

DEBORAH AND BARAK

Judges 4:1-24; Galatians 3:1-26 / Joel 2:1-32

I. Sin Makes Life Hard

A. Left to itself, Israel forgot God's grace and returned to wicked and selfish behavior. "And the children of *Israel again did evil* in the sight of the LORD, *when Ehud was dead.*" (JUDGES 4:1)

B. God would not let His people enjoy their self-centeredness. "*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." (JUDGES 4:2)

C. God the Father will not let His children run wild like the pagans. "For *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*" (HEBREWS 12:6)

D. The punishment was sufficient to point Israel back to God; people tend to be slow learners. "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." (JUDGES 4:3)

E. God solves problems but people must understand they need help. "*Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*" (ISAIAH 55:6-7)

II. Deborah Came to the Rescue

A. The prophetess restored justice. "And *Deborah*, a *prophetess*, the wife of Lapidoth, she *judged Israel* at that time. 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.*" (JUDGES 4:4-5)

B. When the men in office failed to act, Deborah took charge. "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? 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.*" (JUDGES 4:6-7)

C. The cowards would only do their job when Deborah led them and in the process they exposed their hearts. "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. 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." (JUDGES 4:8-9)

D. God overcame the oppressor. “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. 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.” (Judges 4:14-15)

III. God Used Jael to Finish Barak’s Job

A. When the time is right, God provides the opportunity. “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. 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. 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***.” (Judges 4:17-19)

B. Jael pegged her villain, in the process taking away Barak’s glory. “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***.” (JUDGES 4:21)

C. God does not have to wait for the right time and sufficient resources. “So ***God subdued on that day Jabin*** the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. 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.” (JUDGES 4:23-24)

D. Cowardice, fear, and lack of resources do not hinder God. “***Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther***. Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. For ***if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed***: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?” (ESTHER 4:13-14)

E. Obedience is the best cure for fear. “Wherefore, ***when I came***, was *there* no man? when I called, was *there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?* or have I no power to deliver? behold, ***at my rebuke I dry up the sea***, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because *there is no water*, and dieth for thirst.” (ISAIAH 50:2)

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