

## Judges 5 - Thursday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012

(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!

- In just these first two verses we are given a most profound lesson as it relates to leadership. Notice it says; "when leaders lead in Israel."
- Saying this, this way, seemingly implies that leaders don't always lead. In other words, one who is in a position of leadership fails to lead.
- Also, notice it also says when leaders lead, then people willingly offer themselves and the result is, they in concert together, bless the Lord.

- Perhaps you've seen this before, but here's an interesting contrast that someone came up with distinguishing between a leader and a boss.

- A boss drives people, but a leader leads people.
- A boss depends on authority, but a leader depends on goodwill.
- A boss inspires fear, but a leader generates enthusiasm.
- A boss says "I"; but a leader says "we."
- A boss places blame for breakdowns, but the leader fixes the breakdown.
- A boss knows how it's done, but a leader shows how it's done.
- A boss uses people, but a leader develops people.
- A boss takes credit, but a leader gives credit.
- A boss commands, but a leader asks.
- A boss says "go"; but a leader says "let's go."

(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.

- What I really like about this song is where it says, I, even I, will sing to the Lord. This should give everyone a great deal of encouragement.
- This is also where we are told how that the Lord miraculously and supernaturally gave the victory to the Israelites by sending a flash flood.
- Also, Deborah goes all the way back to the Israelites Exodus when, in Deuteronomy 33:2, God did a similar miracle on behalf of Israel.

Charles Spurgeon - "All the kings around are bidden to remember the glorious marching of Jehovah, whom he led his people from Egypt to Canaan; even on the road to battle the Lord displayed the glory of His majesty."

(6) "In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, In the days of Jael, The highways were deserted, And the travelers walked along the byways. (7) Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is how Deborah sees herself. Notice first, she identifies herself as a mom.
- The reason I point this out is because she could've seen herself chiefly as a Judge, and or a prophetess, but instead, she says I'm a mom.
- What makes this so interesting is the context within which she makes this proclamation, namely, it's at a time when village life had ceased.

- The reason village life ceased was because of the rampant crime that made it unsafe for travelers on the roads, and families in the homes.
- Here's what I'm thinking, when a mother, such as Deborah, will arise and take hold of their God given authority in the home, things change.
- That's not to say a mother can't work outside the home, but it is to say, God has ordained that the mom have a godly influence in the home.

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

- Here we have a description that in a sense becomes eerily similar to what can become of our Christian lives when we're in a similar place.
- Not only does the enemy wish to keep us in bondage, he also wants to disarm us so not a shield of faith or sword of the spirit is among us.
- It's interesting to note that this fate is no respecter of persons, it can happen to the rich riding white donkeys and poor walking on the rode.

(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!

- There's something here that's woven into the fabric of the narrative, and it's not so easily visible at first glance. Notice she says recount.
- More specifically, she calls on them to get to a place that's far from the noise of the archers and recount the righteous acts of the Lord.
- To me, this is the key to a victorious Christian life in the face of the battles in life. Get to a quiet place away from the noise and recount.

(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.

- Not only do they recount the righteous acts of the Lord, they also recount the righteous acts for His villagers in Israel in their heroic efforts.
- This will come into clearer focus in just a moment as we see a stark contrast with those who refused to fight in the battles with these hero's.
- I find it interesting that God makes a point of recording them by name. It would seem that He takes notice of the warrior and the coward.

(15) And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah; As Issachar, so *was* Barak Sent into the valley under his command; 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. (17) Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets.

- You'll forgive me for categorizing them in this way, but this is an account of both the hero's and the zero's, for lack of a better way to say it.
- Ephraim, West Manasseh, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali were all the hero's in battle against the enemy's of the Israelites.
- Conversely, Reuben, East Manasseh, Dan, and Asher were all the zero's in their refusal to go into battle against the enemy's of Israel.

- This is one of those places in scripture where the seemingly nebulous and even monotonous details that are given to us come into play.
- The reason I say that is because of how we're told why these zero's didn't go into the battlefield. Each one of them teaches us a lesson.
- First, related to Reuben, they had great resolve in their heart but did nothing. Reuben teaches us about our talk not matching our walk.

- Second, is the Eastern part of the Tribe of Manasseh, they stayed beyond the Jordan. They teach us the lesson of stepping out in faith.
- The third one is Dan; they remained on their ships in their unwillingness to go. Dan teaches us about only being concerned with ourselves.
- The fourth and final one is Asher; they stayed by the seashore in their unwillingness to go. Asher teaches us about the sin of omission.

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

- Here, we round a corner and go back to the hero's and how they jeopardized their lives by fighting in the battlefield to the point of death.
- To me, it's not so much "that" they fought in the battle, it's more about "why" they fought in battle. Notice it says that they took no spoil.
- The significance of this is that they fought not for how it would benefit or prosper them, they fought simply because it was out of obedience.

(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.'

- If I could be so candid, verse twenty-three is one for which I wish were never recorded in the pages of Holy Writ because of the curse in it.
- In other words, those who refused to, out of obedience, and in fear, to fight the battle, were to be cursed bitterly because they didn't help.
- Would to God that Judges 5:23 could never be said of us. Would to God that we could be numbered amongst the hero's and not the zero's.

Charles Spurgeon - "God put Deborah first as ruler, but she did not fail to make honorable mention of all who shared in the fight, nor afterwards to rebuke those who shunned it. ...The laggards of Meroz, are cursed, not for what they did, but for what they failed to do. Fear made them neutral, and neutrals in a patriotic ware are detestable. 'I would thou wert neither cold or hot.' Earnest spirits feel great indignation against good-for-nothing indifferents."

(24) "Most blessed among women is Jael, The wife of Heber 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.

- Lest you think this is repetitive and redundant, you need to know that this is still a song where Deborah has put what happened to music.
- While I'm not sure how melodic this song would've been with lyrics like this the reason the Holy Spirit has this put to song is to remember it.
- The fact of the matter is that God wired our brains for music, and if you ever want to memorize something, the best way is to put it to song.

(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?' (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." So the land had rest for forty years.

- We end the chapter with a record of how the land had rested for forty years, however, not before this horrific description that is given here.
- We have everything from lawlessness, to child slavery and everything in between, but God. In other words, none of this has the final word.
- This, thanks to two women, one named Deborah, and one named Jael, both of whom were used mightily by God to turn everything around.