

Episode #520 Judges 5 – The Song of 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. We have been studying the "judgeship" of Deborah, which means "A Bee," the wife of Lapidoth, meaning "Torches." She calls Barak, "Lightning," to defeat the Canaanite king Jabin and his captain Sisera or "Battlefield." We saw last time that the oppression was largely against the women of Israel, which is why Jehovah called a female to judge them. She did not deliver them, as the judges were supposed to do, however. That was up to Barak. For his lack of courage, the LORD gave the victory blow to Jael, a woman.

III. Israel's victory over Jabin.

A. Verse 23. This day begins the defeat of Jabin.

B. Verse 24. The victory is complete. This results in Jabin's total destruction. This is what judges were supposed to do!

IV. Judges 5:1. Deborah (Bee) and Barak (Lightning) son of Abinoam (My Father is Delight) sing a song celebrating the victory.

A. Verse 2. This was the blessed thing: that these people willingly offered themselves to fight.

B. Verse 3. The kings and other rulers are called to hear this song of praise to Jehovah.

C. Verse 4. Seir (Hairy) was the great mountain in the land of Edom (Red), the nation descended from Esau, southeast of Israel. Israel marched past Edom as they were first journeying to enter the land. A storm is described, which Jehovah often used to upset His enemies.

D. Verse 5. Melted = describes the water flowing off them in streams. Mountains also symbolize governments, which melt in defeat before Jehovah. Note that Sinai too harkens back to Israel in the wilderness.

E. Verse 6. Shamgar defeated the Philistines in the south, but apparently the oppression of Jabin in the north began during his judgeship, perhaps the later days as his power waned. These were the days as Jael was growing up. The highways were empty of travelers. Why? They were dangerous because of raiders. Byways are winding pathways, back roads.

F. Verse 7. The villages were deserted (of women?) Because the young girls were all being stolen to support Canaan's polygamy. Deborah was a mother among the mothers of Israel. Imagine how the mothers of these young girls felt as they were stolen away to become slave wives to these cruel Canaanites!

G. Verse 8. The cause of Yahweh allowing this: they had chosen new gods. They also had no weapons. The Canaanites they had formerly put under tribute had taken away all their weapons, and did not allow them to make more!

H. Verse 9. Those governors who willingly went to the war are appreciated.

I. Verse 10. A white donkey is conspicuous, and shows they were no longer afraid of the roads. They sit openly in the gate and walk down the roads, now peaceful.

J. Verse 11. "Instead of the shouting of archers among the wells, There they laud the righteous acts of Jehovah, The righteous acts of His rule over Israel. Then the People of Jehovah hastened to the gates." The places of drawing water is where women are found.

- K. Verse 12. Deborah is called on to sing (a solo?). She sings to Barak to lead captive his train of captives. As in Ephesians 4:8. This phrase is not justification for letting our imaginations run wild. Means Jabin's captives, or else leading the captive girls back home, freed from their slavery.
- L. Verse 13. "Then came down a remnant of the nobles, And the People of Jehovah came down with me against the mighty ones." Again the nobles and the people who came to the battle are commended for it.
- M. Verse 14. Ephraim (Double Land) was the mighty tribe descended from Joseph's younger son. They rooted out Amalek (Valley Dweller), the wicked Canaanite tribe. Benjamin (Son of My Right Hand) was Joseph's younger brother. Machir (Sold) was the eldest son of Joseph's eldest son Manasseh, one of the sub-tribes. This was the half-tribe of Manasseh that took land on the east side of the Jordan River in Gilead. Zebulun (Habitation) was the last son of Leah and another tribe of Israel. These scribes (writers) in Zebulun, not trained warriors, yet they bravely come to battle.
- N. Verse 15. Issachar (Wages) was another of the northern tribes of Israel. Barak was from Naphtali, and represents that tribe. So these six tribes are praised as those who came to the battle. "Into the valley they rushed at his feet." But Reuben? They thought about it!
- O. Verse 16. Reuben stayed home and listened to their sheep! The divisions of Reuben searched their hearts, but did nothing.
- P. Verse 17. Gilead refers to Reuben and Gad, who stayed on the east side of Jordan and did not come. (Machir, the half-tribe of Manasseh, did come, as we saw, but perhaps only a few rulers came?). Dan (Judge) stayed on their ships. Asher (Happy) stayed on the seashore and in their bays. So after commending those who came this is shaming those who stayed behind. Notice who are not mentioned: Simeon and Judah. They are far to the south, furthest from the oppression, and perhaps were not even called.
- Q. Verse 18. Praising those who joined the most and risked the most. Lives = souls.
- R. Verse 19. The kings of their enemies came and fought in Taanach (Sandy Soil), a city of the western half-tribe of Manasseh. Megiddo = place of crowds, a city of Manasseh 6 miles from Mount Carmel and 11 from Nazareth. In the New Testament called Armageddon. This was a battle of Armageddon! Not for plunder did they fight.
- S. Verse 20. Could refer to angels, or perhaps to meteors that fell on the enemy troops.
- T. Verse 21. The River Kishon flooded and swept the enemy troops away. Kishon runs from Mount Tabor to the Mediterranean near Mount Carmel. These describe the obvious help of the LORD in the victory.

VI. The oppression of Jabin and Sisera was the kidnapping of Israelite girls. The LORD gave Israel the victory. Those who boldly joined in the battle are praised, but some cowardly tribes remained behind. We have a battle for the LORD to do as well: not a battle with swords but with the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Will we be bold to the battle, or stay behind in comfort? We all must answer for ourselves!