

10/27/19 - Judges 5:1-31 - "A Song of the Lord's Victory"

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[0 : 00] So this week we're going to be looking at Judges chapter 5, which is the song of Deborah and Barak. And this song is a song of praise to the Lord, and it is a reflection of what happened in Judges chapter 4 when we saw the deliverance of Israel through his provision of the prophetess Deborah.

And the deliverance from Jabin, the king that was reigning in the region at that time, and also from his general Sisera.

And so as we proceed into this song, I want to look back at how we got here and also reflect on what God did for his people in this time and why this song was written.

So I'm going to go all the way back to the beginning in Genesis 1 and through Genesis 3 and just think back to the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve in the Garden.

And God gave them a command to follow, and then they were tempted. And they were given an opportunity either to believe the word of God or to doubt and fall into sin.

[1 : 19] And as we all know, they fell into sin. And the same thing has happened time and again. And as we get into the book of Judges, we see this cycle of the Lord delivering his people.

They're trusting in his word and his promises that were given back in Leviticus and Deuteronomy and all the way back in Genesis. And then the enemy tempts them away from the Lord, and they fall into sin.

And we see this cycle. And so there's also a parallel I wanted to show between the song of Deborah and Barak and the song of Moses that we see back in Exodus 15, where when God had delivered his people out of Egypt, they were at the Red Sea.

And they were trapped by the sea with Pharaoh's chariots coming towards them. And they began to doubt and wonder if it'd be better that they go back to Egypt and return as slaves.

However, the Lord delivered them through Moses by parting the sea. As they came across the sea, the waters crashed down and destroyed the chariots and destroyed the armies of Pharaoh.

[2 : 39] And they wrote this song in remembrance of what the Lord had done. So we see the song of Moses in Exodus 15. And I'm going to read a portion of that from Exodus 15.

The peoples have heard. They trembled. Pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Now are the chiefs of Eden dismayed. Trembling seizes the leaders of Moab.

All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. Terror and dread fall upon them because of the greatness of your arm. They are still as a stone. The Lord protected his people through a powerful example of his might.

So that his people would be safe and the land would have rest. So this song was a reflection of the Lord's deliverance. And the song of Deborah and Barak is also a song of thanksgiving and remembrance of the Lord's deliverance from the rule of Jabin and Sisera.

And I want to look at the parallels between those two songs as we go through. And just to kind of set the scene, I've broken this chapter 5 of Judges into five scenes that we're going to go through as we look at it.

[3 : 49] And in each one we're going to see how the Lord was faithful to deliver his people. And how the battle truly belonged to the Lord. And he was the one who received the glory. But one thing I want to point out is this song is, well of course it's a song, but it's also a poem.

And it kind of interrupts the narrative of Judges. And that's purposefully done by the author to slow us down. So we're reading through this historical narrative and all of a sudden we hit a poem.

And if you're like me, poetry is not something that comes to you easily. And so you slow down and you have to think through what is this poem or this song really saying. And so this song slows us down, makes us think. And not only does it reveal what God was doing at this specific point in the book of Judges. But it reveals what the book of Judges is about. And also it reveals some theology about the Bible as a whole. And so anytime we see poetry there's really a purpose to where it's placed by the authors. And so I just want us to keep that in mind as we proceed.

[4 : 54] But before I jump into the sermon, let's go ahead and open with prayer. Father, thank you for this opportunity to open your word, to study your word, to learn from you, to learn from your word.

And I pray that we would grow in our knowledge and wisdom of you. That we would learn to trust, Lord, that the battle belongs to you. Lord, that we would continue to put our faith in you. And to know that you are faithful to deliver your own. We pray this in your holy name. Amen. So I'm not going to read through all 31 verses as we open. But as we set each scene, I will read a few verses and then we'll look into that. And we'll proceed that way. So the first scene, I want to look at verses 2 through 8. And reflect on the thankfulness that Deborah and Israel had for the Lord's deliverance. So let's read Judges 5 verses 1 through 8.

[5 : 56] Then sang Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam, on that day, that the leaders took the lead in Israel. And the people offered themselves willingly. Bless the Lord. Hear, O kings.

Give ear, O princes. To the Lord I will sing. I will make melody to the Lord, the God of Israel. Lord, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the region of Eden, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped.

Yes, the clouds dropped water. The mountains quaked before the Lord. Lord, even Sinai before the Lord, God of Israel. So Deborah and Barak are singing a song of thanksgiving to the Lord.

They're thanking him for his provision and his deliverance. And this song starts similar to the song of Moses in Exodus, where they say, I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. This is my song. Sorry.

[6 : 56] This is my God, and I will praise him. My Father is God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. And so what Deborah is really getting at with this opening is that the leaders took the lead in Israel, and she's thankful that the leaders took the lead.

She's thankful that the people offered themselves willingly. And later on in verse 9, she says, My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel who offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless the Lord.

And then she says, Listen, kings. Listen, princes. We sing to the Lord, the God of Israel, acknowledging that the Lord is God of Israel. And so we see this reminder.

He is the Lord God of Israel. He's chosen to call himself the God of Israel. And so this song is a reminder to their hearts that he is their God. And that he provides for them, unlike the barren gods of the Amorites, the Moabites, the Amalekites, the Canaanites, all of the Ites, right?

He alone raised up leaders in Israel. And that's the point she's really making here. It was the Lord who raised up leaders. When the Lord went out from Syria and marched from Eden, the earth trembled, the heavens dropped water, and the mountains quaked before him.

[8 : 17] The Lord and his people went out from Eden. The Lord led his people out from Egypt. In Deuteronomy 31, we read, The Lord came from Sinai and dawned from Syria upon us.

He shone forth from the Mount Paran. He came from the ten thousands of holy ones with flaming fire at his right hand. We see even the mountains trembling before the Lord.

He went out in power before his people. In Psalm 68, David says, O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the one of Sinai, before the God, the God of Israel.

And so, in this, where it says that God came from Syria, there's kind of two interpretations we can take. One would be a look back at Exodus, where God literally led his people as a column of fire out through the wilderness into the promised land.

And the second is that in the battle, the Lord came as a storm, a storm cloud rolling in over the mountain Syria into the region, in Kishon, where the battle took place.

[9 : 27] And so, either way we interpret it, the meaning is that God led his people literally and figuratively in this time, in this season. He was their God.

He is the one of Sinai. He delivered his people from Egypt and preserved them. And something else to note is that just as the man Israel learned, if you remember his story back in Genesis, that God is not stuck in the place Bethel, the people Israel learned, that God is not stuck in the place Seir, but he literally follows them wherever they go.

No matter where they go, he is their God and he is with them. Just as for us, no matter where we are, he is our God and he is with us. The Lord preserves his people.

It was nothing Barak or Deborah did to preserve Israel. It was the Lord who brought about their deliverance. And that is what this song is about. Looking at Isaiah 42, 8, God says, I am the Lord. That is my name. My glory I give to no one, nor my praise to carved idols. And so that is really at the heart of this song.

[10 : 38] So if we continue reading on verses 6 through 8, In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were abandoned and the travelers kept to the byways.

The villagers ceased in Israel. They ceased to be until I arose. I, Deborah, arose as mother in Israel. When new gods were chosen, then war was in the gates.

Was shield or spear to be seen among the 40,000 in Israel? And so now Deborah is making a contrast in the song between the state of Israel and the greatness of God.

She talks back about, or reflects back about Shamgar, the previous judge, who was only mentioned in one verse in Judges 331. And she talks about the highways being abandoned, right?

They couldn't take the highways. They were forced to take the back roads. The highways wouldn't have been safe. There were bandits that would attack them. This would have made commerce impossible. And so the rule of Jabin, the king, and Sisera, the general of his armies, was such that the country was in disarray.

[11 : 52] There was no safety in the villages. The people were forced into the cities, into the walled cities. And even there, they didn't have protection. Even there, they were slaves of Jabin and Sisera.

And so the country in the promised land that God had provided was in disarray. It was fallen into disorder. And the people, over time, were brought to a place of crying out to God.

And crying out, he provided a judge and a deliverer. But ultimately, he provided deliverance.

Looking at Judges 3.31, I want to reflect on what it says about Shamgar.

After him was Shamgar, the son of Anath, who killed 600 of the Philistines with an ox goad. And he also saved Israel. And so something I remember from studying judges in the past was, you know, he's pictured here as using an ox goad as a weapon.

And this is to show that there were literally no weapons in Israel. All their weapons had been taken and either turned into farming instruments or had been destroyed. And so this shows the state of Israel.

[12 : 59] They had no way of defending themselves. This was done purposefully to make sure there would be no uprising or revolt. And so the situation was bleak. There was no hope for them except to cry out to God.

So I kind of want to take a look back at Leviticus and see why did God allow this to happen to his people, Israel? Why would he allow such a harsh judgment on his people?

And so let's look back at Leviticus 26 and see what God had promised his people when they entered the promised land. Looking back in Leviticus 26 verses 3 through 4, God says to his people, if you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season and the land shall yield its increase and the trees of the field shall yield their fruits.

This is the promise of blessing God gave his people as they entered the promised land. But just a few verses later, he also gives them a promise of what will come if they do not follow his commands.

He gives them a warning and more than a warning for those of us who get to look back on this, it's more of a prophecy of what will happen when his people turn against him.

[14 : 20] Looking at verses 14 through 32 in Leviticus 26, God says through Moses, but if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, if you spurn my statutes and if your soul abhors my rules so that you will not do all my commandments but break my commandments, then I

will do this to you.

I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consumes the eye and makes the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain for your enemies shall eat it. I will set my face against you and you shall be struck down before your enemies.

Those who hate you shall rule over you and you shall flee when none pursues you. And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me, then I will also walk contrary to you and I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins.

Right? And so God had promised them that if they turned from him this would be the punishment. And so in his judgment in the book of Judges he's fulfilling his promise.

They turned from him they went after the Baals and the Asherah and so he punished them. And if we look at the last bit of Leviticus there he says if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me we see he has a purpose in this punishment.

[15 : 48] If you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me. His purpose is not simply punishment for the sake of punishment but punishment to turn them back to himself.

These are his people who he loves who he has named himself after and it is his purpose to turn them back to him. And that is why he has brought about such a harsh punishment.

So let's look as we keep going at verse 7 in Judges 5 and due to this reign of terror brought through Jabin the villagers could no longer live in the land.

Israel was forced to move to the protected cities and we see Israel suffering the punishment the Lord promised. A quote in one of the commentaries I read by Dale Davis says sometimes it is only when God's people see how hopeless they are that they can appreciate how mighty Yahweh is how mighty the Lord is.

A desperate people and a sufficient God are placed side by side. Although the country was in ruin and they couldn't use the highways the villages ceased in Israel the Lord had a plan and a purpose.

[17 : 03] And as we realize that this desperate situation lasted for 20 years we realize it took 20 years of hardened hearts for God to break the will of his people with the purpose of turning them back to him.

Fortunately the Lord did not leave them in their sin. He did not abandon them in their sin or he didn't destroy them by his wrath as he rightfully could have done but instead he brought a deliverer through Deborah and Barak in verses 8 we see Deborah arose as the mother of Israel an expert advisor in religious and civic matters and the people of Israel came to her for judgment and they came to her for interpretation.

She took the role of judge in Israel at a time of great distress. She was well respected among Israel among their leaders and she tried to bring about sound wisdom in a time of great distress but also she reminded the people of the Lord when most had fallen away and she reminded Barak of the word of the Lord.

She encouraged him, she built his faith and she did not usurp his role as commander of the armies but instead she went with him. She went with him to fulfill the word of the Lord.

At this time there was war at the gates, new gods had been chosen in Israel, the people were living in idolatry. We see insight. There was no shield or spear in Israel among 40,000.

[18 : 39] There was no way to defend themselves. The situation was truly hopeless. Looking back at Judges 2 we are reminded they, meaning Israel, abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers who had brought them out of the land of Egypt.

They went after other gods from among the gods of the people who were around them and they bowed down to them. They provoked the Lord to anger. In Deuteronomy 32, they stirred him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations they provoked him to anger.

For us, this is a humbling, a sobering reminder that when we abandon the Lord and go after idols, he is stirred to jealousy. And although there is punishment for our sin, the Lord chastens us with the purpose of bringing us to repentance, of restoring us.

In Isaiah 30, 18, the Lord says, therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you, for the Lord is a God of justice.

Blessed are all those who wait for the Lord. So let's look now at Judges 5, verses 9 through 13, and reflect on the faith Israel had in the Lord's deliverance.

[20 : 00] starting in verse 9, it reads, my heart goes out to the commanders of Israel who offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless the Lord. Tell of it, you who ride on white donkeys,

you who sit on rich carpets, and you who walk by the way.

To the sound of musicians at the watering places, there they repeat the righteous triumphs of the Lord, the righteous triumphs of his villagers in Israel. Then down to the gates march the people of the Lord.

Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, break out in song, arise, Barak, lead away your captives, O son of Abinoam. Then down march the remnant of the noble, the people of the Lord, march down for me against the mighty.

So again, Deborah is thanking the Lord for a willing people. She's thanking the commanders of Israel for being willing, but ultimately she is saying bless the Lord.

Lord, she is thankful to the leaders for being willing, but most of all, she's thankful to God, who is the author of their faith that brought about their willingness.

[21 : 04] She tells them to tell the story, to sing the story. This is not only for their own good, but for the good of those who would come after them, a reminder of God's deliverance.

She says to the rich, those who ride on donkeys and sit on rich carpets, she tells them to sing, to tell of the Lord's faithfulness. She imagines, or maybe already witnesses, the sound of musicians at the watering places as the people repeat the triumph of the Lord in his villages in Israel.

Moments ago, we were reflecting on the villages being empty, the people forced into the cities, the watering places being a place without safety, a place where they would be attacked, and now we see them singing, playing instruments at the watering places because the Lord has brought them rest.

The people trusted in the Lord. By faith, they marched against a mightier foe. However, Deborah says, bless the Lord for granting this willing people. The people had faith that the battle belonged to the Lord.

The battle belonged to the Lord. Reflecting on his past provision to deliver his people from Egypt into the promised land, the people are emboldened to march against a mightier foe.

[22 : 24] As we too should live by faith, remembering the Lord's past faithfulness and believing on his steadfast love, a verse that came to mind when reading this was Psalm 30 verses 1 and 2.

I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me. O Lord God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. So now the song kind of steps back and remembers the Lord's deliverance and his provision during the battle.

So now although this song was written after the battle was won, we're going to step back and look at in more detail how the Lord delivered them from Jabin and from Sisera.

If we read in Judges 5 verses 14 through 18, Deborah says, From Ephraim their root, they marched down into the valley, following you, Benjamin, with your kinsmen, from Makir, marched down the commanders and from Zebulun, those who bear the lieutenant's staff.

The princes of Issachar came with Deborah and Issachar, faithful to Barak, into the valley. They rushed at his heels. Among the clans of Reuben there were great searching of heart.

[23 : 35] Why did you sit still among the sheepfolds to hear the whistling for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, and Dan, why did he stay with the ships?

Asher sat still at the coast of the sea, staying by his landing. Zebulun is a people who risked their lives to the death, Naphtali too, on the heights of the field. And so, as we reflect back on the battle, Deborah recounts the tribes of Israel, of the northern kingdom who were present at the battle, and she also mourns those that didn't show up for the battle.

So we see some of them were there, but not all of them were present. Looking back at Judges 4.14, Deborah said to Barak, up for this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand.

Does not the Lord go out before you? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him. The men of Ephraim, their country, would have bordered this region where the battle was to take place.

10,000 of them came down following him. The country of Zebulun, the smaller region just below that, they also were present at the battle.

[24 : 54] However, among the clans of Reuben, who were to the north, near the sea, they had searching of heart. They delayed. They didn't show up to the battle.

The tribe of Gilead, that is Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, they stayed beyond the Jordan. They didn't show up.

While Dan stayed with his ships in Asher still at the sea. They were not the only tribes in northern Israel not to show up to the battle, and they weren't all of the tribes that showed up. Judah did not come to the battle because they were to the south. However, these tribes, they were in the region where this battle took place, and they chose to sit idly by while their brothers faced this battle.

We reflect then on Zebulun, who risked their lives to the death along with Naphtali. In Judges 4.10, Barak called out to Zebulun and Naphtali to Kadesh, and 10,000 men went up at his heels, and Deborah with him.

[25 : 57] So of the 12 tribes of Israel, we only really see four, who were willing to go into battle. So, what does this mean for Israel?

Well, like Barak, some of the tribes were hesitant. They didn't rush to the aid of their brothers. They were distracted by the cares of this world. They doubted and they were afraid.

Much like many of the judges to come, we will see they doubt, they are afraid. However, the Lord remained faithful to his people. Despite their lapse in faith, he still chose to deliver them.

They didn't have necessarily a lack of faith, but their faith lapsed. He was faithful not because of the faith of Deborah or those who did come to the battle, but because he heard the cry of his people and he rescued them as a free gift of mercy.

Not as a reward for their faith, but because he would not sit by and see his people suffer. the battle for Israel belongs to the Lord. And although Israel was delivered by the sovereign grace of God, his people were not expected to sit idly by and watch as their brothers faced this battle.

[27 : 14] And as for us today in Christ, we are also not to sit idly by while our brothers and sisters in Christ face suffering and persecution. As Paul said to Timothy, at my first defense, no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me.

May it not be charged against them. How should we be remembered in the song of God's deliverance? Did we have faith to fight the good fight? Would we be included?

Do we belong in the hall of faith as Barak? In 2 Timothy 4, 5-8, Paul says, as for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry, for I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

And that is a challenge and reminder to us that we are called to support our brothers in Christ, to by faith appear when the Lord calls.

[28 : 33] So as we move into the final portion of this song, I want to reflect on the Lord's glory in delivering his people in verses 19 through 23.

Starting in 19, it reads, The kings came, they fought, then fought the kings of Canaan at Tanakh, by the waters of Megiddo, they got no spoils of silver, from the heaven the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera, the torrent Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon, march on my soul with might, then loud beat the horse's hooves with galloping, galloping of his steeds, curse Merah, says the angel of the Lord, curse its inhabitants thoroughly, because they did not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

And now we see in verses 19 through 21, the battle from the king's perspective, right? These are the kings of Canaan who came to fight at Tanakh.

However, they received no spoils. they came expecting victory. The stars, however, fought against Sisera. So what does it mean from their courses in heaven they fought against Sisera?

Well, for Sisera and Jabin, they trusted in the Baals and Asheroth. They trusted that the god, lowercase g, of the weather and of the celestial bodies was on their side and would provide victory for them.

[30 : 04] However, some interpret this as the stars being out of alignment. And so that would have struck fear into them as they went to battle. But more importantly, the weather was out of alignment and fought against them, right?

So let's reflect on that as we proceed forward how the Lord provided and received the glory in delivering his people.

So just to set the scene, the battle here takes place between the river Kishon and the Mount Tabor. And this is a plain that would have been flat and dry and perfect for Jabin and his general Sisera to

use their 900 iron chariots and countless men of war to surround the small army of 10,000 men that had come down with Barak into this battlefield.

And remember, they have no weapons, they have no shields as we reflected on moments ago. And so we see 10,000 men surrounded by 900 chariots and countless foot soldiers with nothing to defend them except the shield of faith in the Lord and his deliverance and his provision.

And so although the stars were misaligned, Sisera and his men would have believed on their chariots that they had a sure victory in this battle. However, in the distance, we see a storm brewing, right?

[31 : 37] A storm of the Lord. The God of Israel routed Sisera and his army. Not sure how quickly this storm moved.

This battle may have taken place over the course of moments or hours, but this storm comes rushing over, thunder crashing, rains pouring down, and the ground turned to mud. And Sisera's chariots that they counted on, they're now useless.

If we look back at Judges 4, we see Sisera was forced to abandon his own chariot and to run. The army was routed by the Lord, and he defeated all of Sisera's army.

Countless men killed by 10,000. Right? These are the kinds of battles that we still make movies about to this day. But for Israel, it wasn't by the faith or the strength of a few great men.

It was by the deliverance of the Lord that they were saved. I can kind of imagine this storm on the horizon from a few years ago. I went for a run back when I lived in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and I ran up into the hills about five miles.

[32 : 47] I used to run a while back then. And I turned around, and there was a storm on the horizon. And this is in Arkansas, where you can see for miles. And so it was my goal to make it home before that storm hit.

And I just remember praying the whole way back. And the sky was purple and orange, and it slowly became black. And this is what I imagine this battlefield felt like to these men, right?

They're counting on the weather, the God ball to provide for them. However, Yahweh provided for his own. Just to tell you the end of my story, I didn't make it home before the end of the storm.

It hit about a mile before I got home. There was hail, there was lightning, there were tree branches flying around, there was a tornado in the next town. But I made it home alive, obviously, by God's grace.

But to this day, I love thunderstorms. I love seeing and hearing the might of God through the weather. So, the point that I want to make is that the heavens in the hand of a mighty God came crashing down with the might of many hooves beating loudly.

[34 : 07] Sisera and his armies, perhaps many Israelites, believed their idols would provide protection and success. However, dead idols cannot deliver.

The Lord, the God of Israel, used the heavens against his enemy to protect his people. The battle belonged to the Lord. A living God provides what dead idols never will.

Right? Do not put your faith in dead idols. Don't believe in your health, your talent, your reputation, or your wealth for deliverance. Believe in the living God.

Only the Lord provides for his people. Isaiah 46, 5-7. God says, To whom will you liken me and make me equal?

Compare me that we may be alike. Those who lavish gold from the purse and weigh out silver in the scales hire a goldsmith and he makes it into a god.

[35 : 06] Then they fall down in worship, they lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there. It cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his troubles.

So as we approach the closing of this song, I want to look in the last scene at the Lord's deliverance through an unlikely heroine.

Verse 24-30 reads, Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, of tent dwelling woman most blessed. He asked for water and she gave him milk.

She brought him curds and a noble's bowl. She sent her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workman's mallet. She struck Sisera, she crushed his head, she shattered and pierced his temple.

Between her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still. Between her feet he sank, he fell. Where he sank, there he fell, dead. Looking back at Judges 4-17, we see that Sisera had fled away on foot to the

tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

[36 : 22] So as we look at this song, we are reminded that Heber the Kenite, he was descendant of Aaron, of a actually of Kenite, descendant of Moses' father-in-law, and that Heber had made an alliance with Jabin for safety and security at this time.

However, when Sisera came looking and expecting safety from an ally, Jael didn't trust in the alliance.

She didn't deny her lord. She didn't betray her people. She trusted in the Lord. She put her faith in the Lord, and she was used by Him to deliver her people from this wicked general.

He asked her for water. She brought milk to put him at ease. Not only that, she brought it in a royal bowl, right? As it says, a royal bowl as a sign of hospitality and a sign that she could be trusted.

She deceived him to get him to sleep and then covered him in a carpet, and then she snuck up on him. We were trying to imagine this this week.

[37 : 36] How do you sneak up on a warrior with a giant tent peg and a mallet in your hand, and knowing you only have one moment for a single strike, either he's dead or you're dead, and she had the faith.

She trusted in the Lord, and she made that striking blow, right? And although it's awesome to know that she was successful, and she's remembered in this song for it, we see that this was a combination of her faith and also her deception, right?

To us, deception is wrong, given this was a time of war. But really, the meaning of this story and why it's remembered is not that we glorify Jael for her faith or her deception.

It's that we glorify the Lord for his deliverance, for his provision in battle, that he provided this woman who believed on him, who trusted in him, and was used by him to deliver his people.

He also used this to humiliate his enemies as he promised to do, to humiliate Sisera. Again, we are reminded that the battle truly belongs to the Lord.

[38 : 55] If we keep reading in verses 28 through 30, out of the window she peered, the mother of Sisera wailed through the lattice. Why is his chariot so long in coming?

Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots? Her wisest princess's answer, indeed she answers herself. Have they not found and divided the spoil? A womb or two for every man?

Spoil of dyed material for Sisera? Spoil of dyed materials embroidered. Two pieces of dyed work embroidered for the neck as a spoil. So now, we see this purposeful contrast in the song between Jael victoriously standing over her slain enemy, over the Lord's slain enemy, and the mother of the enemy Sisera peering out the window, envisioned, we don't know that she actually peered out the window, but envisioned as being this rich queen peering out the window, awaiting her triumphant son's return.

And this is put here to show that the Lord humiliated his enemy for their wickedness. She peers out the window waiting. Her princess is envisioned answering her, have they not found and divided the spoil?

A womb or two for every man? Dye material for Sisera? Back in the song of Moses in Exodus 15, the wicked say, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

[40 : 23] Right? And this is meant to show the wickedness of the people of Canaan. Right? Just imagine this phrase here, a womb or two for every man, what does that really mean?

It means that when the Canaanites were victorious in battle and conquered their enemy, they killed the men and the children, they raped the women to purposefully assimilate the culture through procreation.

Right? These were truly wicked people to hold the land. And so we are given this insight into their wickedness to show that the Lord was just in destroying his enemy.

He wasn't just destroying his enemy for the sake of his people, he was destroying them for their wickedness. In Judges 4.2, we read, The Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, the king of Canaan. And he did this to bring about repentance. In Judges 4.23, it says, God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan, before the people of Israel to bring about faith in the people of Israel.

[41 : 36] Right? The Lord had punished them and delivered them to bring about their repentance. And again, we see through this account that the battle for Israel's heart, also for our heart, belongs to the Lord.

So in closing, I want to look at the last verse, verse 31, which reads, So may all your enemies perish, O Lord, but your friends be like the sun as he rises in his might.

This is a call to the people of the Lord, a reminder and a prayer that all of his enemies would face the same fate. The song serves as a reminder of Israel to love their first love.

If we look back at Deuteronomy 5, verses 5 through 9, the Lord said to them, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house. When you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you first rise, you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

[42 : 49] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. So although, as we read further into Psalms, we see Israel continuing to chase after the Baal and Asheroth, and we see that the culture in Israel was, or at least was meant to be drastically different from Canaan.

In this account, we see that women, such as Deborah, were prophetess and judge. They had power and influence. They were not treated as property or spoil in battle. However, as we keep reading through judges, we see Israel become more like Canaan.

We see women sold, raped, dismembered, prostituted, sacrificed. And we see that the Lord despises the way of the wicked.

He humiliates and destroys them. And Israel was becoming the enemy of the Lord, those whom he despises and would destroy. However, this is jumping forward to the New Testament in 1 Peter.

The Lord says to us and to Israel, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness and into marvelous light.

[44 : 12] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Right?

The Lord is patient to chasten, to remind us through punishment, to turn us back to him. He used Sisera, a wicked man, and Jabin, a wicked king, to bring his people back to himself.

We too must be reminded to love the Lord, to be counted among his friends who will shine like the sun. In all that we do out of faith, we must be reminded that the battle belongs to the Lord.

The Lord did not bring glory to himself through his people by their faith.

He does not, it does not bring glory to the Lord through the quantity or the quality of our faith, but by the presence of our faith.

[45 : 16] As Hebrews 11, 6 says, without faith, it is impossible to please him for whoever would draw near to the Lord must believe that he exists and he rewards those who seek him.

And so these stories about jail and about Deborah and about Barak, about the tribes that were present and the tribes that were not present, they're not meant for us to reflect on the quantity or quality of the faith of these leaders, but on the presence of their faith.

All it was that set them apart from their enemy was that they believed that the Lord was the God of Israel. Although it may seem easy for us to look back on Israel and judge them out of shame for their continuous failure to follow God's command, we must remember that God had a plan and a purpose for these people, an eternal plan of redemption through his people.

Although he's just to destroy those who sin for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. He is patient. He is loving. He's merciful to save us who place our faith in him.

And we're reminded it is only through faith in the Lord that we find peace with God. In Romans 5, 1 through 11, we read, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[46 : 36] Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation. And through this passage, we're reminded that the battle for our salvation belongs to the Lord.

Faith alone in Christ alone. Right? This battle has been won for us by Christ on the cross. And it is through his battle against sin that we receive sanctification.

through his Holy Spirit in us that we press on and that he gives us a new nature. Our victory belongs to the Lord. So one final point I want to take from this is that this is a song of remembrance.

[47 : 51] Right? It's a song that's purposefully put in Judges to slow us down. Not only us, but the original readers to remind them of the Lord's faithfulness. And we too should slow down when we see the Lord do something great in our lives, in our church, in our community.

And we should sing of the Lord's deliverance. We should remember the Lord's deliverance. We should celebrate praise and worship when the Lord answers prayer, when he provides for our needs.

And most of all, when he brings a sinner to salvation in Christ. And finally, the land had rest for 40 years. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for today. Thank you for this blessed time to read from your word. Pray that as we go back to our lives, that we would remember your faithfulness to deliver, your glory in deliverance. And Lord, that we would find faith in you to trust that the battle truly belongs to you. Lord, that no matter how hopeless it may seem, that we have a glorious God who is always faithful to deliver his own.

[49 : 05] We pray this in your holy name. Amen. Amen.