

# BLESSINGS THAT FOLLOW WILLING SERVICE

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Judges 5:1-31

LESSON 191 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might" (Judges 5:31).

## [BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

### Judges 5:1-31

<sup>1</sup> Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

<sup>2</sup> Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

<sup>3</sup> Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, *even* I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing *praise* to the LORD God of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.

<sup>5</sup> The mountains melted from before the LORD, *even* that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

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

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

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

<sup>9</sup> My heart *is* toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

<sup>11</sup> *They that are delivered* from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, *even* the righteous acts *toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel*: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

## [BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

### [NOTES:](#)

#### Victory

We have read about the sufferings of the Children of Israel, caused by their disobedience to God. They met with defeat when they did not serve the Lord. The scene was changed when they turned to God and followed Him. In last Sunday's lesson we read about Deborah, a prophetess, whom God made a judge in Israel. She, along with Barak, led Israel's armies to victory. Barak is listed in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews as one who had conquering faith. Because they obeyed God, He delivered the enemy into their hands.

#### A Song of Thanksgiving

Deborah and Barak knew that it was God who had brought the victory. They took no credit to themselves. That God might receive honor and glory, they were inspired to sing a song of thanksgiving and victory to the Lord for His mercy to them. They were so grateful to God that, no doubt, on that very same day they wanted to praise Him in song. They did not wait until months later to praise God. This can be a lesson for us. Do we praise God as faithfully and as promptly as did Deborah and Barak?

Let us consider this song. Perhaps it will be an example for us. Deborah and Barak had a right to sing unto the Lord; so have we. In James 5:13 we read, "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." A song was a good way to spread the news, and to keep it in remembrance. One of David's Psalms *says* that "one generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4).

#### Willing Service

Why did God avenge His people? Because they gave willing service to Him. That is the secret of being a victor through the power of God — "the people willingly offered themselves." What they did, they did for the Lord; not because it was expected or required of them, not grudgingly asking, "Do we have to?" The armies of Deborah and Barak were victorious because they gave willing service. We can be victorious if our service is willingly given to God. What kind of service do we offer the Lord?

The praises of this song were directed to the Lord God of Israel. No doubt, in times past, when the Children of Israel had served other gods, their songs were to false gods.

As they were praising God for their recent victory, to their memory came many past blessings. God had been with the Children of Israel so long as they served Him. Often, today, when God's people praise Him for what He is doing, they recall former blessings of God's mercy and help.

#### In Trouble

Deborah sang of the conditions that were in Israel before God raised her to be a judge. She did this to show how great was God's deliverance. The highways had not been occupied; where were the merchants, the caravans, the trade? Travelers had used the byways instead of the highways; were they unsafe because of robbers and

<sup>12</sup> Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.

<sup>13</sup> Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.

<sup>14</sup> Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.

<sup>15</sup> And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great thoughts of heart.

<sup>16</sup> Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great searchings of heart.

<sup>17</sup> Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.

<sup>18</sup> Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people *that* jeopardated their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.

<sup>19</sup> The kings came *and* fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money.

<sup>20</sup> They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

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

<sup>22</sup> Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.

<sup>23</sup> Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.

thieves? People did not live in the villages; had they taken refuge in walled cities from which they could not care for the crops? There was war in the gates where sat the judges and officers; was there no place to take their problems to be dealt with justly? No shield or spear could be seen; were they conquered and stripped of their weapons? There was a noise of archers in the places of water-drawing; could not a person even draw water in peace?

Why had there been all this trouble? "They chose new gods." After their fathers had made the choice to serve the Lord when Joshua had said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15), they had forsaken God to serve new gods. That was why all this trouble had come upon Israel. Children must choose today, too, whom they will serve, regardless of the choice of their parents. Are you serving God, or the enemy of your soul?

### Mighty Acts of God

Deborah sang unto the Lord for the great things that He had done. Now they could walk in the way and sit in safety to judge. Now they could draw water without fear. Deborah rehearsed the mighty acts of God — not those of man. This was the Lord's doing.

Deborah felt that she had reason to praise the Lord. She bestirred herself to even more praises, for God had given Israel victory over the enemy who had 900 chariots of iron and who had oppressed them for 20 years (Judges 4:3). God had given Deborah, a mother in Israel, authority over the mighty armies. Perhaps no man could be found at that time whom God could trust with the responsibility of being a judge. But there was a woman, Deborah, a prophetess, who was courageous and faithful, one upon whom God could depend. God has used other women to carry out His plans, too. As Jesus carries, God will use all who are faithful, courageous, and obedient.

Let us bestir ourselves to more praises to God for His mighty acts to us. Who knows but from your own class, God will raise up one — boy or girl — through whom He can work wonders?

### Those Who Fought for Israel

Deborah knew their enemies, and she was not unmindful of those who were fighting with Israel. Nor did she overlook those who were neutral, those who sat back doing nothing. Through this victory, God was glorified, but the people He used received due recognition in Deborah's song.

Those who fought for Israel included the tribe of Ephraim among whom Deborah dwelt (**Judges 4:5** <sup>5</sup> *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.*). The tribe of Benjamin went with Deborah and Barak into battle. Machir, the western half-tribe of Manasseh, sent governors to help, and the princes from Issachar were with Deborah. From Zebulun came men of learning, perhaps better at writing than at fighting, but they were willing to fill their place. They, along with Naphtali (Barak's tribe), risked their lives in a courageous manner. They lived close to the enemy, and no doubt would rather have died fighting than be captives. God saw them all.

Even the things of nature fought against Sisera and for Deborah. God used the stars; and the river Kishon swept away many of the enemies.

### Those Who Did Not Fight

Deborah also mentioned in the song those who took no part in the fight against Jabin king of Canaan, and Sisera his captain. The tribes of Judah and Simeon were not named. Perhaps, because they

<sup>24</sup> Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.

<sup>25</sup> He asked water, *and* she gave *him* milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish.

<sup>26</sup> She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.

<sup>27</sup> At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

<sup>28</sup> The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot *so* long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

<sup>29</sup> Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself,

<sup>30</sup> Have they not sped? have they *not* divided the prey; to every man a damsel *or* two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, *meet* for the necks of *them that take* the spoil?

<sup>31</sup> So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but *let* them that love him *be* as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.

lived farther to the south they had not been expected to join in the conflict. There were others who lived near, who could have helped but did not. The men of Reuben stayed with their flocks, instead of doing their duty by joining the others in battle. Even though they lived beyond Jordan as did Gilead (Gad), they could have been faithful. The tribes of Dan and Asher were indifferent to the call to battle. They stayed at their homes by the sea. A special curse was pronounced upon Meroz, no doubt a place near the scene of battle, whose inhabitants were expected to come "to the help of the LORD." No more mention is made of this place and its inhabitants. It is supposed that it was destroyed by the curse, because of its failure.

### A Spiritual Battle

Today there is a battle between right and wrong. God's people have an enemy of their soul — Satan — who would oppress and capture them if given a chance. God's people are victorious through the power of God, just as Deborah and Barak were victorious over the enemy. God's people band together in prayer and join forces against Satan. They know Satan is their enemy, just as Deborah knew that Jabin the king of Canaan, and Sisera his captain, were their enemies.

God knows, and our leaders know, those who are with them in this conflict of right against wrong. They also know those, even among the congregation, who sit back with indifference and neglect of duty, taking more interest in their own affairs, being occupied in worldly gain, loving ease rather than battle, failing God and His cause.

### Blessings

The song of Deborah honored Jael whose act completed the victory. Jael was not of the Israelites, yet she was loyal to the God of Israel when *she* could have gained favor with the Canaanites. Jael, in her tent, undoubtedly received as great a reward as did Barak whose place was on the battlefield. You, too, have a reward in store if you faithfully and loyally fill the place that God has given you.

Sisera's mother was like a sinner who is eager and impatient. Her hope and confidence were not the kind that endure, for they were based on worldly gain. Ruin and sorrow came to her although she had expected honor and riches.

Deborah concluded her song with a prayer and a prophecy that In due time all enemies of God will perish. Her song is a testimony that **it** pays to give willing service unto the Lord.

### QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Deborah and Barak sing this song?
- 2 What kind of song was it?
- 3 What had God done for the Children of Israel?
- 4 Who was Deborah?
- 5 Why were the Children of Israel in trouble?
- 6 Why did not all the Children of Israel go to battle?
- 7 What kind of service did the people offer the Lord?
- 8 Why were the Children of Israel victorious?