

Deborah and Barak ... *Awakened for Action!*

- The book of Judges chronicles the 339 years between the death of Joshua, and the coronation of Israel's first king, Saul. During this time, "there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).
- The time of the judges was a very wicked period in Israel's history. They were plagued by two problems: *intermarriage* and *idolatry*. In fact, the first led to the second. Having failed to drive out all the inhabitants of the land, soon the young men of Israel took wives from among their pagan neighbors, and were led back into idolatry. Each time, God would bring judgment on His people in the form of a foreign army. Under the thumb of these forces for many years, Israel would cry out to God for deliverance, and God would raise up a judge through whom He would move to rescue His people. This "cycle" is narrated 7 times in the book of Judges, though 12 different judges are named.
- Deborah is the 4th judge described and the only woman. During these dark days of Israelite history, purity and godliness were almost non-existent. Deborah, though acting as a judge for many years, was awakened to take decisive action by God's call. Together with Barak she roused Israel's fighting men to believe God, and go out in battle.
- Barak apparently was the man best suited to lead the fighting men of Israel, and Deborah charged him to set about the task. Israel had no standing army and so the force that Barak assembled was neither properly equipped, nor adequately trained. This, perhaps, explains why Barak insisted that Deborah come along as she was understood to be the one most closely connected to God. As Joshua had insisted that the Ark of the Covenant precede Israel into battle, Barak insisted that Deborah accompany the troops.
- It is important to understand that, while both Deborah and Barak were used of God, neither are meant to become models for positions of leadership in the church. For that God was careful to give specific instructions and directions through Paul in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. What is *descriptive* in the Old Testament is not therefore to be considered *prescriptive* today.

SERMON NOTES
July 22, 2007

Deborah and Barak ***Awakened for Action*** Judges 4 and 5

Introduction: During a desperate time in Israel, God awakened Deborah and Barak to see that the only way the nation could escape the stifling tyranny of the Canaanite King Jabin was to meet his superior forces in battle. On the surface, it appeared to be a substantial mismatch ... but only if the power of God was left out of consideration. Instead, God not only motivated Deborah and Barak to attempt the impossible, He raised up the people to fight, and opened up the heavens to pour out the rain, and the battle was won. Every time we read about a Judge/Deliverer we remember that our deliverance was accomplished only as God sent His Son/Deliverer to appease God's wrath, overcoming the forces of sin that held us fast.

The Journalist's Report

Judges 4:1-24

The Poet's Reflection

Judges 5:1-31

GOD: LIFE LESSONS

JESUS CHRIST: LIFE FOCUS

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The Journalist's Report:

- Israel's crime and God's punishment 4:1-3
- Israel's leaders and God's commandment 4:4-10
- Israel's enemies 4:11-13
- Israel's triumph 4:14-24

The Poet's Reflection:

- Verse #1: Praise to the Ever Present Lord! 5:1-5
- Verse #2: Praise the Righteous Lord! 5:6-11

- Verse #3: Praise the People of the Lord! 5:12-18
- Chorus: *No more tyranny! No more plunder!* 5:19-23
- Verse #4: Let all who love the Lord stand strong! 5:24-31

GOD: LIFE LESSONS

ABOUT GOD

God has no grandchildren; apostasy is always just one generation away.

What God commands, He enables.

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God has chosen to accomplish His amazing rescue mission through ordinary people that He drafts into His service.

ABOUT US

We must be both diligent and intentional about passing on a true and vital faith to the next generation.

In every case, our greatest challenge will not be resources but reliance on, and obedience to the God who has them in abundance.

The call of God on our lives is not simply to occupy a position, or wear a label; He calls us to action.

JESUS CHRIST: LIFE FOCUS

In every case narrated in the Book of Judges, the sin of the people brought the judgment of God. Yet, God heard their cries and sent a Deliverer through whom their bondage was broken, and their lives renewed. The Great Judge Deliver is Jesus Christ!