

Day 243 - THURSDAY: August 31st

Judges 5

Judges 5:1-31 NKJV

Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: "When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the LORD! "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. "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; The mountains gushed before the LORD, This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel. "In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, In the days of Jael, The highways were deserted, And the travelers walked along the byways. Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel. They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel. My heart is with the rulers of Israel Who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the LORD! "Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, Who sit in judges' attire, And who walk along the road. 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. "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam! "Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles; The LORD came down for me against the mighty. 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. 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. Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, To hear the pipings for the flocks? The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart. Gilead

stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets. Zebulun is a people who jeopardized their lives to the point of death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield. "The kings came and fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; They took no spoils of silver. They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera. The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on in strength! Then the horses' hooves pounded, The galloping, galloping of his steeds. '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.' "Most blessed among women is Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite; Blessed is she among women in tents. He asked for water, she gave milk; She brought out cream in a lordly bowl. 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. At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; At her feet he sank, he fell; Where he sank, there he fell dead. "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?' Her wisest ladies answered her, Yes, she answered herself, '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?' "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.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "'The Song of Deborah is one of the finest examples of an ode of triumph preserved in Israelite literature [with] a vividness, an almost staccato effect of action and a spirit of sheer exultation" (*Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, chapter 5 summary). The song celebrates the outcome related in our previous

reading—a most unexpected deliverance from an apparently unconquerable and desperately cruel foe.

Considering all that transpired, the opening lines of the song are most instructive: "When leaders lead in Israel, when the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the Lord!" While this is not an exact translation of the Hebrew here, the idiom used being somewhat obscure, it does perhaps convey the intent behind it. And the sentiment is certainly a true one in any case. For strong, fearless, visionary leadership combined with a people who willingly offer themselves to God produces an irresistibly powerful and successful combination. Wherever there is vacillation and little success among God's people, at least one of these two factors is missing.

The song gives some very interesting details of God's maneuvering in the deliverance from Jabin, as well as the conditions of Israel's servitude to that terrible king. Verses 4-5 reveal that God caused a major rainstorm just before or during the battle. No doubt the muddy ground mired the heavy iron chariots of Jabin, vastly reducing his army's strength and demoralizing his troops. God often uses weather to confound armies, and it has even apparently happened in modern times.

Verses 6-9 reveal the severity of Jabin's oppression. Main highways were desolate of traveler, whether trader or pilgrim; all took the rougher unknown, but safe, trails through the hill country. Moreover, the many small Israelite villages were under constant fear of destruction, and as a result many were depopulated, the people either moving to larger cities or preferring tent dwelling, as did Jael.

Verse 20 has been interpreted in several ways, with some scholars preferring to understand it as an ironic slap at the Canaanite practice of astrology, while others view the stars as symbolic of real heavenly forces, implying that Israel had angelic help in its fight against Jabin. Another explanation is that the reference is to meteors." [END]

Verse 10 – Regarding “white donkeys” the JFB commentary states: “Those which are purely white are highly prized, and being costly, are possessed only by the wealthy and great.”

Verse 23 – Regarding “Meroz”, the JFB commentary states: “a village on the confines of Issachar and Naphtali, which lay in the course of the fugitives, but the inhabitants declined to aid in their destruction.”