

DEBORAH AND BARAK, SERVANTS OF GOD

[BIBLE TEXT](#): Judges 4:1-24; Hebrews 11:32-40

LESSON 190 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

Judges 4:1-24

¹ And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead.
² And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host *was* Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.
³ And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.
⁴ And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.
⁵ And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.
⁶ And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, *saying*, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?
⁷ And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.
⁸ And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, *then* I will not go.
⁹ And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

I Israel's Partial Wages for Their Sin

¹ The Israelites did evil and made new gods, Judges 4:1;

Judges 5:8

⁸ They chose new gods; then *was* war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?

Exodus 20:2-6

² I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

⁴ Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

⁵ Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

⁶ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Leviticus 26:1

¹ Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up *any* image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I *am* the LORD your God.

Joshua 23:6-16

⁶ Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom *to* the right hand or *to* the left;

⁷ That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear *by them*, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:

⁸ But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.

⁹ For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but *as for* you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

¹⁰ One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he *is* that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

¹¹ Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

¹² Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

¹³ Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

¹⁴ And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof.

¹⁵ Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised

thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

¹⁰ And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

¹¹ Now Heber the Kenite, *which was* of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which *is* by Kedesh.

¹² And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor.

¹³ And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, *even* nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.

¹⁴ And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

¹⁵ And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all *his* chariots, and all *his* host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on his feet.

¹⁶ But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; *and* there was not a man left.

¹⁷ Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for *there was* peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

¹⁸ And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in,

you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

¹⁶ When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

2 God used the Canaanites as instruments of punishment for the Israelites, Judges 4:2, 3;

Judges 5:6-8

⁶ In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.

⁷ *The inhabitants of* the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.

⁸ They chose new gods; then *was* war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?

Ecclesiastes 2:26

²⁶ For *God* giveth to a man that *is* good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to *him that is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Peter 2:12-13

¹² But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

¹³ And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

3 The periods of oppression had increased in length with each recurrence, Judges 3:8, 14;

Judges 4:3

³ And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

Proverbs 13:15

¹⁵ Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors *is* hard.

II The Promise of Deliverance and God's Instrumentalities

1 A sincere cry of penitence is always heard by God, Judges 4:3;

Psalms 34:18

¹⁸ The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Isaiah 63:7-9

⁷ I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, *and* the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

⁸ For he said, Surely they *are* my people, children *that* will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

⁹ In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Isaiah 65:24

my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.

¹⁹ And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.

²⁰ Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.

²¹ Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

²² And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her *tent*, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail *was* in his temples.

²³ So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel.

²⁴ And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Hebrews 11:32-40

³² And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samson, and *of* Jephthae; *of* David also, and Samuel, and *of* the prophets:

³³ Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

²⁴ And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Micah 7:18

¹⁸ Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy.

2 God has messengers and representatives, even in the darkest times of oppression, Judges 4:4, 5;

Isaiah 1:9

⁹ Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

1 Kings 19:18

¹⁸ Yet I have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

Romans 11:5

⁵ Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Hebrews 11:32-40

³² And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samson, and *of* Jephthae; *of* David also, and Samuel, and *of* the prophets:

³³ Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

³⁶ And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

³⁸ (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

³⁹ And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

⁴⁰ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

3 Barak is called and commissioned to lead Israel's armies, Judges 4:6, 7;

Job 5:17-22

¹⁷ Behold, happy *is* the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

¹⁸ For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

¹⁹ He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

²⁰ In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.

²¹ Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

²² At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

4 Barak shows godly characteristics in his attitude and response to God's call, Judges 4:8-10;

Exodus 33:12-17

¹² And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my

³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

³⁶ And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

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³⁹ And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

⁴⁰ God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

sight.

¹³ Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation *is* thy people.

¹⁴ And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.

¹⁵ And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence.

¹⁶ For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *is it* not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

¹⁷ And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

1 Chronicles 21:13

¹³ And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great *are* his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man.

III Deliverance for the Penitent, Destruction for the Impenitent

1 Sisera, aided by a confederate, marches in pursuit of the Israelites, Judges 4:11-13, 17;

Psalm 33:12-19

¹² Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; *and* the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

¹³ The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

¹⁴ From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

¹⁵ He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

¹⁶ There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

¹⁷ An horse *is* a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength.

¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

2 Deborah encourages Barak and gives him the Lord's command, Judges 4:14;

Exodus 33:2

² And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:

Joshua 1:9

⁹ Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

3 God fights for Israel, destroying the enemy, Judges 4:15, 16;

Judges 5:20-22

²⁰ They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

²¹ The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

²² Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.

Joshua 23:5

⁵ And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

4 Earthly security and covenants with men are never able to retard God's judgment, Judges 4:17;

Isaiah 28:15-18

¹⁵ Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

¹⁶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

¹⁷ Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

¹⁸ And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

Amos 9:10

¹⁰ All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

Obadiah 1:3

³ The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation *is* high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?

Luke 12:16-21

¹⁶ And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

¹⁸ And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

²⁰ But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

²¹ So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

5 God's destruction of the Canaanites and preservation of the Israelites are indications of His judgment upon all the wicked and of His kindness toward the righteous, Judges 4:18-24;

Psalms 37:1-40

¹ Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

² For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

³ Trust in the LORD, and do good; *so* shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

⁴ Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

⁵ Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

⁶ And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

⁷ Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

⁸ Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

⁹ For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

¹⁰ For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not*

be.

¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

¹² The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

¹³ The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

¹⁴ The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation.

¹⁵ Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

¹⁶ A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

¹⁷ For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

¹⁸ The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

¹⁹ They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

²⁰ But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

²¹ The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

²² For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off.

²³ The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

²⁴ Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.

²⁵ I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

²⁶ *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed *is* blessed.

²⁷ Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

²⁸ For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

²⁹ The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

³⁰ The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

³¹ The law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

³² The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

³³ The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

³⁴ Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

³⁵ I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

³⁶ Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

³⁷ Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that man is* peace.

³⁸ But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

³⁹ But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD: *he is* their strength in the time of trouble.

⁴⁰ And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

NOTES:

Murmuring and Idolatry

There is almost a regular cycle through the years that

followed the administrations of Moses and Joshua, during the period of the Judges, in which the Children of Israel were under oppression many times. As soon as a judge died, Israel "again did evil in the sight of the LORD," and God's judgment came upon them. They were rightly termed "children," for they did not seem able to do anything good without a righteous leader to show them the correct way and to hold them in line. Their periodic downfalls in the wilderness were caused, largely, by their murmuring against God and against His provision for them. Now, in the Promised Land, their basic evil tendency was toward idolatry.

God had promised Israel rest, peace, prosperity, and safety in Canaan, if they would exterminate the nations of the land and do away with everything that would cause them to draw back from following Him. He promised to be their God — their deliverer from sin — if they would follow Him. But here they failed. They neglected to follow God's commandment and utterly destroy the idolatrous nations of Canaan; and, as a result, these pagan people led them astray, 'for the affections of the "children" — the great bulk of the Israelites, a multitude who did not follow God and receive His righteousness through the divine provision, the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant — were not centered on "things above," as were those of their father Abraham, who "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Their love and devotion was centered, instead, in "things on the earth"; and because of that they were easy prey for the enemy of human souls, Satan, who is attempting to build a kingdom in opposition to the Kingdom of God.

"The Way of Transgressors" and the Plan of God

Israel's departure into evil, after the death of Ehud, was one of bitter experiences. Because of this digression, they were oppressed by the Canaanites for 20 years. The highways of the land were unoccupied; the travelers walked on the byways, instead. The inhabitants of the villages were compelled to leave their small, unfortified communities and go where they had a measure of protection. There was war in their gates, and not a spear or sword among the 40,000 in this part of Israel. All this was brought upon them because they sought new gods and forsook the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their fathers. Such is the way of a transgressor!

But, bitter as this suffering may have seemed to them, it was but an earnest of the "wages" that sin would eventually bring to them, and will bring to all others who do not repent and turn to God with all their hearts. There is no escaping those wages. Garnishment proceedings cannot be brought to stop them. There is no chance that payment will be deferred. Sin brings death, and the only escape from that penalty is a cry to God for mercy.

How wise are the provisions of Almighty God! How ample and how wonderful is the plan that He devised, through the provisions of which His "banished" do not need to be "expelled" from Him! (**2 Samuel 14:14** ¹⁴ For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect *any* person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him). Our sins brought upon us the penalty of death; but Christ gave Himself, suffered, and died, that that penalty might be paid and that we might be justified by His grace and infinite mercy. There is no annulment of His eternal Law here, for the penalty was fully paid. He remained just, and also became the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus.

No human could have done this, for we all were under the penalty of death for our own sins. It took the shedding of the innocent Blood to avail for the sins of mankind. The violation was of an infinite Law; therefore the penalty must also be infinite. The Substitute also had to be an infinite One. There was only One who could meet all these requirements; and *His name is Jesus!*

The Effects of the "Scarlet Line"

Since, in the mind of God the Father, Christ was "slain from the foundation of the world," and because the Covenant-promises were available to "all families of the earth," there has always been a people who have embraced those provisions and who have been truly saved from their sins. Not a great number at any one time — for Christ reminded us that it was but a "little flock" for whom God was preparing an eternal Home — but individuals, down through the course of time, followed God with all their hearts. And so rich and full was the righteousness of God which He imparted to these Old Testament saints, so wonderful was the holiness of God which He implanted in their souls, that the Holy Spirit has reminded us that it is our duty and obligation to follow those who make up this great "cloud of witnesses."

Man — or Woman?

Even in the dark hour of Israel's oppression there were a few who dared to stand for God and who dared defend His cause. God does not classify men and women as human standards rate human abilities and capabilities. In this hour of oppression men's hearts may have failed because of the fear and depression that was over them. But God is all, and He is in all! We are but instruments in His hands. And any and all of us are unprofitable in ourselves. The abilities we may have are God-given. We have nothing but what we have received from Him. God can use a woman as easily as He can use a man — and He did so at this time. There is no difference to Him.

There have been many periods in human history when men's hearts have failed and a faithful woman has stood in the breach to hold aloft the Torch of Truth and Liberty to the world that was groping in the blackness of spiritual despair. We have the Gospel today because of the stalwart spirit of several godly women who, in the past century or two, have stood firmly for the Gospel, and have been faithful to that which was given them to do. Space does not permit us to comment here on these, such as Susanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, Evangeline Booth, Frances Havergal, Fanny J. Crosby, Mary Slessor, and many others who were faithful in their ministry for God. But we of the Apostolic Faith are especially aware of the fact that God uses women for His ministry, since we have seen for ourselves the peerless life and ministry of a great woman of God, our founder, the Reverend Florence L. Crawford. Through Mother Crawford's faithfulness to God, and through her influence in the world of true believers, the doctrine of entire sanctification as a separate work of grace, subsequent to justification and preceding the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, is still in the world. And because of that fact the genuine baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire is also received today, even though a counterfeit experience has been given to many by the enemy of their soul.

Florence Crawford was called by God in a most outstanding way, and left the associations and teachings of infidelity and became a real Christian. Soon she longed for an opportunity to do service for the God she had come to love so dearly, and found that opportunity at first in many humble duties near her own home. We

have heard her tell that she would take little children off the street into her home and wash their bleeding and bruised feet, doing so in the name of her Master. She began to visit, encourage, and pray for men in jails and prisons. The Lord gave her many converts in that field of labor, and then, in a way that *she* could not understand at that time, took her from that fruitful Kingdom-work and gave her a specific call to leadership in the ministry of the Gospel.

She began that phase of her ministry strictly on faith, in obedience to God's call. The Lord enlarged her field of activity, and as she prayed, taught, preached, and counseled the many in her sphere of influence, He gave her many hundreds of sheaves for His harvest. Opposition came, for there were those from the very beginning who began to tear down the divine Standards — to substitute an easier way — at the sacrifice of their souls and the souls of countless thousands who followed them. But she stood firm; a mere woman against many men whose hearts had grown faint because of the trend away from the "old paths." She held the Apostolic Faith work on strict Biblical lines of doctrine and laid a foundation that stands today and will continue to stand until Jesus comes. How thankful we are for the Deborahs of all ages!

God has a work for all — men and women, young men and young women, boys and girls. Some are considered weak and imperfect by human standards, but no one who is fully yielded to God is so classified by Him. He can work perfectly with imperfect instruments, if they are surrendered to His will and plan. If this were not the case, how then could His Plan have been carried out at all? None of us, even including the spiritual giants of old, are self-sufficient. We are all unprofitable servants — imperfect instruments — wholly dependent upon Him.

Deborah and Barak

Deborah was God's instrument. She was a prophetess, which means she brought the Word of God to the people. Her call was genuine, and was recognized by all those who knew her, for they all — men and women, alike — came to her. We need not fear our limitations if we are walking in the center of God's will. The fact that we may be of those who are regarded as incapable of being messengers for the Lord, according to human standards, does not mean that God cannot use us if we fully surrender to Him.

God wants young men! He wants young women, too! There is a place in His vineyard for all; and the fact that one may be born a woman does not mean that her sphere of influence or activity for God is limited. Many who are called to serve God are instead only serving humanity — sometimes their own human desires, at that! If God has called us to be His servant, we should not stoop to be a king! The place of most humble service in God's vineyard is higher than the most exalted position that man, nation, or commonwealth of nations can give.

Barak recognized the call of God upon Deborah. He did not assert himself, or his superiority, in any way. He felt himself, and his own judgment, inferior to anything that comes from God and is approved by God. Like Moses, who would not consent to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land without the Presence of God constantly with them, Barak refused to lead the armies of Israel to battle with the Canaanites unless the "messenger of God" was there to show the way at all times.

What a lesson we can learn from this man of God! He was humble, but that does not mean that he was weak in character or

impotent in matters of decision. He had courage. He had strength. He had the respect of the armies of the Israelites. But he had more than that. He had the deep conviction that all his qualifications were nothing, in themselves. He needed God's help, and he knew it. He had the spirit that would not hesitate to admit his, insufficiency, contend for God's sufficiency and accept it when it came, no matter how God chose to give it to him.

The Canaanites, perhaps, would have thought him foolish if they had known the conversation that took place. They would have thought him mentally incapable of leading an army of fighting men to battle, where human blood would flow freely and the strongest physical constitution would revolt at even one of the gruesome sights that would become heartbreakingly common before the end of the first day of battle. What help could a woman be in a time like that?

Barak knew his weakness — the limitations of any human being. He knew, also, where divine strength was to be found; and he knew who was called by God to be a leader in Heaven's cause. He knew that nothing could be done properly unless God was both the author of it and the constant provider for it. He made his decision, and announced his stand. And because that decision was right, Deborah quickly agreed to it, and went to battle with the hosts of the Israelites — a place more foreign to a woman's tender feelings, emotions, and limited physical strength, than can possibly be imagined.

The Hard Way, or the Easy Way?

Some say they cannot do certain kinds of work for God because they are not men; or because they are not of certain emotional or physical qualifications, even if they are men. Deborah forsook the comparative comfort and safety of her palm tree, and also the important duties of prophetess and judge, to do God's will. She left the usual life of the women of her day, and even a certain phase of spiritual duty, for a greater work of God. The places to which she went were not easy. The sights she saw were not inspiring to her. But she followed God and took the hard way — a way — opposite to every feeling of womanhood — and found an exultation of joy and reward from God that has seldom, if ever, been equaled in the history of the world. Her expression of praise and joy that came from obedience and trust in God was so all-inclusive and instructive that it found a place in the Bible, and has been the subject of countless sermons by men of God, through which millions of people have been edified and brought closer to God.

Deborah might have said that even the palm tree of judgment was no place for a woman. She might have reasoned that Barak was not the man for the position of general in the army, if he entertained the thought he expressed, since it could be said that he lacked courage and decision. Barak, also, could have seen the same objections that Deborah could thus have felt.

Deborah might have revolted at the thought of going to battle and seeing the dead and dying all around her, hearing their agonizing cries as they begged for death to end their pain and suffering. She might have thought that the rugged life of a field soldier was no place for the tenderness of womankind. But Deborah did not follow that popular pattern. She followed God! And because of her decision, and subsequent action, many thousands are in the Glory-land today.

Some of the Wages of Sin

Deliverance came to Israel in an unexpected manner.

Scripture states that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera"; that "the **LORD** discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host"; and that "the river of Kishon swept them away." Jael, wife of Heber, helped make up the breach by taking advantage of the opportunity to slay Sisera, **an** enemy of the Children of Israel, which had been appointed for destruction.

The Canaanites had the same opportunities to turn to God as Rahab. They, too, were included in the blessings promised to all families of the earth under the Everlasting Covenant. Instead, they refused God's salvation and fought against Him. Their leader took refuge in the seeming safety of his own negotiated peace treaty, and not in the only effective Refuge provided for man. The armies of Jabin, king of Canaan, were destroyed. Sisera, the general in charge of the heathen army, was also destroyed. The king himself was destroyed.

It has been said that when God attacks, there is no standing; when He pursues, there is no escaping; and when He begins, He will also make an ending. "The wages of sin is death." These who opposed God, rebelled against Him and His righteous administration, found the punishment that will come to all who, likewise, prefer sin to righteousness, ungodliness to holiness, and eternal death to eternal life. There is no escape from the righteous judgments of an eternal God!

QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the basic evil in the hearts of the Israelites at the time of the wanderings in the wilderness?
- 2 What was the basic evil in their hearts when they settled in Canaan?
- 3 What commandments were broken by their sin? Of which ones were they guilty?
- 4 How did God use the Canaanites in His plan? As what were they used?
- 5 Quote Romans 6:23 from memory.
- 6 Through whom did God speak, to reveal His will for the Israelites, at this time?