

Bible Studies in Judges
Deborah, Barak, and Jael – chapter 4 and 5

Read Judges chapter 4

1. What is different about the judge that appears this time when Israel cry out to God for help (verse 4)? What lessons can we draw from this?
2. What do you make of the interaction between Deborah and Jael in verses 4-8? Who is in charge here?
3. Why do you think Barak wanted Deborah to go with him (verse 8)? How do you feel about this response?
4. How does Deborah's instruction in verse 7 marry with what happens in verses 10-16? What conclusions might we draw from this?
5. Chapter 5 is a victory song sung by Deborah and Barak, which sheds some extra light on some of the events. What light does 5:21 shed on how this victory came about (see also 4:6-7, 13)?
6. What do we know about Heber and Jael, and what how might that lead us to expect Jael to treat Sisera?
7. Why do you think Jael did what she did?
8. What place do each of the following play in what happens?
 - a. Deborah
 - b. Barak
 - c. Jael
9. Is there anyone else we should consider? If so, why?

Reflection:

10. Who is responsible for saving Israel in this incident? What light does that shed on our own salvation?
11. Jael had to make a decision of who to help – effectively a decision about whose side she was on. What similar decisions do we have to make? [see for example Matthew 12:30, 46-48]
12. What does the position of Deborah, and the role she plays, tell us about the place of women in God's plans? [In the New Testament, what are we to make of passages like Romans 16:1-16; 1 Corinthians 11:3-16; Philippians 4:2-3; 1 Timothy 2:8-15?]
13. What does the fact that Jael plays such a significant role in these events tell us about the place of "outsiders" in God's plans? [see for example Galatians 3:28]
14. What "hammers and tent-pegs" (not literally, but metaphorically – simple gifts and tools) do you have that God can and does use?