

## DEBORAH: A MOTHER IN ISRAEL

### INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Judges 4:4-8**. From Roy H. Enoch (12-11-1994).
- B. Deborah is the only woman to judge and lead God's people by the consent of the people.
  - 1. Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, ruled 6 years in Judah.
    - a. She had married Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat.
    - b. When her husband died, her son, Ahaziah reigned.
    - c. At his death, she killed all of her other sons and took the throne and reigned for six years (2Kgs. 11).
  - 2. But Deborah had earned the respect of the people and they came to her for decisions. The people realized that she was the most capable person willing to lead (Jud. 4:5).
- C. We don't know much about Deborah.
  - 1. She lived "in the mountains of Ephraim," but some think that Jud. 5:15 implies that she was of the tribe of Issachar.
  - 2. She would sit under a palm tree between Rama and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim.
  - 3. Her husband's name was Lap'i-doth and we know nothing else of him.
  - 4. Deborah was a prophetess, or inspired of God.
- D. The children of Israel were in dire straits in this area.
  - 1. They had returned to sin at the death of Ehud (Jud. 4:1).
  - 2. God had allowed the Canaanites to oppress them severely (Jud. 4:2).
  - 3. The children of Israel cried out for deliverance because, "...for twenty years he (Jabin) harshly oppressed..." them.
    - a. It takes a great deal of hardship for many to leave their sin that they might turn to the Lord.
    - b. God is always willing to forgive the guilt, but there may still be consequences to be suffered.
- E. We want to study the things we are told about Deborah.
  - 1. She was a leader of God's people.
  - 2. She was willing to let others lead and get credit.
  - 3. She gave God the credit for the deliverance.

### I. SHE WAS A LEADER OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

- A. God had always designated male-leadership.
  - 1. In the garden of Eden, God told Eve to be in submission (Gen. 3:16).
  - 2. In government God selected men to lead and rule.
    - a. Only when men would not accept their responsibility do we have women taking the lead, as in this case.
    - b. Even in this case, Barak is the one who led the army and the Hebrews writer lists him with other judges (Heb. 11:32-33).
    - c. Men were also selected to conduct the worship in the tabernacle and temple, as well as the Lord's church.
- B. But when men were afraid to carry out their responsibilities, sometimes women were used until men gained their courage.
  - 1. It seems that Barak was called to lead and receive glory for leading in the rebellion.
  - 2. But since he would only go if Deborah went, the glory of conquering Sisera would go to a woman, Jael.
  - 3. She is glorified for carrying out God's execution.

### II. SHE WAS WILLING TO LET OTHERS LEAD AND GET CREDIT.

- A. She shows no tendency to try to gain glory for herself.
  - 1. She sends for Barak to lead the army with the assurance that God will give him the victory

- (Jud. 4:6-7).
- 2. When Barak will not go without Deborah, she goes with him (Jud. 4:8).
- 3. After Barak gathers the ten thousand from Naphtali and Zebulun, Deborah tells him to go for the Lord has delivered Sisera into his hand (Jud. 4:14). So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.
- 4. When the battle is won, Deborah writes a beautiful song of victory giving God credit for the deliverance.
- B. Deborah always shows complete faith in God to deliver and bless.
  - 1. This is all the more remarkable considering the oppression for 20 years and the mighty force the Canaanites had.
    - a. The 900 chariots of iron would be the tanks of today's ground fighting.
    - b. Even horse soldiers had a great advantage over foot soldiers in mobility and strength.
    - c. And the Israelites were poorly equipped (Jud. 5:8).
  - 2. Perhaps this is the reason the people came to her for judging their disputes.
  - 3. We need to always seek advice and encouragement from those who have an unwavering faith in God's word and power.

### III. SHE GAVE GOD COMPLETE CREDIT FOR THE DELIVERANCE.

- A. She always gave God's directions instead of her own opinion.
  - 1. When she sent for Barak, she told him, "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying..." (Jud. 4:6).
  - 2. When Barak said that he would go if she would go with him (Jud. 4:9).
  - 3. She told Barak to attack Sisera's army (Jud. 4:14). So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.
  - 4. Credit was then given to the Lord (Jud. 4:15).
- B. Her beautiful song of praise for the deliverance in Judges 5 is a classic victory song.
  - 1. The song begins with the grand principle of success (Jud. 5:2).
    - a. It is a tragedy when leaders will not lead and the people will not volunteer to serve.
    - b. The same principle applies to the home, church, and government.
  - 2. One of the most natural ways of giving thanks is to sing. Judges 5:3
  - 3. Judges 5:4,5 describe God as the one who delivered from Egypt by Sinai and Edom to the Promised Land.
  - 4. Judges 5:6 describes the oppression until she arose, "a mother in Israel" to deliver.
    - a. The reason for the oppression is given in Jud. 5:8.
    - b. The result of the oppression was that Israel was unarmed.
  - 5. Judges 5:10-15 praises those who responded to the Lord's call by fighting for deliverance. Six tribes were praised for coming to help.
  - 6. Four are rebuked for refusing the call (Jud. 5:15-17). Judah and Simeon are not mentioned at all.
  - 7. Judges 5:19-22 describe the kings who came together of the Canaanites to fight against Israel.
  - 8. Judges 5:21 curses Meroz for not coming to help the Lord.
  - 9. Judges 5:24-27 blesses Jael for valiantly slaying Sisera, the general of the Canaanite army.
  - 10. Judges 5:28-30 pictures Sisera's mother watching in vain for his return.
  - 11. Judges 5:31 is a prayer that all of God's enemies will so perish.
- C. The victory was so great that the land had rest for 40 years.
  - 1. The Canaanites are never referred to as a serious threat to the people.
  - 2. We are not told whether Deborah or Barak ruled as judge, but Heb. 11:32,33 seems to indicate that it is Barak who is now recognized as the leader.

**CONCLUSION.**

- A. Deborah showed great faith and humility for any time, much less for the troublesome time in which she led.
- B. She had complete confidence that the Lord could deliver the unarmed people from those with iron chariots.
- C. We need that kind of faith to meet the forces of evil today.
- D. Let the leaders lead in faith and the people volunteer themselves to serve as God has commanded.