows that she was not even involved in drafting soldiers - Barak conscripted recruiters, and they only recruited men. Don't use Deborah to justify adding females to the military draft. Chapter 5:14 reiterates that point. It uses the masculine for those who bore the recruiter's staff.

### **She was not told by God to lead Israel as a nation. God commanded Barak to lead (5:2,12; Hb. 11:32)**

Third, she was not told by God to lead Israel as a nation. God commanded *Barak* to lead. In chapter 5:2 she praises male leaders when they are willing to lead. Using the masculine for leaders she says,

"When leaders lead in Israel, when the people willingly offer themselves, bless the LORD!

In verse 12 the inspired song commands Barak, "Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam." And interestingly, when Hebrews 11:32 mentions this period it only mentions Barak as the leader.

*And*, interestingly, we have no record of Deborah continuing to judge once Israel was restored. She may have, but there is no mention of the fact. This may be why Hebrews

11:32 mentions Barak, but not Deborah. Again, history is not normative; the law of God is. And God's law only authorized males (אַיִשׁ) to be head (רָאשׁ) over tribes and over nations (Deut. 1:13,15; etc., etc., etc.). Indeed, it was only males who *voted* for their leaders in both the Old Testament and New Testament. And I have written a book on that subject.<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 3:12 says that it is a shame and a sign of God's abandonment of a nation and is a sign of oppression when women rule a nation. There is nothing good about it. I will not vote for a woman in politics - even if she was as good as Deborah. Actually, if she was as good as Deborah, she would refuse to serve, would have asked the men to lead and made them feel ashamed if they did not.

### **She was not using her own words - her words were God's words ("Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded..." 4:6)**

And then finally, as was already mentioned, she was not using her own words when giving orders on how the military should function. She was not interpreting revelation; she was giving revelation. She says, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded" and then gives a verbatim quote of God to Barak. Human judges today would have to interpret revelation. That would be different.

### **Deborah saw herself as "a mother in Israel" (Judges 5:7)**

How did *she* see herself? This is where we get to the heart of how we can apply Deborah, and now the hyperpatriarchs are going to squirm. Chapter 5 verse 7 says that she saw herself as a mother in Israel. What does that look like? Were Israelite mothers helpless damsels who didn't dare get their feet muddy and who needed a gallant knight to lay his coat in the puddle so that she could walk across? Not on your life. Mothers in Israel had no problem stepping in the manure as they milked the cows and goats. They had no problem butchering animals. They had no problem holding their own in theological conversations in the home. They were not wall flowers.

If the phrase "mother in Israel" means anything, *it must be consistent with the only two times that phrase is used in Scripture*. The other time is in 2 Samuel 20, where the wise woman of Abel took matters into her own hands when the leaders of the city were too stupid to see that tact and diplomacy was needed, not manly brawn. She was a Deborah who was helping the men to do the right thing. In fact, why don't you turn there. We are going to read the whole passage. It is 2 Samuel 20. The context is that there was a rebel in the city of Abel who had been trying to overthrow the kingdom of David. Joab had chased the man all over Israel, and when he ran into that city, Joab came and started to besiege the city of Abel. What do men do when someone starts a fight? They fight back, right? They often don't stop to ask what the fight was about. Many times emotion keeps them from seeing straight. Starting to read at verse 16.

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<sup>4</sup> see <https://leanpub.com/universal-suffrage/>

2Sam. 20:14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel and Beth Maachah and all the Berites. So they were gathered together and also went after Sheba. 15 Then they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth Maachah; and they cast up a siege mound against the city, and it stood by the rampart. And all the people who were with Joab battered the wall to throw it down.

2Sam. 20:16 Then a wise woman cried out from the city, "Hear, hear! Please say to Joab, 'Come nearby, that I may speak with you.'" 17 When he had come near to her, the woman said, "Are you Joab?" He answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Hear the words of your maidservant." And he answered, "I am listening."

2Sam. 20:18 So she spoke, saying, "They used to talk in former times, saying, 'They shall surely seek guidance at Abel,' and so they would end disputes. 19 I am among the peaceable and faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?"

2Sam. 20:20 And Joab answered and said, "Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy! 21 That is not so. But a man from the mountains of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has raised his hand against the king, against David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city." So the woman said to Joab, "Watch, his head will be thrown to you over the wall." 22 Then the woman in her wisdom went to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw it out to Joab. Then he blew a trumpet, and they withdrew from the city, every man to his tent. So Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

That's what a mother in Israel does. She doesn't take on a man's role, but she knows how and when to intrude herself on behalf of her men. So let's turn back to Judges 4-5 and look at twelve things that this mother in Israel courageously did. I only put ten in your outlines, but then realized later that I need to give you two more.

### She was a mother (5:7)

The first omitted point - and it is an obvious point, is that she was a mother. That's what chapter 5, verse 7 says. She is not a mother *of* Israel, as feminists like to say. She was a mother *in* Israel. There is a big difference. The phrase means that she had children. We aren't told if her children were all grown, but she was a mother. Married women should aspire to having children. Because the children aren't mentioned, commentators assume she was older and that they were grown, but we don't know that for sure.

### She ministered outside the home (4:5)

Second, she ministered outside the home. Chapter 4, verse 5 is clear on that. She ministered to Israelites under the Palm tree. And you *can't* say that she was in sin doing so, because she was *prophesying* these judgments outside the home, and prophets were not moved by their own will. You might argue that this palm tree of Deborah was likely near their home, but the fact of the matter is that she ministered to people outside her home. Obviously Paul calls women to be homemakers in Titus 2:5 and to "manage the home (οἰκοδεσποτέω)" in 1 Timothy 5:14. But if you have taken adequate care of all your home duties, there is no reason that a woman cannot minister outside the home. And the very passage that fundamentalists appeal to in order to keep women at home shows the exact opposite. It tells the older women to disciple the younger women on many practical areas of being a wife. They didn't have phones back then, so the older women could hardly disciple the younger women without one or the other of them leaving their own home and going to the

home of the other. Deborah with God's authorization ministered outside the home. This is a necessary corrective to hyperpatriarchalism.

## She reluctantly played an onsite role of moral support for Barak (4:8-11)

Third, in verses 8-11 you can see that she doesn't appreciate cowardice in men. And yes, she is willing to be a moral support on the battlefield if she absolutely must be, but notice her rebuke. And yes, women are allowed to give rebukes. You could add that as an additional point. Chapter 4 and verse 8.

Judg. 4:8 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!"

In other words, I am not going to obey God unless you are there with me. What kind of leadership is that? In effect he was saying, "I'm too scared to obey God." Verse 9.

Judg. 4:9 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 [and that would be Jael]." 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.

She didn't consider that to be the ideal, but hey, if it is necessary, she was willing to do it. She is willing to give him moral support. Some men need that.

## She encouraged Barak to lead (4:6,9,14; 5:2)

Next, she was an encourager. I think all men need this. She encouraged Barak to lead in verses 6, 9, and 14, and again in chapter 5:2. Mothers in Israel don't want to *usurp* the role of a man. They want the *men* to step to the plate. So when you men are encouraged by your wives to lead, lead. Don't get mad at them. She is not leading when she asks you to lead. She is encouraging you to lead in a godly way. She is being a mother in Israel.

## Her heart was with both rulers and volunteers alike (5:9) - she has a broad kingdom vision

Next, she let the rulers and all of the volunteer soldiers know that her heart was with them and she greatly appreciated them. She didn't keep that appreciation and respect to herself. She verbalized it. She was generous with praise. Too many leaders get nothing but criticism; they don't get the praise that they need. But there is actually more to this point in chapter 5:9.

My heart is with the rulers of Israel who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the LORD!

She loves it when the men offer themselves willingly to the Lord. David Guzik's commentary says this about that verse: "Her vision was bigger than just getting 'her job'

done. She wanted to see the Kingdom of God advanced.”<sup>5</sup> And mothers in Israel today should not hold back their husbands or others by their domestic concerns. Yes the kingdom includes domestic concerns, but mothers in Israel have a broad kingdom vision, and they appreciate it when their husbands and other men have a broad kingdom vision. They are blessed when men get involved in the culture battles of our day. Their heart is with them. They don’t think, “Oh, no. It might be dangerous if my husband gets involved. I don’t want to lose you.” They don’t allow their fears to dampen their husbands’ kingdom enthusiasm - even if there is danger involved. Mothers in Israel have a broad kingdom vision.

## She encouraged judges to judge rightly (5:10-11)

Next, she was interested in justice and seeing judges judge rightly. And she was outraged when justice was not happening. Now that the war is over she says in verses 10-11.

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

That’s what *should* happen in the gates. Several have pointed out that a better translation for “righteous” in each phrase is “just.” Here’s how four other English translations that I own have worded it:

there they shall recount the just acts of the LORD, the just acts for His villagers in Israel; *then* the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates

The reason Deborah was so burdened with cases was because the other judges were not giving justice. The people will go down to the gates (the gates of the towns and cities were where the *official* courts existed - not under the palm tree - they will go down to the gates) *when judges have a Biblical worldview and when their decisions are defined by God’s justice.* It will automatically happen. But on the contrary, when official court justice looks less and less like God’s justice, you will find less and less righteous people using the court system. They will revert to the church, or to other forms of arbitration or binding arbitration. In fact, Paul says it is a shame when Christians sue each other in secular courts. That ought not to be. He asks if there is not even one righteous man in that congregation who can give this kind of judgment. And he isn’t even referring to elders there. You don’t always have to go to a church court to get justice; you can involve a person in arbitration.

By the way, this is a sign of a nation going to the birds - when a majority of citizens no longer believe they will get justice in the courts. In China the average citizen usually doesn’t bother to use the courts and instead uses binding arbitration of friends or other people they respect. Several journals have shown that the vast majority of Chinese cases are tried privately by binding arbitration and completely bypass the court system. Obviously they aren’t inspired like Deborah was, but they feel like they would get a better shake for less

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<sup>5</sup> David Guzik, Judges, *David Guzik’s Commentaries on the Bible* (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), Jdg 5:9.

money getting judged under a palm tree (in other words, privately and informally) than under a monolithic state facility. And that's actually what Deborah was doing - she was engaging in binding arbitration (at least in my opinion - some think she was just giving guidance - but that doesn't do justice to the word judgment.). In any case, she was *not* judging in the gates of the city.

Notice that she wants the justice of the civic judges to reflect *God's* justice. She was able to give God's justice by getting direct revelation from the Lord, but uninspired judges in every age can give God's justice by going to the inspired law of God in Scripture and seeking to the best of their ability to interpret it and to apply it. One of the blessings that was placed upon Gad in Deuteronomy 33 was this:

He came with the heads of the people; he administered *the justice of the LORD, and His judgments* with Israel." (Deut. 33:21)

Zephaniah 2:3 praises those "Who have upheld *His* justice." Since Hebrews 2:2 says that every penalty in the Old Testament was a just penalty, that means that to the degree that courts deviate from God's Law, to that degree they are unjust - which means that our whole American court system is an unjust court system. By God's definition it is unjust. Why would we use those courts if we don't have to? And that in turn means that churches and/or individuals need to consider setting up Christian arbitration panels that can give binding arbitration. I praise God that such panels are indeed being set up all across this nation. Deborah gave justice because she gave God's revelation. When courts reject God's word, you will not have justice. Period.

## She encouraged others through song because she was aware of what was happening (5:12)

Next, she encouraged others through song. She broke out into this inspired song in verse 1, but verse 12 shows one of the goals.

12 "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam!

She commanded herself to be awake four times. To be awake is to be cognizant of what is happening, and a mother in Israel is very much aware of current affairs and knows how to pray, how to encourage others, and how to speak into people's lives *without undermining their authority*. Yes, it can sometimes be hard to navigate that, but it can be done.

## She praised leaders who sacrificed a lot (5:13-15,18)

Next, a mother in Israel praises those who sacrifice a lot. She has lots of praise in verses 13-15 and in verse 18.

Judg. 5:13 "Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles; The LORD came down for me against the mighty. 14 From Ephraim were those whose roots were in Amalek. After you, Benjamin, with your peoples, From Machir rulers came down, And from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter's staff. 15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; As Issachar, so was Barak Sent into the valley under his command; Among the divisions of Reuben There were great resolves of heart.



Down in verse 18 she says,

Judg. 5:18 Zebulun is a people who jeopardized their lives to the point of death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.

Men will rise up to do great things when their women respect them, encourage them, and appreciate their sacrifices. They will do incredibly courageous things on behalf of a mother in Israel - not a nag, but a mother in Israel. But when women become feminist fathers in Israel, it emasculates the men and keeps them from the leadership women *wish* they would exercise. It backfires.

### She spoke her disappointment of leaders who were cowards (5:16-17)

Next, she spoke of her disappointment of leaders who were cowards. It's OK for women to be disappointed when men are cowards. Starting to read in the last phrase in verse 15:

15 ... Among the divisions of Reuben there were great resolves of heart. 16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, to hear the pipings for the flocks? The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart. 17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets.

There was no good reason why these tribes could not have joined in the battle, but they were too busy with musical concerts, bonfires, and business dealings to sacrifice for the cause. And she challenges them on that. Why? When you have a big kingdom vision you want others to share that big kingdom vision. And you are disappointed when they don't.

It's OK for women to be disappointed when men are cowards - so long as those women aren't using their disappointment as a cloak for lack of submission; so long as they *do indeed* get behind their men and say, "Look, if you get involved in this political cause, I'll have your back. Even if we are sued, I'll have your back. Even if you lose your job (if you are doing the right thing) I will have your back. I'd rather lose everything under the leadership of a courageous man than maintain the status quo under a person who fears man more than God." That's in effect what Deborah would say. She would never undermine her man, but she would let him know that she totally has his back if he will courageously and righteously lead.

### She engaged in spiritual warfare prayer (5:20-23)

But I believe that a big part of what she was doing while watching the armies clash was praying on their behalf and engaging in spiritual warfare. This is only hinted at in one verse, but I doubt she was doing nothing while watching the battle from the top of the mountain. Verse 20 says of angels, "They fought from the heavens; the stars from their courses fought against Sisera." Stars are often symbols for angels in the Scripture. She knew that even physical battles are won in the heavenlies and it would have motivated her to pray. Though a mother in Israel is *not in the army*, she is not disinterested in what the army does. She takes this army before the Lord of hosts and asks for deliverance, and God answered in marvelous ways. Verses 21-23.

21 The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on in strength! 22 Then the horses' hooves pounded, The galloping, galloping of his steeds. 23 "Curse Meroz," said the angel of the LORD, 'Curse its inhabitants bitterly, Because they did not come to the help of the LORD, To the help of the LORD against the mighty.'

One commentator spoke of how this would have instantly turned the advantage to the foot soldiers and against the chariots. He said,

Suddenly, what had previously been an immeasurable advantage becomes a death trap. The heavens opened up, deluging the Jezreel Valley with rain and turning the placid and predictable Kishon into a mighty torrent, softening the ground for horses and chariots and sweeping the chariots away.<sup>6</sup>

But again, verse 20 shows that the biggest difference was the angels who were fighting on their behalf. Mothers in Israel don't have to be in the army to be able to summon the armies of heaven. Amen?

### **She celebrated the exceptionalism of Jael (5:24-27)**

Next, she celebrated the exceptionalism of Jael in verses 24-27. Recognition of valor (in both men and women) is a very important part of life. I was disheartened to see the nasty comments that so many books heaped upon Jael. Several called her a murderer. Even Lockyer's book called her a cowardly murderer.<sup>7</sup> But Deborah by inspiration has nothing

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel Isaac Block, *Judges, Ruth, vol. 6, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 237.

<sup>7</sup> The full quote is, "How can we explain or justify such an act deemed treacherous according to the morals of Jael's own time? "Hospitality was one of the most strictly adhered to, of all desert obligations, and was a matter of honor among the Hebrews," says Mary Hallet. "In betraying Sisera, Jael broke this code of hers; but to us that is more easily understood than the revolting cruelty of her method of murder!" "So Sisera died" — and Jael's treachery was forgotten in the more important fact of her courage. The circumstances occasioning such a revolting act have already been touched upon (see DEBORAH). Israel chafed under the severe rule of Jabin, king of the Canaanites, and Deborah arose and with Barak went out against the armed force of Jabin. God intervened, and unleashing the powers of nature completely disorganized Jabin's army. Sisera, captain of the host, and Israel's cruel oppressor escaped and fell into the hands of a woman (4:9). Sisera fled to the tent of Heber the Kenite, whose wife Jael met Sisera and urged him not to be afraid but to turn in and rest. Seeing how worn and weary Sisera was, Jael covered him with a mantle, and when he asked for water to slake his thirst she opened a bottle of milk for him to drink. Then, assuring him that she would shield him from any searchers, she watched him as he fell asleep. Going softly to his side, Jael drove the tent nail through his head and pinned it to the ground. Shakespeare says of woman that "she can smile and smile and be a villain." Jael was not a crude or coarse woman, or a tiger of a woman. Lacking courage, she dare not attack Sisera fairly. She resorted to trickery, for although she met Sisera with a beaming face, there was murder in her heart, and she killed him by foul and reprehensible means. Had Sisera attempted to rape Jael, and in defense of her honor she had killed him, that

but praise for Jael - and I would think would have nothing but disgust for these emasculated commentators. Beginning to read at verse 24.

24 "Most blessed among women is Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite; Blessed is she among women in tents. 25 He asked for water, she gave milk; She brought out cream in a lordly bowl. 26 She stretched her hand to the tent peg, Her right hand to the workmen's hammer; She pounded Sisera, she pierced his head, She split and struck through his temple. 27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; At her feet he sank, he fell; Where he sank, there he fell dead.

Again, this is not a woman who gets squeamish with bugs, guts, or blood. She can operate in a man's world without threatening men or trying to take away their jobs. Instead, she glories in what the men and women around them are doing. She is strong in her own sphere and pushes the men to be strong in their sphere.

### She sought God's glory (5:28-31)

And finally, this mother in Israel sought God's glory. She mocks the goals of human enemies and exalts the goals of God. She sees clearly what the *real* issues are, and mocks the mundane and trivial issues and values of Sisera's women. What a *contrast* we see between Deborah's values and the values of Sisera's women in verses 28-31. Which values do *you* identify with? Let's read her mocking.

Judg. 5:28 "The mother of Sisera looked through the window, And cried out through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?' 29 Her wisest ladies answered her, Yes, she answered herself, 30 "Are they not finding and dividing the spoil: To every man a girl or two; For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments, Plunder of garments embroidered and dyed, Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?' 31 "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." So the land had rest for forty years.

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would have been another matter, but to kill him as an assassin kills a victim was something different. Her murder of Sisera reminds us of Judith of Behulia, who drove a sword through Olopernes' throat as he slept. Jael did not kill Sisera as David did Goliath, a champion of the Lord bent on destroying His arch-enemies. While divine judgment fell upon Sisera, Jael erred in that she did not allow God to designate the means of punishment. Perhaps she felt an irresistible impulse to slay the persistent enemy of God's people, but she remains forever censurable for the cruel way she killed Sisera, even though Deborah gloated over the act and praised it in poetic form. When Deborah said, "Blessed above women shall be Jael," perhaps she was only praising her faith and not her treachery. Any woman killing the country's enemy must be the friend of Israel, and so the method of Sisera's death mattered little to Deborah who doubtless thought that all was fair in time of war. What atrocious crimes have been committed in the name of patriotism! Jael had no conception that she was the one person at the opportune moment to render "stern justice on an enemy of God." Knowing that the tide of battle had turned against the Canaanites she realized that Sisera would be captured and killed, therefore she acted as the executioner herself, thereby cementing a friendship with Deborah, the conqueror, who thought Jael worthy of praise because of her love for Israel." Lockyer, Herbert.\* *All the Women of the Bible\** (pp. 70-71). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

If we are to see the shredded values of our nation restored, we will need more than courageous Baraks to take on strongholds. And he did become courageous when he saw that Deborah had his back. But we will need more than courageous Baraks; we will need strong mothers in Israel who have the back of Barak, encourage Barak, speak into his life when he needs it, and who are totally secure in their relationship with men. And we may need a few Jael's to reload the men's muskets and shoot their own muskets when the enemy comes over the walls. But let's value the strong mothers in Israel that God has raised up in our own generation. Amen.