

## Episode #519 Judges 4 – Deborah and Barak

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God's works and ways.

### II. Deborah the Judge?

#### A. Judges 4:1-5. Jabin, Sisera, and Deborah.

1. Verse 1. When Ehud was dead (and Shamgar as well). The evil again.
2. Verse 2. Jabin (God Considers) was a Canaanite ruler, one of the people not destroyed! Rules from Hazor, in Naphtali, one of Israel's tribal territories! Sisera his commander. Name means "Battlefield," so perhaps a title? Harosheth = Woodland, in northern Israel. Hagoyim = "Of the Gentiles" does not mean out of Israel, Matthew 4:15.
3. Verse 3. Note the military advantage! Israel had the LORD as their advantage, but they had given Him up!
4. Verse 4. Deborah "judged" Israel. The example feminist believers love to go to for an example of a woman ruler in the Old Testament.
  - a. This one example against so many hundreds of others is supposed to mean something?
  - b. In Hebrews 11:32, it is Barak, not Deborah, who is praised for his faith. This is not because there are not women in the list, because there are, multiple times!
  - c. Did she meet the criteria for a judge? Judges 2:16,18. Apparently not!
  - d. This oppression was particularly targeted against the women, Judges 5:30. The men were failing to protect them. Thus the LORD raises a prophetess/judge out of the women to lead them. This humiliates the men for their failure.
  - e. God puts men in charge of the external relations of the family (government and religion). The women have power inside the home, I Timothy 5:14.
5. Verse 5. Deborah's "court" was under a palm tree. Ramah (Hill) and Bethel (House of God) are on one side and the other of the border between Benjamin and Ephraim.

### III. The Fourth Judge: Barak.

- B. Verse 6. Barak (Lightning) son of Abinoam (My Father is Delight) of Kedesh (Holy Place) in Naphtali. He is to gather forces at Mount Tabor (Lofty Mound) between Zebulun and Naphtali, and is to draw his army from these two tribes.
- C. Verse 7. The LORD will bring about the confrontation by drawing Sisera to the Kishon River (Winding or Twisting). There he will be helpless before Israel.
- D. Verse 8. Barak will not go without Deborah's help!
- E. Verse 9. Deborah will accompany him, but a woman will get the victory. Fitting in this case when the men were being remiss.
- F. Verse 10. They gather to him as the LORD said.
- G. Verse 11. Heber (Comrade) is a Kenite (Smith), of the sons of Hobab (Cherished), the (son of) the father-in-law of Moses. He was separate from the rest of his kind in the

- plain of Zaanaim (Removings) in Naphtali near Kadesh. (The others were in Judah.)  
This verse is setting up verse 17.
- H. Verse 12. Sisera's spies or informants tell him that Barak has done this.
  - I. Verse 13. He gathers his chariots, which was their military advantage over the Israelites. (Their advantage was to be the LORD.)
  - J. Verse 14. Deborah calls him to act. Jehovah was going out before. This was their secret weapon in play!
  - K. Verse 15. Barak defeats Sisera, along with his chariots and army, as Jehovah said. Sisera must abandon his chariot and flee on foot.
  - L. Verse 16. Sisera's army tries to flee, and is wiped out to a man.
  - M. Verse 17. Sisera reaches the tent of Jael (Mountain Goat or Ibex) the wife of Heber the Kenite. Perhaps because they were both non-Israelites?
  - N. Verse 18. She calls him in. She has her own tent. (Remember we saw the Shulammitte took her lover into her mother's chamber in Song of Solomon 3:4.) She covers him with a rug or thick coverlet. Supposedly to hide him, but he cannot see what she is doing, either.
  - O. Verse 19. He asks for water to drink. She gives him milk instead.
  - P. Verse 20. He asks her to keep a lookout and lie for him.
  - Q. Verse 21. The women would erect the tents at the time (even still today), so she was proficient at this. This was a mighty blow struck for the women in Israel!
  - R. Verse 22. Barak arrives too late. The captain is already dead at her hands.
- IV. Deborah "judged" Israel, but she did not deliver them herself. This is an exception to men always being chosen as rulers, but for a good purpose. The oppression was largely against the women of Israel. Barak is willing to fight, but only with Deborah's help. Therefore Jehovah gives the victory to the courageous Jael, who strikes a blow for the women of Israel. This was always the key: the LORD was on their side!