

## The Cycle of Sin Judges 4-5

So tonight we find ourselves in the 4th chapter of the book of Judges and hopefully we'll tackle 5 as well

Okay... let's do a little review of the first three chapters and see what lessons we learned from prior Wednesday nights in Judges?

First... **Disobedience**. Remember the Israelites were supposed to completely destroy their enemies... *but they didn't*.... Instead... the children of Israel... ***dwelt with their enemies!***

Now this was just the ***beginning steps*** of the problems they would bring upon themselves... *that would lead to their collapse*.

The Second lesson we can learn... is that ***dwelling*** with the enemy... would cause the children of Israel start relationships with the enemy... they would begin to intermarry and have children with them... and this led to the **ultimate disobedience**...  
What is the ultimate disobedience?

The children of Israel began to... **worship** with their **enemies**.

Church... do we face this same temptation in our time?  
I think we certainly can... and it seems that the desires of the enemy are creeping into and gaining a foothold in many churches today.

The reality is... if we start relating too much to the world... if we start accepting and then embracing the ways of the world...we will eventually start worshipping ***with*** the world.

Jon Courson explained it like this... he said: *Let me remind you that none of us fall into sin. We walk into it one step at a time. All along the way... the Lord is saying, Wait. Stop!*

*"Oh, Lord, this is okay," we say. "I just won't do that." But when we end up doing that... we say, "Well Lord, that's okay, but I sure won't do the next" — until we end up doing the next.*

Jon finished with...*Sin is not fallen into- it's walked into one step at a time - which is why we are to make no provision for the flesh (Romans 13:14). When we fail to do this... the slow leak of compromise is bound to take it's toll.*

*I think that is a great word and I agree that we need to stomp sin... not play with it!*

*Well... let's get right into Judges chapter 4... Judges chapter 4:*

### *Deborah and Barak*

**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. **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.

**1** When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord.

What we see here is the cycle of sin coming around again. God blesses His people and they prosper... but then there is a continual drift to disobedience. And this isn't just the Israelites who continually perpetuate this sin cycle... *it it seems much of humanity goes through this cycle.*

The last time we met... Pastor Brent shared that this cycle of sin is repeated 7 times throughout the book of Judges and that it follows a consistent cycle:

- 1: It starts with Serving God.
- 2: You are tempted and give in to Sin / You come under control to Sin. And then comes the Suffering and Slavery from Sin.
- 3: Sorry for Sin / and then there's Sorrow over Sin... which turns to Supplication to God.
4. Saviour is raised up (a judge/deliverer).
5. Salvation and victory.
6. And then back... full circle to Serving the Lord.

He also shared... that it's a dark, depressing time... yet a marvellous and encouraging sign to see God intervene and answer the cries of Israel. We serve a loving and gracious God who does not give up on us. After Israel was led away by sin, God raised up a judge. Not a judge pronouncing order in a court and bringing the gavel down with a verdict... but a judge that would be a deliverer, or more along the lines of a military leader for the people.

- The Hebrew word for judge is *Shophet*, which means deliverer... saviour... along with the idea of ruler.

Judges is a book of failure on the part of the people because of their unfaithfulness... but it's also a book showcasing the faithfulness of God. And he ended with... What a gracious God we serve!

**End of quote:**

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So... rather than focus on man's continual cycle of disobedience... let's be more and more impressed with the mercy and grace of God. Even though Israel kept forsaking Him... He would not forsake them... but kept working with them.

We're living in a time in this country where our culture has been enjoying decades of freedom and prosperity... but we're now seeing that freedom and prosperity being taken away... why? *Because...* like Israel in the book of Judges... our culture has drifted away from obedience to God.... to *disobedience*.

So let's continue and look at verse 1.... Ehud was the second judge of Israel after Othniel and God put him in place when the Israelites cried out for help... **18 years after returning to their sin ... and being placed under the rule of the king of Moab.**

We remember from chapter 3... that Ehud was left handed and he used that as a way of getting access to king Eglon and *then killing the really...really... really fat King Eglon....* in what is one of the **more graphic scenes** in the Bible.

Once free from Eglon's rule... the Israelites enjoyed 80 years of peace... the longest peaceful period recorded during the time of the judges... **but when Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord.**

In verse 2 it says **So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan who reigned in Hazor.**: God loved Israel *too much* to let them go their own way. So He once again... places a period of correction on the Israelites... *to once again* start the cycle and bring them back to serving Him.

But this time God used an entirely different oppressor... Jabin the King of Caanan... *not a nice man...* in fact quite an evil King who reigned in Hazor just fifteen miles from the Sea of Galilee... and as we will discover. Had 900 chariots of iron.

This verse reminds us that God can... *and will...* use anything to get our attention and keep us in line with His will. Amen!

Church...there may be times in our lives when we wish God would leave us alone and let us enjoy our times of disobedience... yet we will ultimately be thankful for His continued dealing with us... even when it isn't comfortable.

And sadly... even when God deals with us in this way... it may still take a *considerable* amount of time... until we turn our heart to Him in repentance. It took Israel twenty years of being harshly oppressed in bondage... before they **cried out to the LORD... and we can be just as stubborn.**

**4** Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. Now this is interesting... because many have considered it *unexpected* for God to raise up a woman as prophetess.

But when we look at the New Testament... *it makes it clear...* that God grants the gift of prophecy to men... *and to women...* and they are to practice it appropriately.

The Bible tells us of several other prophetesses: there was Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Anna (Luke 2:36), and... Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:8-9).

So it was not a 'one off' for a woman to be chosen by God to be a prophetess... but it did come with some important conditions.

1 Corinthians 11:5 teaches... that the essential element to a woman's ministry as a prophetess in the early church... was her clear submission to the male leadership in the church.

Yes... you heard me correctly... clear submission to the male leadership in the church.

As we learn from the New Testament church... a woman was to use her gifts in the context of the order established by the leaders of the early church.

But Deborah was not only a prophetess... *which was considered unexpected*... but she was also a judge... again a position that was *quite unexpected* for a woman to hold... and... she was the first woman judge - a *shaphat*, which is known as a heroic leader for Israel.

What we do know... is that Deborah was a woman greatly used by God... and she was also a woman who respected the people God put in authority over her - *which of course Barak was one of those men*.

So why was this position unexpected?

Because the issue... from a New Testament perspective... is not whether women can be used greatly by God. *Of course they can*... and there are so many areas for women to use the gifts they've been given.

The issues are of **headship**... **final accountability**... and **authority**.

Now... before any one gets up to leave... remember... this isn't my opinion... **well actually it is**... because I believe what the Bible teaches... and... *the Bible clearly teaches*... that it's God Who has granted these responsibilities to men... in both the *home and the church*. Yes... Women can and are used greatly by God... *but*... it is to be under the headship of male authority in the church.

Remember... *if you're feeling an argument rising up inside you... please don't come to me*... I'm just sharing what God has ordained.

And... while we are discussing this topic... *I'm going to have to bring this up*...

**Women are not to be pastors.**

**Thank you and Good Night!**

Okay... Let me explain...

Church... God has **ordained**... that *only men* are to serve in positions of spiritual teaching authority in the church. *This does not in any way imply that men are better teachers*... or that women are inferior or less intelligent in any way.

It's simply the way God designed the church to function. If you want to challenge God on how he created man and woman to function... in regards to the church and marriage... *go for it*... but your challenge is folly.

God's design... is that Men are to set the example in spiritual leadership—in their lives and through their words.

Women are also to set an example in their lives... but in a different way (1 Peter 3:1-6). That Women are encouraged to teach other women (Titus 2:3-5). encourages women to teach children. The only activity women are restricted from... is teaching or having spiritual authority over men.

*This literally **bars women** from serving as pastors to men.*

The reasons for this design of God has nothing to do with any notion of male superiority; it has to do with God's ordained order (1 Corinthians 11:3), in light of God's order of creation (1 Corinthians 11:8-9), in light of the presence of watching angels (1 Corinthians 11:10), and in light of the nature of the fall (1 Timothy 2:14).

The reasons also have nothing to do with any **notion** or even the **suggestion of female inferiority**.

Think this through... Jesus was under the headship and authority of His Father (John 5:19) without being inferior in any way (John 1:1 and 10:30).

And so it is with women.

It's just what God has ordained.

*Please address any complaints... emails... calls or letters to the **King of Kings!***

Now... that said... lets get back to our story of Deborah and Barak.

**5** And she (*Deborah*) 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.

It's interesting to note that the name 'Deborah' means bee or honeybee.

Bees are in fact very **industrious**. They monitor and regulate the temperature of the bee hive by gathering around it and fluttering their wings 190 times per second... in order to keep the wax from melting.

They are also very **discerning** with antennae containing 2000 - 3000 plates through which they can identify the correct flowers to draw nectar from... and of course bees are known for the **sweetness** of the honey they produce.

In Deborah... We see these same three characteristics. She was very *industrious*... very *discerning* and very *sweet*. But she also packed a wallop of a *sting*... as we will see revealed in this chapter.

Some have assumed that Deborah was allowed leadership to judge... *because men failed to take the position. And there may be some truth to that...* because Barak doesn't seem to be all he should be... although we have nothing in the text that indicates he failed to do something God told him to do in taking leadership.

(Wolf notes, "Her prominence implies a lack of qualified and willing men." Yet this can be regarded as no more than an *implication*, not specifically stated in the text.)

**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 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'?"

I really like this about Deborah... she never tried to take the role of leader... or believed that God had called her alone to deliver Israel from the oppression of Jabin, the King of Canaan.

She realized... that God was going to do much of the work through Barak... and she was to be an encouragement to him.

She is simply reminding and confirming something... that the Lord has already spoken to Barak.

It also appears that Barak was hesitating to act upon what God had already told him to do... *and that can sometimes be seen as weakness and a lack of leadership on his part.*

I know in my own life... there are times when God has spoken to me regarding something that He has given to me to do and I drag my feet... *because I'm not trusting Him for the outcome.*

Think about what God was telling Barak to do... go to war against a much stronger adversary.

Barak... you take 10,000 men and I'm going to deploy Sisera and his far superior army of chariots against you... *but don't worry...* I will deliver him into your hand.

But rather than trust God... look at what Barak does next...

**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!"

It seems that Barak had more faith in (Deborah's faith in the Lord) than in his own... and this seemed to be evident in the leadership of Israel at that time.

(Meyer writes)

*“Barak preferred the inspiration of Deborah’s presence to the invisible but certain help of Almighty God...He is mentioned in Hebrews 11 as one of the heroes of faith; but his faith lay rather in Deborah’s influence with God than in his own. Thus he missed the crown of that great day of victory.”*

*And church... that is what it is like when we depend on others to do the work that the Lord has called us to do. The work will be unfulfilling and unfruitful.*

**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.”

So perhaps Deborah... in her mind was thinking, “You’re such a wimp Barak... I guess I’m going to have to go with you if we want to see Sisera defeated... but then she tells him... you won’t be the one to personally defeat Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army... *God will use a woman to defeat him.*”

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.

**11** Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which *is* beside Kedesh. **12** And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.

Now a quick explanation of who *Heber (He-bar)* and the Kenites were- *Heber (He-bar)* means “Crossed over” - just as *Hebrew* means “crossing over.” The Kenites lived in Israel... *but were not Israelites.* They were descendants of Moses’ father-in-law Hobad (Numbers 10:29)

Now... even though the Kenites had settled in Israel... *they were in alliance with the enemy King Jabin...* but Heber (*He-bar*) left the Kenites and began to dwell with the people of Israel. Heber (*He-bar*) “crossed over” and joined the Israelites.

**13** So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who *were* with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

Sisera was the leader of a very sophisticated and impressive military... with very advanced technology in that day.

In our day...this would be like having Wayne D. Eyre of the Canadian Armed forces calling out the American Air Force General... Charles Q. Brown... *into battle!*

The armies of Israel... under the direction of Barak and Deborah... were at a very great disadvantage... *not only because they didn’t have chariots of iron...* but they didn’t even have any real weapons... *as we’ll learn about in the next chapter.*

**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 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.

Deborah sure didn't waste any words when it was time for Barak to go into battle. She simply says, **“Up!” It's time**

She knew this *is* the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into Barak's hand. She says... *“Has not the Lord gone out before you?” In simple terms she tells Barak... God has already made it known that you can't lose... because He will win the battle in a way you never saw coming.*

Now to Barak's credit.. he listened and he led the ten thousand man Army down from Mount Tabor and... but this was an act of weak faith on the part of Barak.

Poole commented)

*“He doth not make use of the advantage of the hill, where he might have been out of the reach of his iron chariots, Joshua 17:16, but boldly marcheth down into the valley, to give Sisera the opportunity of using all his horses and chariots, that so the victory might be more glorious and wonderful.”*

OK... *so let's think this through...* Sisera with his 900 chariots and soldiers under his command... had a powerful advantage over the 10,000 footmen. I'm sure Sisera was expecting a quick and utter defeat of Barak and his army. After all... He had some pretty sophisticated and impressive military technology for the day... and the reality was... that the armies of Israel... under the direction of Barak and Deborah... were at a great disadvantage.

Barak and his men were positioned in the best possible place when they were up in the hills of Mount Tabor... *that terrain was to their advantage.*

Nevertheless... Barak and all those brave men that went with him... showed real courage... and more importantly... trust in God! *to go out against Sisera and his army.* They essentially had no weapons of any value to fight against a technologically advanced army (*having 900 chariots of iron*).

Also note... God led them to fight on a plain... which gave great advantage to Sisera and his forces with chariots.

*This was exactly the conditions needed for the chariots to be their most lethal... this was going to be a no brainer for Sisera!*

*So what exactly happened here?*



It says that when Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him... the Lord 'Routed' Sisera and all his chariots and all his army.

Wait... What did God do?

It says He Routed Sisera... which means to Terrify!

God literally brought terror upon Sisera and his army.

How God did that is not certain... *but it could have been a sound like thunder that's never been heard before... or some angelic sound that brings fear to the hearer. Whatever it was... it worked!*

Listen to what is described in the *(Daily Notes of the Scripture Union)*

*Barak openly showed his force of 10,000 on the slopes of Mount Tabor. Sisera rose to the bait. He and his chariots crossed the dry Kishon riverbed at the ford just south of Harosheth. They raced southeast along the ancient highway toward Taanach. Israelites from the south, from Ephraim, entered the valley at Jenin (5:14) and joined forces with Barak and his northern troops in the valley below Taanach...south of the Kishon.*

*Deborah called for the attack.*

*Footmen against chariots! At the critical moment... rain fell...turning the plain into mire... utterly confounding the chariots and horses. The advantage was now fully with the infantry... Barak pressed the attack. Sisera was separated from his men and fled. The leaderless troops... not used to fighting on foot...ran for their base. The rains continued and the Kishon rose to a torrent. Those who were not slain by the Israelites in pursuit were swept away by the Kishon as they tried to cross the ford to Harosheth.*

To which I add... But God!

I want to read you something from Daymond Duck... who writes for Rapture Ready... because I think it reinforces the power of God... that we have just seen between Barak and Sisera... how God can so easily change our seemingly desperate situation... **into victory!**

### **Daymond Duck**

About one week after Israel left Egypt under the leadership of Moses, an estimated two and one-half million unarmed Jewish men, women, and children found themselves camped out at the Red Sea with Pharaoh and a hostile, well-armed, well-trained Egyptian army and 600 horse-drawn chariots approaching them from behind.

The Jews were sore afraid, and they asked Moses if he brought them there to die.

- “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Ex. 14:13-14).

Moses said (in my words), you see Pharaoh and his Egyptian army now, but after today, you will never see them again.

God parted the waters of the Red Sea, the Jews crossed to the other side on dry ground, Pharaoh and his troops followed, the Sea closed, and Pharaoh and his army drowned.

This is the God factor: God delivered the unarmed Jews from Pharaoh and his highly-trained, well-armed Egyptian army in one day.

Daymond then gives some more great examples.

In one day,

- God stopped construction on the Tower of Babel, confused the people's language, and scattered them around the world.
- God destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah, and all the cities around them.
- God caused the walls of Jericho to collapse (after the seventh trip on the seventh day).
- God caused the fortified city of Babylon to fall.
- God delivered multitudes from sin when Jesus died on the cross.
- God brought the nation of Israel back into being.

He goes on to say...

In one day,

- God will change the world with the Battle of Gog and Magog.
- God will change the world with the Rapture of the Church.
- God will change the world with the confirmation of a covenant with many for 7-years of peace in the Middle East.
- God will change the world with the Second Coming of Jesus.

***Do not overlook the God factor.***

God can change the world in the blink of an eye... anytime He chooses.

*How true is that... we need only to put our complete trust in our Lord and Saviour! Amen!  
What His Word says... He will do!*

**17** However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for *there was peace* between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

Jabin the King of Hazor and Sisera still had control of the Kenites... so Sisera went to seek out Jael believing he would find protection from Barak and his army of men in the tent of this woman Jael.

*But God had a different plan.*

**18** And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.” And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.

Interestingly... Church... what does the name Deborah mean?**(Honeybee)**...  
Do you know what the name Jael means? **Mountain Goat**

*I'm sure glad I'm married to a honeybee... as we'll see why in the next few verses!*

So Jael goes out to meet Sisera and calls him ‘my lord’ and doesn’t appear to be afraid of Sisera... *in fact she assures him that he will be safe with her.*

Well... so far so good... Sisera’s plan appears to be working out just as he had hoped.  
But... *here’s where the story takes an unexpected turn.*

Remember in verse 9 when Deborah said to Barak...  
*“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.”*

*It would have been logical to assume that this would be Deborah... but God had something else in mind. He instead used the wife of a **Kenite** to accomplish Sisera’s end.*

*Now also realize... that in those days... Women had their tents separate from their husbands... and Sisera believed he would be safer in Jael’s tent than Heber’s.*

*So let’s see just how well Sisera’s plan works out.*

**19** Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. **20** And he said to her, “Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there any man here?’ you shall say, ‘No.’ ”

So Jael... being a good host... opened a jug of milk for him and covered him... *making him feel welcome and cared for .... as was the custom of the day.*

Sisera... being the clever commander that he was... tells her to stand at the door of the tent and says if any man comes looking for me... tell him I’m not here.

*That’s what Satan does... He acts nice and looks for a way to get in and then begins giving orders and demanding that we serve him.*

Now this plan should have worked... because in that day... the privacy of a harem... even a tent... cannot be intruded upon without express permission.

But Sisera didn’t realize that the danger he feared... was already present inside the tent.

**21** Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. **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.

Now the telling of the killing of the really...really... really fat Eglon... by the left handed Ehud in chapter 3... was one of the more graphic scenes in the Bible... but this killing by Jael has even more gory detail which supports the idea that this was an eye-witness account.

Jael clearly knew how to handle a tent-peg and a hammer because it was customarily the job of women to set up the tents.

She struck the peg so hard that **it went down into the ground.**

That's like a **mountain goat**... type of strength!  
She did not hold back.

But in doing so... Jael broke a fundamental principle of hospitality and many in the ancient world would think of her as a treacherous woman.

She broke her promise to Sisera and killed a man that her own husband had made peace with.

There are a lot of different thoughts and ideas regarding what Jael did and why she did it... but we can't know what was going through her mind at the time... but we can know this...

God used even her treachery... to accomplish His purpose. Sure... it could be argued that Sisera deserved to die... after all... this was war and Sisera fought against God's people on behalf of a leader who had been *harshly oppressing the people of Israel* (Judges 4:3).

But the lesson for us... is that God can make even the evil of man... serve His purpose: It says in (Psalm 76:10) *Surely the wrath of man shall praise You.*

Yet... that *never* diminishes the personal responsibility of the one doing the evil. Judas' betrayal of Jesus served the eternal purpose of God... yet he still answered for that evil deed.

**23** So on that day **God** subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. **24** And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

I'm going to spend just a few minutes relating this story to our sin... and how we have to have our battles with sin... until we finally win the war against sin.

The great Charles Spurgeon preached a wonderful sermon on this passage titled... *Sin Slain...* on how we can look at Sisera as a type of sin... and his master (Jabin) as a type of Satan.

He insisted that we should not be content to merely *defeat* sin... as Barak defeated Sisera in battle; we should not rest until sin is *dead*. And... just as Jael asked Barak to look at the dead body of Sisera... Spurgeon said... *we should look at sin slain by the work of Jesus... knowing He has already won the battle.*

“If you are content merely to conquer your sins and ***not to kill them***... you may depend upon it... it is the mere work of morality — a surface work — and not the work of the Holy Spirit.”

Church... In this story... let's consider Sisera as a type of the old man of our sin nature... and Jabin is a type Satan...

What is Satan's goal? It's to oppress and suppress you and me and he does that through our old sin nature... just as Jabin kept Israel in bondage through Sisera.

We need to apply the hammer of the 'Word of God' and the nail of the cross... to our old sin nature... in any given area of our life... just like Jael did to Sisera. And when we do...like Jabin... Satan will cease trying to use that sin to tempt us.

*Ok... Let's buckle down and try and get through the next 31 verses of Judges Chapter 5... before 9 o'clock*

## The Song of Deborah

I was thinking about why Deborah and Barak wrote and sang this song on that day. I imagine it was to celebrate how great God is and to have a record of the incredible victory that God had done in this battle.

You know... songs help us remember things that have happened in the past... they ignite something in our brain that allows us to go back in time.

You know what it's like... when you hear a song from years ago... it has a catchy tune and instantly you start singing it and remember all of the lyrics.

One of the songs that came to my mind while I was working on this part of the message... was the Bee Gees 'Stayin' Alive.'

As soon as I thought of it I was 17 again and the song came alive in my head!

Don't panic... *I won't start singing it...* but the chorus starts out with 'Life going nowhere... Somebody help me' isn't that a real struggle many are facing in this world today?

Here's a weird fact: Did you know that the song 'Stayin Alive' is one of the most associated songs used to perform CPR... which is interesting because that's what you're hoping will happen to the person in cardiac arrest... Stayin' Alive.

But that's not why doctors and paramedics use it... they use it because the tempo of the song is 104 beats per minute... which is the same rate chest compressions are given.  
*Interesting.*

Now... *I realize my mind went **way too far back** to December 1977... when I was a teenager who had recently graduated...*  
instead of a Christian worship song from 1995... when I surrendered my life to Christ... *but I hope you get where I'm going with this.*

It's like the 1974 Big Mac jingle... *Who here remembers that one?*

Then I had this thought... *what if...* I sing Judges chapter 5 to you tonight... and see if it would have the same affect as the Bee Gee's 'Stayin' Alive' or... the Big Mac jingle.

*You know... really bring the song to life and let burn it into your mind!*

But *fortunately* for all of you... **God**... *through my prophetess wife 'Deborah'...*  
communicated to me... that I was NOT to sing this chapter 5 song to anyone... *ever...* or for that matter... sing any song publicly... ***because of the irreversible pain...harm... suffering and potential PTSD*** it would cause to all of those hearing it... *not to mention ruin a song that Glorifies our Lord...*

...so we'll just quickly read through it.

1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: 2 "When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the Lord!  
3 "Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I, even I, will sing to the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel. 4 "Lord, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth trembled and the heavens poured, The clouds also poured water; 5 The mountains gushed before the Lord, This Sinai, before the Lord God of Israel.

In the opening lyrics of this song... we're told what happened in the battle with Sisera. History verifies that the Lord sent a rainstorm and all of Sisera's nine hundred chariots got stuck in the mud. *It's interesting to think that the highest technology of the day was rendered useless by rainfall.*

Think of today's computers and military technologies and now the (AI) in our day... and that's only the technology we've been allowed to know about... and then think of the still future battle that will be fought on horseback.

At the future battle of Armageddon... technology will somehow be rendered absolutely useless and this great war will be fought on horseback and will result in hand to hand combat in the most primitive ways.

Just like God rendered Sisera's iron chariots useless with rain... and God will once again in the future... intervene and shut down whatever military advantage Israel's enemies might have... **and give Israel the victory!**

6 "In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, In the days of (*yaa-el*) Jael, The highways were deserted, And the travellers walked along the byways. 7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,

No one dared to travel on the main highways because the people lived in fear of their enemies.

(Clarke) said: *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.*"

*Continuing in the last half of verse 7 it says...* Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel.

Notice that it doesn't say... *that Deborah is the mother of Israel.* It says she is a mother in Israel.

Deborah was certainly a special woman... she was a poet... a prophetess...a judge and a genuine hero in the history of God's people... *and yet what does she take pride in?*

The fact that she's a mother. Church... There is no higher calling than motherhood... because mothers have the unique opportunity shape lives and affect the future.

8 They chose new gods; Then *there was* war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.

This again just confirms the ongoing cycle of sin that continued to plague Israel... and the result of that sin...

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

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

These lyrics of the song... show us that Deborah not only cared for her role of leadership... *but she had a heart for other leaders and their work.*

Her vision was bigger than just getting "her job" done. *She wanted to see the Kingdom of God advanced.*

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.

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

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;

Here the tribe of Benjamin... Ephraim... Manasseh... Zebulun and Issachar were commended *for entering the battle against Sisera and Jabin*. But Deborah and Barak’s song continues in

*Verse 15 calling out those who did not!*

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.

*Jon Courson had this to say, “Reuben didn’t get involved. He stayed in the sheepfold... stayed where it was safe. Why? Because he gave it a lot of thought.*

*The “paralysis of analysis” is a dangerous... yet common problem today. “Should I witness to him or not?,” we ask.*

*“Should I go there or not?,” “Should I be kind to that person or not?,”*

*And we find ourselves becoming introspective to the place where... like Reuben... we do nothing. Reuben debated so long... he missed the entire battle.*

*Could that happen to you or me? Absolutely.*

*God says, “I want you to do this... to experience that... to have victory here... to gain spoil there.”*

*But we sit back and analyze... and thereby miss what He has for us. Be like Ephraim...*

*Benjamin...Manasseh...Zebulun and Issachar. Get involved. Get engaged. Be part of what the Lord is doing as He wages war against sin and does battle for the souls of me.*

What a great word!

Church! *We need to get engaged in the battle that God is calling us to!*

Can it get messy? *Sure!*

Can it cost us something? *It probably will!*

Will it be worth it? Yes... of course it will.... *if you want to hear Jesus say, “Well Done my good and faithful servant.”*



17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets.

Is there a Gilead in you and me?... who when a need arises says... yeah...that's not my thing... or.... that's just way outside my comfort zone. If so... **you will miss the battle!** What about a Dan... is there a Dan in you and me? *who would rather going sailing.... than enter into the battle.*

And then there's Asher... who just remained at the beach. Asher... along with Gilead and Dan *missed the **opportunity** to join the battle and share in the victory.*

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

Unlike Gilead... Dan and Asher...

Zebulun and Naphtali risked their lives! They trusted God... and took steps of faith. They engaged in the battle and took on the enemy... *They drew closer to God and were blessed because of their faith in Him!*

Church... Satan is our enemy and he has created battlefields every where we look. I don't need to name them... because we're well aware of the (*Romans 1*) challenges being lived out all around us.

I also think of the list in Proverbs chapter six when it lists *six things that the Lord hates... yes, seven that are an abomination to Him:*

Do you remember what they are?

A proud look...A lying tongue... Hands that shed innocent blood...A heart that devises wicked plans... Feet that are swift in running to evil... A false witness *who* speaks lies... And one who sows discord among brethren. *These are all battlefields utilized by the enemy!* Two of the first three have been brought to the forefront already this month - Remember the first one - *God hates pride - Church what is the culture celebrating in the month of June? - pride.*

*And what about the fact that God hates the shedding of innocent blood - can you think of anyone more innocent than a baby in the womb?*

*We just had our Pro-Life conference here last Saturday and a great message on Sunday regarding the attack on the unborn.*

*I encourage you to get involved in the pro-life movement and or the House of Refuge ministry we have here at Riverside.*

Like the nation of Israel was divided in two groups... *so is the church in our time.* Some are rushing in to do battle with the evil in our day... while others in the church are content to stay in their groups... take a cruise... enjoy the nicer things of this early life or just hangout at the beach.

19 “The kings came *and* fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; They took no spoils of silver. 20 They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera. 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.

Church... of all those tribes mentioned... who had the courage and the faith to enter into the battle... who should receive the glory?

**None of them!** It was the Lord of hosts... *The King of Kings who secured the victory and deserves the glory! Amen!*

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.’

Wow!

We don’t know much about Meroz... even it’s exact location is not known... but it was a city of Israel in the region of the battle and it’s *inhabitants were cursed... why? for their failure to get involved in the battle.*

In a way it will be like that for believers in our day... who... day after week... after month... after year... choose to avoid the work of the Lord. *Although they will make it into heaven... when they stand before the judgement seat of Christ... they’ll realize the missed opportunities in their own communities. Opportunities to be part of God’s plan for their area... and... they will weep... because they’ll be aware of the heavenly rewards that were lost for all eternity.*

Believers... Get busy serving our Lord in what He calls you to... even when it’s not in your comfort zone. Remember... if He’s calling you... He will equip you... and in reality... He will do the work through you.

24 “Most blessed among women is Jael. The wife of Heber (Hebar) 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.

It says that Jael was most blessed among women.

It’s interesting... because what she did... would be condemned by most people in the time of the Judges... Why? because culturally... she had... *not just a responsibility... but practically a **command** to protect and bless any guest in her home... and yet she killed him!*

*But she was blessed... because her obedience to God and His plan ... was much greater than her obedience to the tradition and customs of her day.*

Now Deborah really drives home... what Jael drove through Sisera's head. It says she pounded Sisera and pierced his head... and it reminded me of what Jael's name means. Remember... **Mountain Goat!**

I mean... She hammered that tent peg with the force of an angry goat.

If you want to be blessed... *you don't have to kill a bad guy...*

*Get active for the Lord and put to death the things of the enemy and the sin in your life and encourage others to do the same and always look for opportunity to share the Gospel.*

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?' Church... there is no reward when you follow the enemy. I see people everyday that are looking to the world... to find their hope and reward.

They listen to the lies of the enemy and believe that this life is all there is... but like Sisera... one day truth hits them hard in the head... and if they haven't surrendered their life to Christ... then the reality of a literal hell... becomes their reality for all eternity.

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."

Let me quote a man we all know and love:  
(Our own Pastor Brent... from his 2007 teaching in Judges)  
and I'll end with this....

The truth is.. that all of the Lord's enemies will perish.  
1 John 5:12 says, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

That's why the enemies of the Lord will perish... they don't have the Son. But the Lord says... let those who love Him... be like the Son... when it comes out in full strength... in other words those who love Him... let it show... let it be evident.

May we be like the Son... emitting a light in the world... a warmth and this energy in this world that were in. May we not be just like the sun in the sky... but may we be like the Son at the right hand... who is really being an example of His life... His character... living our lives like Him. That's what we need to be... those that love Him... obey His commands. Those that love Him will follow Him. That's who we need to be modelling our lives after... and if we love Him... that's going to be our heart.

So the land had rest for forty years.

One last thought before we end...

*God often calls people to step out in faith.. to attempt the unexpected.*

*God often uses unlikely people and sources to accomplish His plans.*

*God sometimes requires great risk and effort on our behalf as part of His divine plan.*

In the case of Deborah and Barak... they risked their lives in war... while Jael took in a runaway fugitive and risked her life... to end his and help free Israel from oppression.

Ultimately... this account reveals that *God is in control of the nations and changes their leaders according to His desires.*