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Message 3 of 13

**God’s plans (Call & Obedience)**

**(Judges 4:1—5:31)**

**Theme**: “In those days there was no king in Israel; **each person did what was right in his/her own eyes**” (21:25). Ironically, God was their king (8:23) but they just didn’t acknowledge Him as their king or live accordingly.

**Cycles**: The Israelites did evil in the sight of the LORD and served other gods, God handed them over to an enemy who oppressed them for x-number of years, the Israelites cried out to God, God raised a “warrior” (Judge) who delivered them from the oppressor(s), and there was peace for x-number of years. But then the cycle continued: Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served other gods, God handed them over to an enemy, etc. (2:11; 3:7; 3:12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1).

**Today’s Lesson (Judges 4:1—5:31)**:Story of the Judge Barak (along with Deborah and Jael)

The Setting (4:1–3): Ehud (the previous judge) died. Israel repeated the cycle of sin. So, God sold them to an enemy—Jabin (a king of Canaan), whose palace was in Hazor. The commander of his army, Sisera, lived in Haroseth Haggoyim, which was a low, flat, solid land—where he had 900 iron (wheeled) chariots. Jabin and Sisera oppressed the Israelites for twenty years. As before, they cried to the LORD for help (Judges 4:1–3).

The Plan (or Call) (4:4–7): God spoke through the prophetess Deborah to Barak (of the tribe of Naphtali) commanding him to go with 10,000 men (from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun) to Mount Tabor. God will lure Sisera with his chariots and troops to the Kishon River, on the valley of Mt. Tabor, to give him to Barak. (Rain trapped the chariots.)

The Disobedience and Forfeited Honor (4:8–10): Barak didn’t want to go alone; he wanted Deborah to accompany him. Because of his disobedience, the prophetess Deborah predicted that the credit would go to a lady.

Parenthetical Information (4:11): Heber, of the tribe of Kenites (Moses’s brother-in-law’s descendants), left his tribe in the South and had moved to the North. His “tent” was near Kedesh.

The Deliverance (4:12–22): Sisera heard that Barak had gone up to Mt. Tabor and followed him. When he went to the valley of the Kishon River, God caused a rain that made the land soggy and trapped Sisera’s chariots. While they were trapped, Barak and his men defeated Sisera’s men. Sisera escaped on foot, and went to Heber’s wife’s (Jael’s) tent. She showed hospitality until he was asleep. Then she picked up a tent peg and a hammer, went to Sisera’s bedside, and drove the peg through his temple into the ground. He died. Barak came, and she handed over the dead body of Sisera to Barak. The salvation came to Israel through Jael. They had peace for 40 years.

**Lesson for us**: God is on a rescue mission. We should be like Jael and take the risk in joining His mission (cp. Matthew 21:28–32).