

How a Nation Unravels: The Book of Judges

Lesson 3

Judges 4-5

January 23, 2022

The Importance of Women to a Nation

Introduction

When we encounter Deborah during today's study, we see that Israel had turned from God for the past 20 years and had finally had enough of the resulting oppression they were suffering under Jabin, the king of Canaan. They cried out to God for help, and in His mercy, God decided to intervene in miraculous ways. He brought justice to Israel's oppressors and restored Israel to its place at His side. It's like when Israel was asked to have faith in God and do what He asked of them at Jericho despite the seemingly impossible situation. These accounts are reminders of how powerful God is.

In our story today, Israel's weaponry is at a minimum. The army they were fighting had an advanced military with chariots and horses, and the fighting was on a plain, which gave the chariots the advantage. Israel faced a powerful, formidable foe, yet they found that they served a much more powerful God.

This story isn't about us, but we tend to want control of our circumstances. We want to call the shots and pursue our agenda. These choices often lead to us hitting rock bottom, but God can use them to get our attention and bring us to greater faith in Him. Let's see the character of God at work and ask God to give us a deeper faith because of our knowledge of Him.

Memory verse: "When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves—praise the LORD!" —Judges 5:2

Pray and read Judges 4-5. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

What does the passage say?

1. How long did the Canaanites oppress the Israelites? (Judges 4:2-3)
2. What did Deborah do for the Israelites? (Judges 4:5)
3. What did the Lord command of Barak, and what was His response? (Judges 4:6-8)
4. Because of Barak's request, who will get the honor of defeating Sisera? (Judges 4:9)
5. How did the battle between Barak and Sisera end? (Judges 4:15-16)
6. Why did Sisera trust Jael? (Judges 4:17)
7. Whose song of praise was sung in Judges chapter 5? (Judges 5:1)

What does the passage mean?

1. God used Jabin, king of Canaan, and Sisera, the commander of his army, as a means of discipline for His children. Why was this necessary? (Deuteronomy 28:1-2; 15; 25; Hebrews 12:6)

2. “Has not the Lord gone out before you?” This speaks of a king or general leading the troops. Deborah encouraged the troops saying that God, the king, would go before them. What was the significance of this? (Exodus 13:21) What was the Israelite’s role in the battle? (Judges 4:14-15; Hebrews 11:32-34)

3. Deborah’s song in 5:8 says, “but not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.” The Israelite army had few weapons, was up against a much larger army, and fought on a plain that was a terrible disadvantage. What happened on that battlefield? (Judges 5:19-22)

