

# Lessons from the Life of Deborah

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March 5, 2022

Prior to Passover, we spend much time studying God's Word with the express purpose of gleaning lessons that will help us as we examine ourselves, as we are instructed to do prior to Passover. With that in mind, there is a historical account in the Bible that provides much for us to learn and apply to ourselves in this process of self-examination. This example gives us much encouragement in these very dark days, because there are some analogies between the dark days that we are going to look at in the book of Judges and certain things that are going on today. Because back then, sinister forces were exerting control and obviously Satan does not rest and those forces continue to attempt to exert control.

Today, what we're going to do is look at the life of one of the eleven judges of Israel. This judge is a woman who appears out of nowhere and who is the only female judge. Her name is Deborah. In the same account there is another woman, who is also a heroin in the account and she arrived on the scene later and we'll talk about her in a bit. Deborah, like Moses before, and like David after, fulfilled the roles of judge, of a national leader, of a poet and of a song writer. Two chapters of the Bible are devoted to her. The events described in these two chapters are thought to have occurred around the 1100's B.C. Those two chapters are Judges 4 and 5. We will go to Judges 4 as a start. These two chapters chronicle a sixty-year slice of biblical history. These two chapters are very unusual because the first chapter is a narration of an account that happened—that's Judges 4—and then the second chapter is poetry and song—that's Judges 5. In fact, Judges 5 is the oldest known poem in the Bible. These two chapters complement each other, and if you put the two together then you fit the details and the insights together—you get the complete story by putting the two chapters together. It is thought that Deborah led Israel for approximately sixty years. Twenty years before the Canaanite war and forty peaceful years after—so two chapters, sixty years. There is no record—absolutely no record in history or in the Bible—of any opposition or rebellion against Deborah for being a female judge. Rather, she appears to be highly respected. If you want a title for the sermon it's:

## Lessons from the Life of Deborah

There are four lessons. But what we are going to do first is look at the account in Judges 4 and 5 and put them together. Then we will go through the account to glean the four lessons that we can learn today which might help us as we prepare for Passover.

First, we need to get some background of the time. Joshua had died a couple hundred years earlier. Israel is in the familiar pattern that we all know about. Yehovah removed—withdrawed—His blessings because of their disobedience. Then Israel becomes oppressed as a result of that disobedience. There is a king name Jabin and he is the king of the Canaanites and reigned from a town named Hazor in the Northern part of

Israel, 125 miles north of Jerusalem, about ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee. He reigned in the area of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun in Northern Israel. Josephus—have the 1960 edition of his writings—states that Jabin, the king of the Canaanites, had 300,000-foot soldiers, 10,000 horsemen and 3000 chariots. He had conquered Israel twenty years earlier and ordered them to pay tribute to him. That's the background as we come to Judges 4:1.

**Judges 4:1** *And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead.*

2) *And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, [he will play a role in a moment] which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. (KJV)*

Sisera's headquarters was forty-five miles southwest of Jabin in Hazor. He was near the coast—to the south and west.

3) *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. (KJV)*

So Josephus and the Bible disagree. Josephus said he had many more chariots than that, but it could be that his other chariots were deployed somewhere else. At least 900 chariots faced the Israelites. Go to the next chapter, Judges 5:6 and this is out of the New Living Translation.

**Judges 5:6** *"In the days of Shamgar son of Anath ... (NLT)*

Shamgar is mentioned in chapter 3:31. He had killed 600 Philistines.

6 continued) *... and in the days of Jael, [she is a contemporary of Deborah and we will see the account of her in just a minute] people avoided the main roads, and travelers stayed on winding pathways.*

7) *There were few people left in the villages of Israel—until Deborah arose as a mother for Israel. (NLT)*

So we can see how oppressed Israel had become because God Almighty withdrew His blessings and they suffered as a result. The Hebrew word for "mother" is interesting, it's Strong's #517, the Hebrew word *em* and pronounced *ahmay* and it means "a mother", but notice this, as the bond of the family. When you apply that to Deborah and her role, it tells us she was the "bond" that held the nation of Israel together as a mother would be the "bond" of a family. Going on in verse 8 out of the NIV.

8) *God chose new leaders [in other words they rejected God Almighty] when war came to the city gates, but not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel. (NIV)*

This tells us that Israel was not armed for war; they had no chariots. They had no shields and no spears, they probably had short swords, maybe some bows and arrows, but certainly no power against an army with 900 chariots and horseman and foot soldiers. An army that greatly outnumbered the Israelites. Let's go back to Judges 4:4 where we left off.

**Judges 4:4** *Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lapidoth, was leading Israel at that time.* (KJV)

Names are important to God Almighty as we know. The patriarchs' names had meaning, the twelve sons of Jacob, their names had meaning, down through biblical history, people's names are significant and they have meaning. The Hebrew word for *Deborah* is very interesting when you look it up. It's Strong's #1683 and you wouldn't have thought of this—I certainly didn't it—but *Deborah* means "the bee"—as in a buzzing bee. It has a specific meaning. "The bee, in the sense of orderly motion and its systematic instincts". If we apply that to Deborah we could probably conclude that she was organized, deliberate, and active. Bees don't sit still, they are moving all the time The Jewish Encyclopedia under Deborah, page 489 says this:

*Wife of Lapidoth could also be translated "woman of torches" or "woman of flame".*

It goes on to note that the rabbinic tradition notes that Deborah was a great light of Israel—a woman of torches. She was, amid a persecuted people, a great light and influence over the nation.

*5) She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim ...* (KJV)

This is just ten miles north of Jerusalem and about 100 miles south of where King Jabin reigned.

*5 continued) ... and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided.* (KJV)

Given the fact that she was in Ephraim, it indicates that she was probably an Ephraimite in the area where she lived and the Israelites came to see her under her palm tree. This is akin to where it is described later on, as a judge or a prophet sitting at the city gates. They would come to the city gates and have a consultation. In this case they came to Deborah and spoke to her under a palm tree on her property.

*6) She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali ...* (KJV)

This is about 10 miles north of where Jabin, the Canaanite king lived. It's north of the Sea of Galilee so he is all the way up at the top of Israel. The Hebrew name for Barak means "lightning" or a "flashing sword". Nothing is known about Barak but given his

name I think we can assume that he was a man of some fighting ability. He had that background. Going on in verse 6.

*6 continued) ... and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: [He commanded her, she is the prophetess, she is in communication with God Almighty]'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. (KJV)*

Deborah is asking this man Barak to raise an army and be the general in command of the army. In addition to that—you don't need to turn there but you can use it as a reference—chapter 5:14-15, which tells us that during the song that Deborah and Barak sung, that Ephraim, Benjamin and Issachar also joined this army in addition to Naphtali and Zebulun. Now verse 7, Deborah now quotes Yehovah; God Almighty spoke this to her.

*7) I [Yehovah] will lead Sisera [the captain of the hosts], the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands."*

*8) Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." (KJV)*

Barak obviously has great respect for her because he knows she is close to Yehovah and he is not about to go on this undertaking if she is not there with him. We could say, backing him up. They do make a good team because her closeness to Yehovah as a prophetess is combined with his military prowess that he apparently had and, in that sense, they make a good team together.

*9) And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou take shall not be for thine honor; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. (KJV)*

"This is not to glorify you", she said. The New Living Translation—I'm going to quote three other translations just to get the sense of this verse.

*9) Very well she replied, I will go with you but you shall receive no honor in this venture for Yehovah's victory over Sisera will be at the hands of a woman. (NLT)*

The New American Standard Bible says:

*9) I will certainly go with you however the fame shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for Yehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. (NASB)*

Finally, the Aramaic Bible in plain English says:

*9) Certainly, I'm going with you, however Barak, you shall not boast on the road you are traveling because the Lord Yehovah shall deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman. (ABPE)*

So, she had this caution, this warning and maybe Barak had a problem with pride or a problem with being boastful—we don't know—but here's this warning and she's putting him on notice that this isn't for your glory, it's for the glory of Yehovah and He's going to deliver the army into the hands of a woman.

*9 continued) ... And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. (KJV)*

This is Barak's hometown, 10 miles of north of Hazor so this is a relatively long journey, 130 miles north. They are 10 miles north of where Jabin the Canaanite king lives.

*10) And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him. (KJV)*

The term "at his feet" implies that the men of the army were willingly submissive to his command and to his leadership and he must have had their respect. If somebody is "at your feet", they are submissive to you. Everybody was on board with Barak's leadership, and I assume, as long as Deborah was by his side. In verse 11 we have a change of focus. There's another player coming in.

*11) Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses ... (KJV)*

This by most accounts is a mistranslation—father-in-law—Clark's Commentary says the "son-in-law" which is more appropriate, because we know who the father-in-law of Moses was.

*11 continued) ... had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. (KJV)*

Which is not far away.

*12) And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. (KJV)*

Heber was now playing the role of a spy. He was telling Jabin the king that,

"Look there is this Israelite army going up to Mount Tabor."

Mount Tabor is about 20 miles away and Mount Tabor is about 2000 feet above the valley floor, so it's a quite high promontory. From a military standpoint it has a wonderful advantage, you can see all around and muster your forces better. We see that this man Heber was a traitor and a spy.

*13) And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. (KJV)*

As we've said, the Israelite army was far outclassed. They had no chariots and the fact is, as history tells us, Sisera's chariots were armed with scythes; I think we all know what a scythe is—we cut wheat with it. It's a curved blade that is several feet long. What he had done was attached scythes to the axles of the chariot so that the scythes were out horizontal, parallel to the ground on each side—three or four feet to each side of the wheels, the axels—and the strategy was, as the charioteer would drive a chariot right through a standing army and cut them off at the knees. They would then be driven into the path of foot soldiers. Sisera concentrated his forces near the river Kishon and the river Kishon in those days and that time of year, was more like what is called a wadi. It's a river channel that is flat and broad but is dry, except during the rainy season. So being flat and broad, it's a good place to muster your forces. Sisera gathered his forces together at the base of Mount Tabor in this flat area, the wadi of the river Kishon.

*14) 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. (KJV)*

Beginning of verse 15, out of the New Living Translation.

*15) When Barak attacked, the Lord threw Sisera and all his chariots and warriors into a panic. (NLT)*

What happened? How did God Almighty do that? Look at Judges 5:4. This is part of the poem—part of the song that Deborah and Barak sang.

**Judges 5:4** *LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marched out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. (KJV)*

Now go to verse 21, out of the New King James.

*21) The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on in strength! (NKJV)*

What had happened was that Sisera had concentrated his forces at the foot of Mount Tabor and in the wadi of Kishon and Barak's army hid in the woods that existed at that time on the sides of Mount Tabor. Yehovah, God Almighty, caused a mighty rain. You can imagine if a downpour like we were describing was like the floods in Australia, came on the top of the mountains or the upper parts of the mountain, that water would come rushing right down the sides of the mountain into that wadi and inundate the troops, turning the river bed, the valley floor, into mud. Then the chariots became immobilized,

causing panic among the soldiers. Barak's army came out of hiding probably from the woods and surrounding mountains and slaughtered the Canaanites. It was done by the power of Yehovah; He caused it all, He gave them strength, He turned the soldiers of Jabin into a panic and they were slaughtered. Any dreams that Jabin and Sisera had of using all of their chariots—3000 chariots—to defeat Egypt and become a world power, literally got stuck in the mud at the bottom of Mount Tabor when Yehovah sent the rain.

Let's go back to Judges 4, the second part of verse 15. The slaughter is occurring, Sisera now knows he is being defeated and he turns and runs. He wants to save himself.

**Judges 4:15** ... *so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.*

*16) But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left. (KJV)*

The entire army of 30,000 was destroyed by an Israelite army of 10,000 due to the power of God Almighty. What about the army's leader, Sisera?

*17) Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael [the woman we talked about in the introduction] the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.*

*18) And Jael ... (KJV)*

Remember names mean something to God Almighty. The Hebrew word for *Jael* means "wild goat" and we're going to see this is an appropriate name for this woman.

*18 continued) ... 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.*

*19) 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.*

*20) Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. (KJV)*

He trusted her because her husband was Jabin's ally—his boss's ally—so he had full trust in her, he had no reason to doubt that she wouldn't comply.

*21) Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took a 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. (KJV)*

Think about that for a minute. Here you have the commander of a foreign army, a man of renowned military prowess and obviously strong, comes in and gives her orders. He's

tired, on the run, so he conks out on the floor of the tent. To drive something through this temple and out this temple and put it into the ground has to be something longer than a foot. She creeps in with this—we would call it a tent peg today—and a hammer (don't know what the hammer is made of, probably has a stone head) and she held it there and it probably took one or two blows to put it right through his head into the ground, killed him instantly. That took some powerful blows and it took courage and it took strength. This was a woman to be reckoned with.

*22) And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seek. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.* (KJV)

Death comes to an Israelite enemy at the hands of a woman, a courageous woman. Yes, she murders a man—she commits murder—but Yehovah commanded the slaughter of the army and she was just an instrument in His hands. This is commemorated by a famous Italian painting by Giuseppe in 1620 and it shows the whole scene and she is there with a hammer above the tent peg and he's sleeping on his side—it's a very graphic painting done in the renaissance style. It's a gorgeous painting but very dark in its intent. The fact is, Yehovah blessed her because of her courage and her determination to do His will.

Notice Judges 5:24, this is the song, the poem.

**Judges 5:24** *Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.* (KJV)

If you recall, this is a very similar praise that goes to Mary, the mother of Jesus in Luke 2. "Blessed are you above women." Same kind of praise for this very strong woman who killed the commander of the Canaanite army. Back to Judges 4:23.

**Judges 4:23** *So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel.* (KJV)

Verse 24 of the NIV.

*24) And the hand of the Israelites pressed harder and harder against Jabin king of Canaan until they destroyed him.* (NIV)

Josephus says in this 1960 edition, that Barak overtook Jabin in Hazor, where he lived, he killed him and he took the city of Hazor down to its foundations; completely turned it into rubble. That was the end of King Jabin who had oppressed Israel for twenty years. Now what happens is, Deborah and Barak praise God Almighty, Yehovah, for what He did. Let's go to Judges 5:1, this is the beginning of the poem, the song.

**Judges 5:1** *Then sang Deborah and Barak ...* (KJV)



This is after Jabin is dead, after Sisera is dead, after Hazor is leveled.

*1 continued) ... the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,  
2) Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. (KJV)*

In volunteering for this army.

*3) Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel. (KJV)*

Verse 4 out of the New Living Translation.

*4) "Lord, when you set out from Seir and marched across the fields of Edom the earth trembled, and the cloudy skies poured down rain. (NLT)*

We read that earlier, denoting the flood that was created by God Almighty.

*5) The mountains quaked in the presence of the Lord, the God of Mount Sinai—in the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel. (NLT)*

Now verse 31.

*31) "Lord, may all your enemies die like Sisera! But may those who love you rise like the sun in all its power!" (NLT)*

Isn't that an interesting turn of phrase: "Rise like the sun at full strength." This is metaphorical, sure, but when God's people rise in the resurrection, will they not be spirit beings, probably shining in ways that we cannot imagine.

*31 continued)... Then there was peace in the land for forty years. (NLT)*

What a story. We could read right over it, it gets lost in the Bible, we don't even think about Deborah but what a story of God Almighty delivering His people at the hands of a woman. As we approach Passover, it's time for our self-evaluation, we fast, we look at our conduct over the last year and we look for examples in our Father's Word for help in evaluating ourselves, to help us in the process. Let's ask the question now, what lessons can we learn from the example of Deborah that would help us to look at ourselves, learn what we need to learn and go forward, closer to God Almighty. We are going to look at four lessons today.

## **1. Yehovah used a woman to accomplish great things.**

What a concept. Deborah fulfilled the role of judge, national leader, poet and songwriter. Yehovah used several women as prophets before. We won't go through the accounts

but Moses' sister Miriam was called a prophet in Exodus 15. There was a woman named Huldah who was a prophetess in 2 Kings 22 and then if you remember in Luke 2, Anna was a prophetess who lived at the temple—quite famous. Then of course God Almighty used Ruth to save Israel from extermination; we know that account. The fact is, when you think about it, in our Father's eyes, all humans, all His children, are equal. That concept of all God's creation—His children—Gordon pointed out rightly so in the sermonette that there are some evil, bad folks out there, but we need to love them and pray for them because they are indeed children of God; they aren't called yet—they will have their time. In the Father's eyes, all humans are equal and that was something that had to be pounded into the heads of the Jews in the early New Testament times. They thought they were above everyone because they had this special relationship with God and everybody else—the Gentiles were unclean; you couldn't even touch them. The Pharisees—if your sleeve came up against a Gentile, in their view, you had to go home and wash.

Let's go to Acts 10:34, just one verse, that gives us this principle. Something, when the situation is gone in the world today, we need to keep in mind.

**Acts 10:34** *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (KJV)*

It is true; we don't have any special light shining on us because He has called us in the 21st century and we are part of the Firstfruits—that is quite an honor—but it doesn't make us special in any way. Now go to Galatians 3:28. Paul grew up in the strictest Rabbinic tradition; a Pharisee of the Pharisees and I'm sure at some point he thought he was pretty special, growing up at the feet of Gamaliel, having this training and education.

**Galatians 3:28** *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

We are all equal, as our Father's children and our opportunity for salvation. God Almighty doesn't have any second-class citizens as far as opportunities for salvation. Once we are called, we all have that equal opportunity. It is true that men and women have been given different roles by God. Yehovah has given us different roles, especially in marriage and in the church itself. They are roles, but it doesn't mean one is superior over another. It doesn't mean one has a leg up on the Kingdom over the other; it doesn't mean that at all. It doesn't mean women cannot be accomplished, as we just read in the account of Deborah. This is a big lesson. Women can do great things. That's the point we're on. It doesn't mean that women can't be successful, that what a woman puts her hand to do, she can't do—of course not. For time's sake, we could go through Proverbs 31, we're all familiar with the Proverbs 31 wife, but in summary, what does she do? She runs the household; she runs it. She buys property, she spends money, she sells products that she has made, she looks after the poor and the needy and she has freedom to do that and as a result, her husband is proud in the right sense—not that he

is puffing himself up—but he looks very favorably upon his wife because of her skills and what she has done. In that regard, women can be very capable.

Let me give you a personal example of a woman Dorothy and I know—she is not in the church—but when we had our business twenty years ago, we had no savings, we invested everything we had in this business. If it had failed, we would have been out on the street. After a few years, it became apparent that we had to put some money aside for retirement because we had zero. We invested in a condominium in Victoria, British Columbia—it was just a favorite place of ours and there was a condominium that we liked and we were able to do that. At the time, twenty years ago, there was a 40% exchange rate bonus. In other words, sixty U.S. pennies would buy you a dollar Canadian. So that in essence, everything you bought in Canada had a 40% discount. That's the only reason we could afford that. After the building was built and we got moved in—we used it to go up there about four to six times a year and stay for a week or two. The condo complex had what they call in Canada, a concierge. It could be a man or woman but this concierge was a woman and she basically ran the building. Looked after the building, looked after the people in the building and was hired and supervised by the condominium board as the caretaker. If you had a problem, you went to her. She had to please the tenants because the board, made up of tenants hired her, yet she had to enforce the condominium rules and there were rules—there were certain things you couldn't do. Smoke in public places or hose down your patio and spray water all over your neighbors and things like that. So, she had to enforce the condo rules when a tenant broke them, but she also had to please the tenant. So it was a very fine line this woman had to walk. She was in a unique position because she had power over the tenants and yet a responsibility to them at the same time. Not an easy job, very difficult to manage properly.

I personally learned a lot from her leadership because she had a desk right in the front door and she was always right there and when she had a problem, she would answer the phone. I learned a lot about her leadership because she was pleasant at all times but when a rule was broken there was a serious, unbending side to this woman. She was dedicated to correcting the problem. Don't get in her way in correcting the problem.

There was television show about a man who had a wife and he referred to his wife as “She who must be obeyed” and we talked about the concierge—her name was Evelyn—we talked about her as “She who must be obeyed” because you get cross wise with Evelyn and you were in the wrong, you knew it. But then, after the correction or after the problem was solved, everything turned to normal. She was just as friendly as she could be and as motherly as she could be and as nice as she could be—there was nothing personal about it and the tenants loved and respected her. She was a mother and a leader at the same time. When she retired, everybody chipped in and gave her a big party and a vacation or weekend or something at some place. She was a perfect example of being a motherly person and leader.

I remember Clint Eastwood—the famous, award winning actor and director, he's 91 years old now—said,

*“If you take your work seriously and not yourself seriously, you will do well the rest of your life”.*

Deborah did that, this concierge named Evelyn did that and the point I’m making is, as our Father’s children, both men and women have equal value in our Father’s sight and in His eyes. Let’s go to 1 Peter 3:7 out of the New Living Translation. Peter is talking about husbands and wives.

**1 Peter 3:7** *In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, [obviously referring to physical strength] but she is your equal partner in God’s gift of new life. (NLT)*

She has the same opportunity, the same chance to be in God’s Kingdom.

*7 continued) ... Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered. (NLT)*

That is a scary thought for men. We see that women have equal opportunity to be in the Kingdom of God and a physical woman can shine just as brightly in the Kingdom of God, once she is changed—just as brightly as a man—in the Kingdom of God. That is a huge lesson that frankly, women need to learn and men need to learn. The life of Deborah proves this account and it should be an encouragement to all women. Notice Proverbs 31:30, this is a warning from Solomon. I’m going to read this out of the New Living Translation. I wish young women today, especially ones you see out flaunting themselves would read this.

**Proverbs 31:30** *Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised. (NLT)*

Now and in the Kingdom of God. What great things can a Godly woman accomplish today? What can she attain? The most obvious one is eternal life. What greater gift than that? “I have every opportunity; I am not a second-class citizen in attaining eternal life.” That’s a huge one. Then the second is, a woman can accomplish a great deal by setting a Godly example for all of those within her sphere of influence; all of those she comes in contact with—family, friends, neighbor, job, acquaintances—it doesn’t make any difference. Let’s go to Matthew 5:14 and look at a very familiar scripture but look at it from a standpoint of a woman accomplishing great things like Deborah did, in this first point.

**Matthew 5:14** *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. (KJV)*

What He is saying is, you set an example whether you want to or not. I’ve heard people, especially women, say “I don’t want to set an example, I don’t want to up there with a

light on me.” But the light is on you whether you like it or not and we set an example whether we want to or not.

*15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (KJV)*

You can't hide it.

*16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (KJV)*

This scripture too, applies to both men and women. Examples can be set; they are set every day. The question is, “Is my example a Godly one or a carnal one?”

Let's go to 1 Peter 3:1, Peter again is talking about men and women. This is out of the New Living Translation.

**1 Peter 3:1** *In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, [meaning even those who are not converted, not baptized, not called] your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over*  
*2) by observing your pure and reverent lives.*  
*3) Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes.*  
*4) You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.*  
(NLT)

A woman who has a gentle and quiet spirit is to be admired. A brash, haughty, loud, crude woman is not. That's true for men too. There's an old saying, “Your example is shouting so loud, I can't hear what you're saying”. That is so true and women can set this gently, quiet example for all to see. I think the best example that I've seen is Herbert Armstrong's wife, Loma. She was always in the background but when Loma spoke to Herbert Armstrong, he listened; he did indeed listen. She was very influential in making up for his lack because he didn't have that female sense of judging a person's inner character. He would sometimes just listen to people as to what they said and not evaluate, what's the motive, what's the agenda, is somebody trying to pull the wool over me? Loma by many accounts, quietly whispered in his ear. “Be careful here, look out for this person” and so gave him quiet, gentle advice. When she died, much was lost in that regard. When she died, things went south. That shows you what a great contribution she made to the church and to her husband.

Women have a unique opportunity to influence the behavior of others. It is done in a Godly way and in a meek and quiet way.

The second point:

## 2. Deborah knew that God Almighty would fight her battles.

As a woman she knew she didn't have great physical strength. She had no background in military matters that we know of, but she knew of a principle that was very important. Let's go to Zechariah 4:6; this was the principle that Deborah relied upon during this whole sixty-year period. Especially during the Canaanite war. An angel is speaking to Zechariah.

**Zechariah 4:6** *Then he [the angel] answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, [this is the principle] Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. (KJV)*

This is the principle and Deborah knew this. Remember—we won't turn there—in Judges 4, Deborah said to Barak,

*"Yehovah is going to deliver you this day and He's going out before you and He's going to route Sisera. But you better not brag about it or take credit for it."*

Because she knew it was by God's Spirit. Let's go to Judges 5:4, we read part of that before. Notice the credit that God Almighty gets. That He is the One. This is out of the NLT, Deborah wrote this and sang this.

**Judges 5:4** *"Lord, when you set out from Seir and marched across the fields of Edom, the earth trembled, and the cloudy skies poured down rain.  
5) The mountains quaked in the presence of the Lord, the God of Mount Sinai—  
in the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel. (NLT)*

Verse 19, out of the NIV.

*19) Kings came, they fought, the kings of Canaan fought. At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo, they took no plunder of silver.  
20) From the heavens the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera. (NIV)*

Angels from Yehovah carried the day. It wasn't man's might, it wasn't a general's brilliance or wisdom, it was spiritual forces that carried the day. She knew that and she knew God Almighty would fight the battle; she didn't have to worry. Today, our Father fights our battles. We cannot forget that in these dark days that we are entering. Let's go to Ephesians 6:12. This will be out of the NIV. A very familiar scripture but let's apply it to today and what is happening in this world today.

**Ephesians 6:12** *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers [notice the way the NIV phrases it] of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (NIV)*

This is so true with what's going on in Europe today.

*13) Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (KJV)*

Let's look at a principle for all time in Psalm 91:9. This is a principle that applies whenever we face opposition, whenever we need rescuing. I've read this so many times over the years when we, as a church, or as an individual needed to be rescued by God Almighty.

**Psalm 91:9** *Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the Most High, [that tells you it has to be God Almighty, God the Father] thy habitation;*

*10) There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*

*11) For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. (KJV)*

Just as He did with Deborah and Barak and we just read about the angelic forces that were involved.

*12) They [the angels] shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

*13) Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*

*14) Because he [we can insert our own names] hath set his love upon me, [we have set our love upon God Almighty] therefore will I deliver him: [Because we love God with all our being and put Him first.] I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. (KJV)*

Isn't that interesting? His name is Yehovah. The Bible says that clearly and we proclaim that at every opportunity; we never want to deny God Almighty's name.

*15) He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. [Or her.]*

*16) With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation. (KJV)*

This is a principle for all time and a lesson for us in this very troubled, very dark, very dangerous world. As Deborah did, we can look to our Father to fight our battles, be they physical or be they spiritual.

Let's go to the third point.

### **3. Deborah gave Yehovah all the credit.**

In these two chapters, she never exalted herself. Deborah gave Yehovah all the credit. She never used her God-given position as prophetess to exalt the self. Remember she warned Barak to do the same thing in chapter 4 verse 9 of Judges. She told him:

*“This is not for your honor because God Almighty is going to sell Jabin and Sisera into the hands of a woman.”*

She gave God all the credit and we should always do the same thing and follow Deborah’s example. It’s easy to forget our Father’s involvement. Sometimes in the update, I will get an urgent prayer request and you have to get something out, because this is happening or that is happening, or my child is sick or somebody’s on the way to the hospital or whatever it might be. Then, our Father intervenes and someone is rescued, someone is healed, someone is taken care of. But then the phone goes silent. So then I have to call back and ask, what happened over there? Tell me what happened? “Oh, they’re fine.” Okay, how did that happen? It’s easy once the crisis is over to move on to the next event in our lives and not stop and think, maybe we should praise God Almighty and look back at His Hand in it and that He pulled our fanny out of the fire, He rescued us and maybe we ought to give Him credit openly in front of everybody. It’s easy to give credit to a pill or procedure and move on to the next event and forget giving Yehovah all the credit.

Let’s go to Daniel 6:25 and see a remarkable event of a pagan king doing what we should be doing. We’re breaking into the account after Yehovah rescued Daniel from the lions.

**Daniel 6:25** *Then king Darius wrote unto all people, [this wasn’t a memo passed around at the office] nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.*

*26) I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: [why would he say that?] for he is the living God, [that is Yehovah, God the Father, that’s what the Bible tells us] and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.*

*27) He [this pagan King is saying] delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. (KJV)*

Here is a pagan king taking the time to write a letter to every province, every dominion to the far ends of his kingdom, giving God Almighty the credit for rescuing somebody he threw to the lions—think about that. If we take credit or give credit to other things, why should our Father continue to answer our prayers and deliver us? If He’s done it before and we never gave Him any credit or any thanks, or we didn’t acknowledge it to the people in our sphere of influence. As with Deborah, and you read Judges 5, she gave God Almighty the honor and the glory and the credit for what He did for her and we should do likewise for all our blessings.



Fourth and last point. The obvious point but one we need to remember and apply it today.

#### **4. Our Father answers our prayers for rescue.**

Remember Israel cried to God and during the days of Deborah, twenty years of persecution and our Father—their God—answered them. After sinning and being oppressed, in Judges 4 we read it, He answered. The fact is—this is something we should learn—He answered in a way they did not expect. He rescued Israel at the hands of a woman, which they never expected. If you had asked them how God was going to do this, the last thing they would have thought about was:

*“I’m going to take a woman and I’m going to cause her to be my instrument to rescue you disobedient Israelites”.*

But that’s what He did. Similarly, our Father hears our prayers, and it’s been my experience, He often does not answer exactly the way I would like it to happen. But it is a marvelous, miraculous answer that’s better than I wanted in the first place. Let’s go to Proverbs 15:29. As we approach the Passover, this is a principle we need to deeply think about—just one verse.

**Proverbs 15:29** *The LORD is far from the wicked:*

That’s a principle; if we sin, we move away from God Almighty and if we are wicked—meaning that’s our intent—we are a long way away from God. The antithesis of that is

*29 continued... but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. (KJV)*

As we approach Passover, our job is to become more righteous every day. To draw near to God Almighty, every day. Let’s go back to Psalms 73 and just read one verse, verse 28. The Psalmist makes a very critical statement.

**Psalms 73:28** *But it is good for me to draw near to God [that is a good thing]: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works. (KJV)*

In these very dark, very dangerous days, as we have learned with Deborah, we must put our trust in God Almighty; He is our only hope. He and His Son and what they have done for us is our only hope for rescue and deliverance during these dark days. It is only through them will we be rescued and we learned that lesson from Deborah. She kept saying, “Yehovah did it, not you Barak, not me—God Almighty did it.” He answers our prayers. Once thing we can be assured of—we won’t turn there—Romans 8:28, we quote that so often, we know that

*“All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.”*

That's us! We can have absolute confidence if we put our trust in Him, everything will work out for good. This is a promise that we, as with Deborah, can count on. Our Father answers our prayers for rescue.

Let's conclude. Everything in the Bible is for a reason—it's there for a reason. It's not by accident, it's not by whim, it's there for a purpose. These two chapters of Deborah are there and are included because our Father wants us to learn something. As we approach Passover, in incredibly dangerous times and between now and the Passover, who knows what's going to happen between now and then, we all need encouragement and the story of Deborah is just that. It's the story of a nation oppressed, a nation subjugated, people weren't even walking on the road and the villages were empty. It reminds you of Ukraine right now. But the people in Judges 4 were calling out to Yehovah for deliverance. They finally got the message and said, God deliver us. Yehovah answered and rescued them at the hands of two women; think about that.

We are in the same position today and all of us should be praying for rescue from this dangerous world gone mad. The threat of nuclear war is there and it will come at a certain point—not now—but it will come. It's certainly indicated that way. The fact is, if we are going to survive, we have to put our trust in God Almighty, just as Deborah did. The big lesson is, our Father will indeed rescue us if we put Him first. That's the big "if". Will we put Him first? Will we acknowledge His name? Will we acknowledge who He is, just as Deborah set the example? Let's go to one final scripture, John 4:23. Christ is speaking something that we need to take to heart as we close this time together. This is more appropriate today than it was the day he uttered these words.

**John 4:23** *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him.* (KJV)

He calls, He puts it out there for us.

*"Are you going to worship Me or not? Are you going to put Me first or not? Are you going to know My name or not? Are you going to recognize fully Who I am or not?"*

*24) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* (KJV)

Let's learn the lessons from the life of Deborah as we prepare for the Passover.