

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*God Sends Help:
A Study from Judges*

Lesson 5: Deborah, A Woman of Faith

Bible Text

Judges 4:1-9, 17-22

Memory Verse

"The One who called you is faithful, and He will do what He promised." (1 Thessalonians 5:24)

Word List

chariot: a carriage with two wheels that was pulled by horses and raced or used in battle in ancient times

devote: to decide something is to be used for a special purpose

We must be very careful how we read difficult Bible stories. Some people read today's story and think it is about a brave woman and a man who was afraid. But maybe this story is about helping and asking for help. Maybe it is also about being brave enough to let God alone be our help. This story is full of things we do not expect. God often does things we do not expect. His ways are not our ways. But He will give us victory when we obey Him and do things His way.

Deborah Helps Israel (Judges 4:1-5)

1 After Ehud died, the people of Israel sinned in the eyes of the Lord again.

2 So the Lord let them be taken by Jabin king of Canaan, who ruled in Hazor. The head of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim.

3 The people of Israel cried to the Lord, for Jabin had 900 iron war-wagons. He made it very hard for the people of Israel for twenty years.

4 Now Lappidoth's wife Deborah, a woman who spoke for God, was judging Israel at that time.

5 She would sit under the tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. And the people of Israel came to her to find out what was right or wrong.

Once again, the people of God sinned. So God let an evil nation rule over them. Then He called them back to Himself. It was always God that brought them back. It was always God who won the victory.

Jabin is another word for king. Joshua led an army against a king called Jabin many years before (Joshua 11). But Joshua did not completely drive out the evil people. Now, another Jabin was an evil king. Everyone feared Jabin and his men because they controlled the main roads (Judges 5:6-7).

Jabin would not be easy to fight. He had 900 **chariots**. Israel had none. His soldiers were well-trained. Israel's army was made up of farmers, shepherds, and shopkeepers. Israel suffered hard times for twenty years. Then God did a surprising thing. He gave a message for His people to a woman.

Deborah did not call herself a judge. She said she was a mother (Judges 5:7). Like a mother, she cared for her people. She taught them what God said. She helped them know what was right and wrong. She **devoted** her time and her life to speaking for God. And the people knew where to find her.

Barak Helps Israel (Judges 4:6-9)

6 She sent for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedeshnaphtali, and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, says, 'Go to Mount Tabor. Take with you 10,000 men from the sons of Naphtali and Zebulun.

7 I will have Sisera, the head of Jabin's army, meet you at the river Kishon. He will have his war-wagons and his many soldiers with him. But I will give him into your hand.'"

8 Then Barak said to her, "I will go if you go with me. But if you do not go with me, I will not go."

9 And she said, "For sure I will go with you. But the honor will not be yours as you go on your way. For the Lord will sell Sisera into the

hands of a woman." Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

God told Deborah that it was time to fight Jabin. But Deborah was not a soldier. She could not lead the army. So she called Barak. He had to come a long way to talk to her. But Barak was ready to do what God said. He trusted God to win the battle for them.

We do not know why Barak wanted Deborah to go with him. Some readers think he was afraid. But Barak is listed as a man of faith in Hebrews 11:32. He had faith that God would win the battle. He led the charge against the enemies, and his army followed him. Barak was brave.

Deborah agreed to make the long and dangerous trip. But she warned Barak that people would give the honor to a woman when the battle was over. Barak did not care what people thought. God would get all the honor and glory. Barak did exactly what God told him to do. He marched an army of 10,000 men to Mt. Tabor. They chased their enemies all the way to Sisera's hometown.

Jael Helps Israel (Judges 4:17-22)

17 Sisera ran away on foot to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite. For there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.

18 Jael went out to meet Sisera, saying, “Come in, my lord. Come in to me. Do not be afraid.” So, he went into her tent, and she put a cover over him.

19 He said to her, “Give me a little water to drink. For I am thirsty.” So, she opened a skin bag of milk and gave him a drink. Then she covered him.

20 He said to her, “Stand in the door of the tent. If anyone comes and asks you, ‘Is there anyone here?’ you say, ‘No.’”

21 But Heber’s wife Jael took a big tent nail in her hand and a tool to hit it with. Because Sisera was very tired, he went into a deep sleep. She went to him in secret and hit the big nail into the side of his head. It went through and into the ground. So, he died.

22 As Barak came after Sisera, Jael came out to meet him. She said to him, “Come. I will show you the man you are looking for.” So, Barak

went in with her, and he saw Sisera lying dead with the big tent nail in his head.

God won that battle. He sent rain to flood the river and turned the valley into a muddy mess (Judges 5:4-5). The chariots stuck in the mud. Sisera left his chariot. He ran away from the battle. But Barak went after him.

Sisera ran to the home of Heber. Heber decided he was on Jabin’s side in this battle. Jael did not agree with her husband. She put her faith in God. She decided to stop Sisera.

She warmly invited him to rest in her tent. Sisera might have been surprised because men never entered a woman’s tent. But Sisera was afraid of Barak. So he went inside and asked for water. Jael gave him milk to drink. She covered him with a warm blanket. He told her to watch and say that he was not there if anyone asked.

Jael was not a fighter. What could a woman do to help Israel? Then God gave her an idea. She quietly came near the sleeping soldier with a tent nail and a hammer. She quickly drove the nail into his head and killed him. Then Jael waited until Barak came looking for Sisera.

Things to Think About

1. When have you shared the Word of God with someone who needed to know right from wrong?
2. How has God prepared you to be the one to help His people?
3. Have you ever had to stand alone against evil? How did God prepare you for that task?
4. Have you been careful to do things exactly as God commands?

Things to Remember

We must remember that we cannot defeat evil alone. Only God can win the battle

forever. He uses us to win small battles every day. God used Deborah to show the people right and wrong. He used Barak to fight Jabin's army. He used Jael to stand for right even when her husband disagreed. God never wastes anything. He prepared Deborah with His Word. He prepared Barak as a leader of men. He prepared Jael as she learned to set up the tents for her family. Each little thing in our lives is something God can use if we are faithful to Him.

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