

DEBORAH AND BARAK...A TEAM TO LEAD GOD'S PEOPLE TO VICTORY!

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A Woman... and a Man!

Not married, but connected through God's Holy plan to release the power of God.

We are going to use Barak, a warrior in the Israelite army, as a character study to bring us to a better relationship with our God. But... we are also going to use **Deborah, the judge and prophetess of the Old Testament. THESE TWO WORKED AS A TEAM TO BRING ABOUT A VICTORY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE THAT ANYONE WATCHING WOULD HAVE SAID WAS IMPOSSIBLE.**

THERE IS ANOTHER PERSON THAT IS INVOLVED IN THIS TEAM. GOD IN THE SPIRIT BRINGS THE LAST LEG OF THE RELAY HOME.

TRACK...RELAY TEAM!

This story found in Judges 4 shows us that God has great things in store for us if we:

- LISTEN WITH OUR EARS... WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS SAYING TO US.
- FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS GOD HAS REVEALED TO US
- OBEY WITH OUR HEARTS THE PROMPTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- GIVE GOD THE CREDIT FOR THE VICTORY! KNOWING WHAT IS BEST FOR US... AND OUR FAMILY (FAMILY AT HOME... CHURCH FAMILY).

The Setting:

Throughout the years, God's chosen people (the apple of his eyes), the Israelites, have continued the same trend of living... .obedience for a time, then rebellion and going into idolatry... then going into captivity, slavery... the judgment of God. Over and over again, these

*chosen vessels of God have been consistent in their relationship to their Protector and Promise Keeper ... Obedience for a period of time and then failure and sin to the uttermost... to the point of living a "pig-pen" style life. God's Judgment would fall on the Israelites and they would go into captivity due to their gross and unrepentant hearts. **When they were at the bottom of the cellar, doing the sins God hates and despises, they then would repent and God would give them a way out. God forgave over and over again. In every instant, however, there were consequences. Corrective action was always "Repent, turn from your wicked ways."***

In the 3rd chapter of Judges, it gives an account of some of the judges and how long each one would be judge over the people, how long there was peace in the land, before Israel would sin again. When the judges died, Israel would fall into sin without learning and heeding to the consequences of their predecessors.

Judges 4:1-16, "Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, now that Ehud was dead. So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggioim. Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help.

Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "Did not (Hath not) the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor... ? I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'" Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." "Certainly I will go with you," said Deborah. "But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him.

Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, the descendants of

Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law, and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaanannim near Kedesh.

When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, Sisera summoned from Harosheth Haggioim to the Kishon River all his men and his nine hundred chariots fitted with iron.

Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?" So Barak went down Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men following him. At Barak's advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot.

Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggioim, and all Sisera's troops fell by the sword; not a man was left."

Deborah listened, she followed instructions, she obeyed what God had revealed to her, and she gave the Lord God credit.

Barak had heard (listened), did not follow instructions, did not obey what God had revealed to him, and therefore God was not honored. However,

God knew Barak, who had a little faith, but not like Deborah, would come through when the chips were down. He was a warrior. He was the man that would carry out God's plan... with the help of a woman... and the assurance that God was on their side.

Important points up to this point:

- ***Deborah was filled with the Spirit of God (Prophetess of God)***
- ***Deborah had listened to God and was willing to follow God's call for Israel to go to war with the Canaanites.***
- ***Knew God so passionately that she did not hesitate to have her people go to war... but, she also knew that God had spoken and revealed His thoughts with another person, Barak.***
- ***The Canaanites were much more ready for war (humanly speaking) than Israel (More men and 900 iron chariots).***

- **Barak, although told by God evidently what to do to be victorious over the Canaanites, was reluctant to engage them in war. His faith wavered because he could not see beyond the human eyes and human wisdom. He did not obey God.**
- **Barak, knowing the history of Deborah, the prophetess, and that when she said "Did not the Lord say," she was right.**
- **Barak wanted confirmation that it was the Lord that said he was to lead the Israelite army to victory. Incidentally, there is nothing wrong with seeking confirmation of such a difficult task. However, don't let human wisdom and fear get in the way of what God is telling you to do.**

Now, let's look and see if Deborah's prophecy comes true concerning Barak not getting credit for total victory.

Judges 4:17-24, Sisera, meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was an alliance between Jabin king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.

Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid." So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. "I'm thirsty," he said. "Please give me some water." She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up.

"Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone in there?' say 'No.'"

But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died.

Just then Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. "Come," she said, "I will show you the man you're looking for." So he went in with her, and there lay Sisera with the tent peg through his temple-dead.

On that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites. And the hand of the Israelites pressed harder and harder against Jabin king of Canaan until they destroyed him.

Final thoughts:

- **Deborah was a legitimate prophetess... her prophetic utterances came true.**
- **Barak was victorious, but it was one of those "We won... but the glory was not mine things."**
- **Barak yielded to God's commands and certainly was honored because he was the one that was given the honor in God's Word in Hebrews 11, Hall of Faith.**

Deborah... No known weaknesses. She was in this world for a purpose, at the right time, and obeyed God. We will get to see her when we sat down with all God's people in heaven. What a woman!

Barak's Strengths:

- Barak recognized that Deborah's authority had been given to her by God, so he obeyed a woman, something rare in ancient times.
- He was a man of great courage and had faith that God would intervene on Israel's behalf.

Barak's Weaknesses:

- When Barak told Deborah he would not lead unless she accompanied him, he put faith in her instead of God. Deborah told him this doubt would cause Barak to lose credit for the victory to a woman, which came to pass.

Life Lessons:

- Faith in God is necessary for any worthwhile task.
- God uses whom he wishes, whether a woman like Deborah or an unknown man like Barak.
- God will use each of us if we put our faith in him, obey, and follow where he leads.
- Realize that you must make choices that please God. When you don't, consequences follow.
- God always has a corrective action plan to get you where you need to be. He will reveal it through people, the Holy Spirit, and your experiences.
- God always leaves a challenge for the individual and the church.

What is he saying to you and me today?

Do you listen? Do you obey? Do you follow instructions? Do you give God the credit for it all?