

DEBORAH AND BARAK, SERVANTS OF GOD

BIBLE TEXT: Judges 4:1-24; Hebrews 11:32-40

LESSON 190 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm 118:6).

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 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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Self-Satisfied and Unthankful

The Israelites should have known that trouble always came upon them when they turned from God, but it seems that each succeeding generation had to learn that lesson for themselves. The land of Israel had had rest for a long time while a generation of young people grew up.

Prosperity often causes a person to forget God. The person feels he is getting along very well and does not need God's help. That is a dangerous condition to get into. We must remember that all our blessings come from God, and we should appreciate them and thank Him for them.

Instead of appreciating what they get, some people become selfish and do not want to share with anyone else. As long as God showers blessings upon us, He expects us to help others. And above all, we must return thanks to Him who gave us so much.

When Israel became self-satisfied and unthankful, they turned from God, and great trouble came to them. They were taken captive by Jabin, a king of the Canaanites — one of those whom God had commanded the Israelites to destroy but whom they had permitted to continue to reign. His city, Hazor, had once been destroyed by the Israelites, but they had not continued watchful, and he had rebuilt it again right before them.

Nine Hundred Chariots of Iron

Sisera was a general in the army of King Jabin and had great power. Fugitives from other countries came to the fortress where he was stationed and joined his army until he had great military strength, including 900 iron chariots.

Now that Jabin ruled the Israelites there was great distress among the people. There was no law and order. People were afraid to walk or ride along the highways because of the many robbers who went unpunished. It was very dangerous to even go outside the city walls to get water, which they had to have. For twenty years Israel suffered this lawlessness, and finally they called upon the Lord to help them. They did not talk about being sorry for their sins, but their trouble was greater than they could bear.

A Mother in Israel

The Lord was merciful to them and gave them Deborah, a faithful prophetess who loved God and did what He commanded. People from the cities all over Israel came to her for advice. One day God commanded her to send the Israelites in revolt against King Jabin. Being a woman, she could not easily lead an army into battle, so she called Barak to be the general. He would have to fight against Sisera who had an army with 900 chariots of iron.

The Israelites had been in subjection for so long that they did not have horses and chariots nor arms and ammunition. It looked like a very unequal fight. It would have been if God had not commanded the Israelites to go. When God commands us to do something, He gives us all the strength and power we need to fulfill His commands.

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, 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

Barak was glad that Israel was to have a chance to throw off the yoke of bondage, but he knew he could not trust only in his 10,000 soldiers to win the battle. God must go with him. And as Deborah was God's representative, he insisted that she go along to the battle.

Deborah was glad to do all she could for God's cause, and she willingly left her home and family to go to fight for her nation. She did not care for any honor for herself, but wanted the heathen nation destroyed so that God might be glorified. And she wanted peace and safety for God's people. That is the burden that any true Christian should carry; he should forget his own interests in order to further God's righteous cause. Deborah warned Barak that he would get no honor from the victory because God was going to deliver Sisera, the enemy general, into the hand of a woman.

The Battle at Mount Tabor

The men of war from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali very patriotically rallied to the colors, and gathered at Mount Tabor to fight with Barak and Deborah. When Sisera heard that the armies of Israel were mobilizing, he quickly gathered his armies; and with the nine hundred chariots he went out to put down the revolt. No doubt he felt confident that his might could not be overthrown. Deborah did not wait for him to come against them at Mount Tabor, but sent Barak and his 10,000 men down to meet Sisera.

There was a great battle that day, the Lord fighting for Israel. The Canaanites were utterly destroyed. Sisera had had great trust in those 900 chariots of iron; but when his army was destroyed, he jumped out of his own chariot and ran for safety.

False Security

A sinner may feel secure in the money he has saved, the home he has made for himself, the good reputation he has built up; but one stroke from God can sweep it all away. The Prophet Isaiah even spoke of a people who had made a covenant with death. They thought trouble could not come near them. But God said: "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" (Isaiah 28:18). God will judge the people, and if they will not repent they will be helpless in the hands of an angry God.

Sisera ran from his chariot, helpless. He had fought against God's people and had lost his entire army and all his chariots. He fled to the tent of a woman where he thought he would be safe. Men were forbidden to go into the women's compartment, so he supposed no one would look for him there. The woman, whose name was Jael, was not an Israelite, but God must have moved her to help His people that day. She let Sisera come in and gave him milk to drink. She then covered him up so he would be hidden.

Sisera felt very secure. He had told Jael to let no one know that he was there. He was very tired from the battle; and when he had eaten, he fell asleep.

Many sinners have fallen asleep in carnal security. They think that because they have a form of religion they will be ready to meet Jesus, in spite of their sins. Others may not even have a form of religion, but will say: "I have never done anyone any harm. I do unto others as I would have them do to me. Would a just God condemn me for that?" God will not condemn one for his good works, but will surely condemn him for neglecting His great salvation. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:1). No one will be ready for Heaven until he has repented of his sins and

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,

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

had them washed away by the Blood of Jesus.

Death to God's Enemy

As Sisera slept, Jael took a tent nail and drove it through his temples, pinning him to the ground. So he died. Barak, the captain of Israel's army, was trying to find Sisera; and when he came near Jael's tent she came out to meet him and said: "Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest." Think of the surprise of Barak when he saw Sisera dead upon the ground, with a nail through his temples!

The war was over; victory had been won for Israel. The enemy's leader had been delivered into the hand of a woman, just as Deborah had said. The Canaanite king, Jabin, could do little without his army, so he was soon destroyed also. And once more the land had rest. God gave the victory.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Who was the new judge in Israel?
- 2 Who was chosen to be the military leader in Israel?
- 3 What did he say when she asked him to lead the army against Sisera?
- 4 What did Deborah do to help the Israelites win the battle?
- 5 Where was the battle fought?
- 6 In what did Sisera place his confidence?
- 7 What was Israel's weapon of defense?
- 8 What happened to Sisera after he left his chariot?
- 9 Who won the battle? and into whose hand was Sisera delivered?

not the promise:

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