

## Judges 4-5 Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

The Book of Judges opens with a brief recounting of how the 12 tribes of Israel *failed* to finish the task of laying claim to their territory.

Though Joshua had broken the back of Canaanite domination throughout the entire region, when the tribes went to take possession of their assigned borders, they failed at following through on Joshua's conquest by ousting the last of the Canaanites villages.

In some places, the Canaanites were allowed to stay & were put under tribute.

In other places, they regained control and forced the Jews who lived nearby to surrender the choicest land to them.

It didn't take long before the very thing God had warned His people about was coming to pass; the Jews began to be seduced by the sensual and immoral practices of the Canaanites.

They began to worship the idols of Baal & Asherah.

God then sought to correct them by allowing their enemies to *oppress* them.

After *years* of increasing oppression, the people cried out to God, who sent them a judge, a deliverer who defeated their oppressors and restored both liberty & the worship of God.

As long as that judge lived, the people followed the Lord, but once he died, they again fell away & the cycle started all over again.

### II. The Judges 2:11-16:

Last week we saw the story of 3 Judges: Othniel, Ehud, & Shamgar. Tonight we read about Deborah; One very serious woman!

#### D. Deborah & Barak Chs. 4-5

##### 1. Their campaign Ch. 4

**<sup>1</sup> When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD.**

Ehud had brought deliverance from a coalition of enemies from southeast of Israel.

As long as he lived, he made sure the people followed Yahweh. 3:30 tells us that the land had peace for 80 years, the longest

period of freedom from oppression in the Book of Judges.  
But not long after Ehud died, the Israelites once again went after  
Baal & Asherah.

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This period of Israel's history well illustrates the difference between  
*religious reformation & spiritual revival*. <sup>[1]</sup>

Reformation brings only a *temporary change* to *outward conduct*.  
Revival *permanently alters inward character*.

Revival always brings about reformation in one way or another.

When our hearts are revived & fall deeply in love with Jesus,  
there's an inevitable *overflow* in changes to the way we live.  
Those changes make an impact *on others* as they see the  
*example* of holiness & whole-hearted devotion to God  
coming from the one who's been revived.

Those others then get caught up, *not in the revival*, but in the  
reformation, & they participate in the changes, but not  
necessarily with the *same motive* because they haven't been  
revived by the Spirit of God.

Historically, this has happened with every major spiritual  
awakening.

There's a core group of those who are genuinely revived whose  
lifestyles are *reformed*.

But the reformation expands to others *apart* from revival.

And reformation without revival becomes a dangerous thing.

It can lead to the harshest forms of legalism.

“**The Reformation**” was that period of Western history in which a  
large number of Christians in Europe broke away from the  
Roman Catholic Church.

It was sparked by men like Martin Luther and John Calvin who  
made the Bible instead of the Church, the basis of authority.

These men & women of the earliest days of the Reformation  
experienced *genuine revival* as they allowed the Scriptures  
to mold their faith.

They realized that the Church was demanding many things of  
Christians that were contrary to the Bible, so they *reformed*  
their practices.

These reforms brought great liberty to those around them, and  
the Reformation spread to those who hadn't felt the same

work of the Spirit in their souls.

The result was that soon there were people arguing about reform.

The arguing turned into fighting & bloodshed.

The *Peasant's War of 1524-26* saw thousands killed as the unrevived sought to force reform on those who didn't want it.

Martin Luther tried to stop the fighting, but to no avail.

In Geneva, Calvin's reforms led to the execution of those who refused to go along with them.

The point is this – *reform* that isn't rooted in & ruled by *revival* is a dangerous thing.

And ultimately, *it won't last* – as the Book of Judges proves.

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**<sup>2</sup> So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim.**

The word “Jabin” was the title for the ruler of the powerful city-state of Hazor.

Just like “Pharaoh” was the title for the Egyptian king.

Hazor is located about 18 miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

It sat on the main highway that connects the coastal trade route with the caravan routes to Damascus & Mesopotamia.

**[MAP]**

The tel that marks the site of ancient Hazor is huge; a sign that it was an important & well-fortified city, the center of Northern Israel. [200 acres]

What Jericho was to the east, Hazor was to the north.

Joshua had made Hazor the focal point of his conquests in the North, but by now, some 150 year later, the Canaanites had rebuilt it.

[Joshua 11]

While Jabin was a powerful political leader, his skill did not extend into the realm of military strategy, so he'd offered Sisera the job of commander of his army.

Sisera was a genius when it came to conquest, & he was well-rewarded by Jabin.

The name “Sisera” isn't Canaanitish – it comes from the language of the Philistines.

The Philistines were part of what is known in history as the Sea Peoples.

Their origin was in the islands of the Eastern Aegean Sea.

About the same time Israel made their conquest of Canaan, the Sea peoples were exploding out of their homes in the west and were making mass migrations into the eastern Mediterranean.

The Philistines had originally tried to settle along the northern coasts of Egypt but were repulsed by Pharaoh's army & navy. So they ended up settling on the largely abandoned coastline of Canaan at the same time Israel was just beginning to take possession of the land.

Sisera was a Philistine military leader who lived in *Harosheth Hagoyim*, a city to the west of Hazor in the Plain of Jezreel.

Harosheth Hagoyim means "Smithy of the gentiles."<sup>[2]</sup>

When the Philistines landed on the coast, they brought with them a technology brand new to Canaan – *iron working*.

At that time, Canaan & the Israelites lived in what is known as the "Bronze Age."

Bronze is an alloy of copper & tin, & while better than Stone Age weapons, bronze is brittle & doesn't hold an edge.

When bronze weapons are used against stone weapons, it's like rifles against bows & arrows.

When iron weapons appear against bronze, it's the same contrast.

So the Philistines landing on the coast of Canaan were like the conquistadors landing on the shore of Mexico.

Copper melts at about 1100° F, just barely within the ability of the Israelites to heat their furnaces.

Iron melts at 1550° F, well beyond their ability to reproduce.

The Philistines kept the technology of how to heat their furnaces this high to themselves, knowing it provided them an edge they didn't want to divulge to their enemies.

Harosheth Hagoyim was a center of the iron industry & Sisera took advantage of it by equipping Jabin's army.

BTW – Israel remained without iron weapons until the time of David. [1 Sam. 13:19–22]

You may remember that when David was on the run from Saul he went to live for a time in the Philistine capital of Gath.

There's a good chance that one of David's men learned the secret of iron-working while they were there, and brought it to Israel.

**<sup>3</sup> And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.**

A chariot of iron was the ancient equivalent to a modern battle tank.

It was a formidable weapon that struck terror when it entered the field.

Being heavier than a regular chariot, iron chariots were drawn by two horses instead of the usually one.

These chariots horses were bred & trained for battle & didn't shy away from battle.

The smell of blood enraged them & made them dangerous as they would charge into battle without fear.

**900** iron chariots was a huge force.

For 20 years Jabin kept his thumb heavy on the Israelites, demanding they pay a tribute so high it left them with barely enough to survive.

The threat was always there – “Pay up, or we'll wipe you out; and we got both the personnel and weapons to do it.”

**<sup>4</sup>Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. <sup>5</sup>And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.**

Deborah was a prophetess; God spoke through her to the nation.

Of course, her message would have been a call to repentance because that was Israel's greatest need, and God always deals with our real need.

As she gained a reputation for being a prophetess, people began coming to her for help with their issues.

She lived in the region of Ephraim in the middle of the land.

There was a palm tree she held court under.

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What's curious about this is that it was the duty of the *priests* to provide guidance & counsel for the people.

They were the stewards of God's Word & the mediators who were supposed to represent God to the people, as well as the people to God.

As we'll see when we get to the last chapters, the priesthood had

become horribly corrupted at this point. They weren't doing their job.

So God bypassed them & used someone who made herself available – Deborah.

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It's important to note here that God used a woman to lead the nation at this point.

There are some who say that women cannot play a significant role in ministry, that their *sole duty* is to take care of the family.

That just doesn't square with the scriptures.

Deborah was one of the Judges.

Esther, Ruth, Mary, & Priscilla are just a few of the women in the Bible who played a crucial role in the plan of God.

God uses women.

But as we read on in Deborah's story, I think we'll see some hints that she took this role as judge only because no man would.

**<sup>6</sup>Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; <sup>7</sup> and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?"**

Deborah knew that God had already been speaking to Barak – look at v. 6 again –

**Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor . . .**

How this word came to Barak we don't know.

It may have been a previous message Deborah had sent.

It may have come through the work of the Spirit directly to Barak; we don't know.

The point is – Barak had *already been told* to do this & he'd delayed, so Deborah gives him a good verbal poke & tells him to get on the ball!

The details of the battle were clear . . .

He was to take 10,000 men of the tribes of Naphtali & Zebulun to

Mt. Tabor there in the Jezreel Valley.  
Sisera would lead out Jabin's forces to the River Kishon & they  
would face one another.

The reason Barak was to raise the army from Naphtali & Zebulun was  
because they were the tribes most oppressed by Jabin.

**<sup>8</sup>And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will  
go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"**

Even though the message of God had been quite clear, Barak balks,  
unless Deborah goes with him.

Deborah lived quite a ways to the south & Barak had made a long  
journey in answering her summons in v. 6.

Now he says she must go back with him on his way north.

Why did Barak demand that Deborah go with him?

The text doesn't say but it's not hard to guess; as a prophetess,  
she'd be handy to have around.

If he needed further directions, she'd be at hand instead of at  
her home miles to the south.

Also, it would be a lot easier to recruit more troops if Deborah was  
with him and it was known that her prophecy had said he was  
going to defeat Jabin's forces.

**<sup>9</sup>So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there  
will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for  
the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then  
Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.**

Deborah consented to Barak's demand so it doesn't appear that it was  
against God's will.

But it wasn't exactly what God wanted either.

Barak was still refusing to shoulder the call God had given him.

He was reluctant to trust God all the way, and as a result, the  
reward wouldn't be all his.

The real victory would be a woman's.

In Deborah's reply to Barak we get a hint as to what's going on in  
Israel at this time.

The men were weak & refused to take their God-ordained role as  
leaders.

So God raised up women to do what the men *ought* to have been  
doing.

Leading the army of Israel was Barak's task which he ought to have

shouldered by himself with dependence on no one but God. But he refused to accept the responsibility by himself; he demanded Deborah share it with him.

Deborah knew Barak was supposed to lead & had tried to encourage him to take the place God had assigned him.

When he conditioned his obedience on her assistance, she consented for the sake of Israel and the deliverance to be gained, but Barak's lack of faith would cost him.

God's will, *will* be done.

Nothing is going to stop His plan for the ages going forward & coming to fruition.

God wants to use each & every one of us in that plan. We all have an assigned role.

But we have to choose if we're going to fulfill that role.

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So Deborah accompanied Barak back to his city.

**10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.**

As soon as Barak arrived back in his city he sent out a summons to the tribes of Naphtali & Zebulun to meet him at Mt. Tabor.

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**11 Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which is beside Kedesh.**

We read about the Kenites in ch. 1. They were the family that descended from Moses' father in law.

They'd settled in the region of Judah, far to the south.

But Heber had left them & moved north to the encampment of Zaanaim near Barak's hometown.

The translators have made a goof here in v. 11.

They refer to Hobab as Moses' father in law.

In Numbers 10:29, he's mentioned as the *son* of Reuel, Moses' father-in-law.

That would make Hobab Moses' *brother-in-law*, not father-in-law.

So why then does v. 11 here refer to him as Moses' father-in-law?

The Hebrew word translated "father-in-law" refers only to an



“in-law.”

The translators *added* the word “father” to provide clarity – but they goofed.

**12 And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.**

Why the family of Heber informed Sisera of Barak’s mobilization of troops remains a bit of a mystery.

He may have been an ally of Jabin’s or he may have been neutral, waiting to see which way the tide of battle would flow.

The stronger of the two forces at this time would be Sisera’s with his iron chariots, so Heber threw in his lot with Jabin’s army and went to warn Sisera that Barak was amassing a force and had set up camp at Mt. Tabor.

**13 So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.**

A branch of the Kishon reaches all the way inland from the western sea to not far from the foot of Tabor.

**14 Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this *is* the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.**

**15 And the LORD routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot.**

We’ll see how God helped the army of Israel when we get to ch. 5.

For now just notice how Sisera had to leave his chariot behind – an unusual move if it’s supposed to be such a boon in battle.

**16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.**

Something happened to render the advantage the chariots supplied to be nullified.

We’ll see what that was in just a moment.

An army that had 900 chariots would be supported by an infantry of at least several thousand.

So this was a pretty even match numbers wise.

The iron weapons of Jabin's army ought to have been the deciding factor.

But the loss of the chariots caused the infantry to grow fearful and they turned tail and ran home to Mama.

They didn't make it, as the Israelites chased them down and slew them with their wimpy little bronze swords.

**17** However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for *there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.*

**18** And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear." And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket. **19** Then he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. **20** And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall say, 'No.' "

Sisera knew Heber's clan was neutral & that refuge would be granted him by Heber's wife.

So he hid out in her tent.

Men & women kept different tents.

Remember the TV shows of the 50's, how whenever they showed the bedroom of a married couple, they had separate beds?

No married couple *really lived* that way, but they had to do that on TV because it would have been considered *scandalous* to even **IMPLY** that a husband & wife slept together!! My how times have changed.

Well, the same kind of sensibility was in force in this time.

Men & women had separate tents.

A husband would *visit* his wife's tent for conjugal relations, but other times, he stayed in his own tent.

No one other than a husband was allowed in a woman's tent.

Sisera figured Jael's tent would make a good hiding place.

Being tired from fleeing from the battle, he asked her for something to drink.

She gave him some milk – because it does a body good.

Now, don't think of a nice, tall, frothy glass of ice-cold milk.

This wasn't that – it says she opened a jug, this would be a ceramic container that was at room temperature.

The milk was *cultured*, probably more like liquid yogurt, & a bit warm.

You tell me what happens if you've been battling for hours, then run for miles as fast as you lil' legs can carry you for fear of your life, then gulp down several mouthfuls of warm milk, & settle under a cozy blanket.

You're going to sleep! And that's what Sisera did; he started sawing logs.

**21 Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.**

She nailed him!

Jael knew Heber's position was to remain neutral as long as there was any uncertainty about who was going to come out on top.

But when the head commander of Jabin's forces came running to her asking for help, it was obvious who'd won & would now be in control.

So she decided to throw in her lot with Barak & Israel.

Where Heber was at this moment is not known.

It possible he was still in Harosheth Hagoyim after having warned Sisera.

If so, then when Barak attacked, he could have been killed.

Or maybe he was on his way back from Harosheth Hagoyim.

Where ever he was, Jael took action and secured her future by siding with the people of God.

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Sisera was the kind of guy that was too dangerous to let live.

Even though he'd claimed refuge in Jael's tent, she knew that he was the kind of guy that if left alive would return to bring more trouble.

Though bereft at this point of an army, if he was let go, he had the skill to turn defeat into victory, so she struck while he was incapacitated.

Sisera was the Osama bin Laden of his day – no matter how far you go in attacking & destroying his ability to make war, he's a clever

dog who manages to keep causing trouble.  
Jael did what she knew she had to do – kill him when she had the chance.

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Jael demonstrates for us a principle for how to deal with sin.

If we allow any sin, not matter how small, to take refuge in our lives, it will eventually come back to bite us in a major way. So the best thing to do with it is to end it *once and for all* when we have the chance.

What's that chance?

Well, when it's been given a resounding defeat by the work of God's Spirit & deliverance.

Here's what happens . . .

We're going along, struggling with some sin, some wrong attitude, some major deal that's oppressing and crippling us as Jabin was oppressing Israel.

Then God sends some messenger with His word who calls us to battle, as Deborah called Israel to return to the Lord.

Like Barak, at first we're daunted by the challenge because that thing we're struggling with seems so big.

But with the encouragement of God's servant, we move into the fight, and God brings an amazing victory.

We see a huge change – but here's the danger, instead of pressing it all the way to the end, the root of that sin seeks to hide in some little corner of our hearts & minds.

Like Jael, we need to stop acting neutral in the battle between holiness & sin & decide once & for all to make holiness our aim, giving no refuge to sin.

Drink deeply of the pure milk of the Word – satisfy your soul in the goodness of God.

Then take the nail of truth & the hammer of God's Word & drive it into your mind by killing the lie sin wants to hide under.

**<sup>22</sup>And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into her tent, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple. <sup>23</sup> So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. <sup>24</sup> And the hand of the children of Israel**

**grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.**

After the defeat of Sisera & Jabin's army, defeating Hazor was a piece of cake.

## **2. Deborah's victory song Ch. 5**

**<sup>1</sup> Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:**

It's from their song that we get some of the details of the battle.

**<sup>2</sup>“When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the LORD!**

Part of the problem that started this whole thing was that the leaders of Israel were not doing their job.

The tribal elders were not leading the people in obedience to the Lord.

The priests had neglected their duty of teaching God's Word.

When there's not leadership calling people to the right way, they will turn to their own way.

Deborah & Barak had shown what happens when leaders do what there are supposed to – blessing comes.

**<sup>3</sup>“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. <sup>4</sup>**

**“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; <sup>5</sup> The mountains gushed before the LORD, This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.**

As Barak led the army of Israel against Jabin's army, God brought up a massive thunderstorm from the region of the Southeast that dumped buckets of rain on the plain.

It wasn't long until Sisera's chariots were so mired in mud they couldn't maneuver.

They became easy targets for the warriors of Israel.

What made things doubly troublesome for the Canaanites was that their god Baal was the god of war & rain.

So it looked like Baal was fighting for Israel.

The Canaanite infantry saw the way their chariots were becoming death traps and lost confidence & began a full retreat.

But their route back to Harosheth Hagoyim was blocked by the now flooding banks of the Kishon River.

Everywhere the Canaanites turned it looked like they were being corner & trapped for slaughter.

**6 “In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,**

Which we read about in the last v. of ch. 3 . . .

**In the days of Jael, The highways were deserted, And the travelers walked along the byways. 7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel.**

The Canaanites had been so harsh on the Israelites there'd been no travel or trade for fear of harassment.

This is the way it was until Deborah arrived on the scene & stirred the people of Israel to return to the Lord.

Notice how she refers to herself as a mother in Israel.

She's not making a claim to anything special here – she's not calling herself **THE** mother **OF** Israel (contrary to the KJV)

She's simply a mother in Israel.

Her point was that she was no one special, just a mom, but she was a mom who refused to compromise her faith in God in the smallest way.

And God took that faithfulness & turned it into the salvation of many.

**8 They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.**

Because the Israelites turned from Yahweh to worship idols, war came.

And Israel lost because she had no weapons to speak of.

Where does this 40,000 come from?

So far we've only heard of 10,000 from Naphtali and Zebulun; where'd the other 30,000 come from? We'll see in a moment.

**9 My heart is with the rulers of Israel Who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the LORD!**

**10 “Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, Who sit in judges' attire, And who walk along the road. 11 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.**

This is a call to declare & celebrate what God has done.

The badge of office for a ruler was a white donkey.

A ruler would make the rounds of his region, riding on a white donkey.

He's always come to *the gate* of a city first where the people would welcome him, then he would make his official announcements.

The idea here is that the leaders need to make sure the story of God's goodness is spread far & wide among His people.

**12“Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam! 13“Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles; The LORD came down for me against the mighty. 14 From Ephraim were those whose roots were in Amalek. After you, Benjamin, with your peoples, From Machir [Manasseh] rulers came down, And from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter's staff. 15And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; As Issachar, so was Barak Sent into the valley under his command;**

They sing about those who came to the battle.

Joining the initial 10,000 from Naphtali & Zebulun, were commanders & warriors from the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh & Issachar, as well as more from Zebulun than had initially answered the summons.

This swelled the ranks from the initial 10,000 to 40,000.

The reinforcements probably came out to battle when they saw the weather change & knew Sisera's chariots would be of no use.

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While these 4 tribes *joined* in the battle, some tribes decided to sit it out . . .

**15b - Among the divisions of Reuben There were great resolves of heart. 16Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, To hear the pipings for the flocks? The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart.**

Reuben fell prey to the “paralysis of analysis.”

Deborah puts it so poetically – they had “great resolves & searchings of heart.”

This is probably a bit of sarcasm, using a phrase they themselves had used when debating whether or not they should answer the summons to battle.

Their leaders called a conclave & said, “Now, let’s not be too hasty in going to battle. Let’s talk about this & make sure we’re all in the same page.

“No point in running off without making sure we’re doing the right thing.

“Let’s put on a little music & meditate on this a while.

“Then we’ll all share our thoughts & devise a formal policy statement we can release to the press.”

Before they had a chance to decide what to do, the battle was over.

The opportunity to do something was past.

It’s wisdom to make sure our response to a need isn’t just an automatic reaction bereft of God’s counsel.

But when action is needed, the analysis must end in a decision.

**17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets.**

Gilead referred to the tribes on the east side of the Jordan.

Jabin hadn’t effected them so they didn’t really care a whole lot about the battle.

Dan & Asher were having too good a time enjoying the beach so they stayed home.

**18 Zebulun is a people who jeopardized their lives to the point of death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield. 19 “The kings came and fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; They took no spoils of silver.**

As the ruler of the city-state of Hazor, Jabin was the lead king of a coalition of lesser Canaanite kings in northern Israel.

They all threw in their forces under Sisera’s command.

They’d hoped to turn this uprising of Israel into a route that would yield much plunder.

They didn’t get a shekel!



**20** They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera.

Israel had angelic assistance in the battle.

**21** The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on in strength! **22** Then the horses' hooves pounded, the galloping, galloping of his steeds.

Now Deborah turns to *rebuke* one of the cities of Naphtali that had *not* come to the battle.

**23** '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.'

Though the rest of the tribe of Naphtali had sent men to answer Barak's summons, Meroz had refused – and for this, they were cursed of God.

**24** "Most blessed among women is Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite; Blessed is she among women in tents. **25** He asked for water, she gave milk; She brought out cream in a lordly bowl. **26** 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. **27** At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; At her feet he sank, he fell; Where he sank, there he fell dead.

Deborah praises Jael for the role she played that day.

She was a tough customer, but she did what she had to do to make sure Sisera didn't get away.

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Then, Deborah shows the tenderness we'd expect from a woman who's a mother.

There's a dark side to war, even in conquest.

There are losses on both sides, and no matter how sweet the victory for the conqueror, it's always tempered by those who've lost sons.

Deborah sings of Sisera's mother, waiting in Harosheth Hagoyim, looking out the window for the sign of his return.

**28** "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?’<sup>29</sup> Her wisest ladies answered her, Yes, she answered herself,<sup>30</sup> ‘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?’

They would hold out the most positive thoughts at the delay of the army’s return.

It’s because they have so much loot they can’t travel very fast.

Oh, how rich it will be when they get home!

But, they’re just kidding themselves, & deep down inside—*they know it.*

**31 “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.**

Now, look at the very next verse – Judges 6:1

**Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years . . .**

While Deborah & Barak’s generation lived, they were okay.

But their children turned away from God & once more fell into apostasy.

There’s an old saying we need to renew & return to popularity today:

***“God has no grandchildren.”***

He only has children.

My mother was a dear saint, a woman so passionately in love with God it colored everything she did & said.

To hear her talk of her mother, my grandmother, was to hear of a woman cast in the same mold as the Apostles of the NT; she was an absolute rock of righteousness.

But my mother could never live on the faith of her mother, just as I could never live off the faith of my Mother.

My children can’t live off my faith, or the faith of my wife, though she has enough faith for 10.

Everyone has to have their own relationship with God; they can’t live off the experiences or faith of another.

God has no grandchildren.

The people of Israel failed in that during this period of time, they never took seriously the call to teach their children *how to have* their *own relationship* with God.

They took God's blessing when it came & reveled in it, but they never passed on t their children the urgency of having their own relationship with God.

The result is that when they grew to adulthood, they turned from God to idols & fell under the curse of God.

Parents must be diligent to train their children to make their own decision for God when they are old enough to do that.

The best way to do that is to make the pursuit of God a vital part of your daily life right now, not just something you do a once or twice a week.

Don't just take your Bible to church – take it to work, to shopping, to play, to school, to family times.

Make prayer something you do, not just at meals, but all the time, any time.

Talk with your children about God, about what He's doing in your life, what He's teaching you.

Ask them what He's doing in their lives.

Build a spiritual culture of in your family by learning to look at the world from God's perspective.

I don't want my children to merely repeat the stuff I've learned, I want them to build on it, and reach higher than I could ever hope to.

I look at my children, at Luke & Tyrell, & Karesse, & I see potential in them Lynn & I could never hope to attain to.

So, in the words of those 60's theologians Crosby, Stills, & Nash – Parents, teach your children well.

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[1]

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[2]

Easton, M. (1996, c1897). *Easton's Bible dictionary*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.