

BOOK OF JUDGES
THE CYCLE CONTINUES-#3—PT 1
GOD RAISES UP DEBORAH AND BARAK
JUDGES 4:1-9

Introduction

The **BOOK** of **JUDGES** is not much of a feel good book! How can we feel good about folks who are **GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE** getting in the same lame **CYCLE OF SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES** time after time again! It’s really kind of sad if you think about it, but there is plenty for us to learn from this **BOOK** so we continue where we left off last time.

We saw the **FIRST CYCLE** in *Judges 3:1-11* as the **LORD** raised up **OTHNIEL** to **DELIVER ISRAEL** from the king of **MESOPOTAMIA**.

We saw the **SECOND CYCLE** in *Judges 3:14-30* as the **LORD** raised up **EHUD** to **DELIVER ISRAEL** from the **EGLON** king of **MOAB**.
(We also saw as a part of that **CYCLE** one verse (*Judges 3:31*) mentioning how **SHAMGAR** was used to deliver **ISRAEL** from the **PHILISTINES**.

Now we see the **THIRD CYCLE** in *Judges 4:1-24* as the **LORD** elevates and uses a couple of women here **because of a failure of men to step up and be men!** That is a sad tale as well! (*1 Corinthians 16:13* comes to mind!)

In the chapter before us today, we will see two women who were used by the **LORD** in great ways, for **HIS GLORY**. The two women we will meet are **DEBORAH** and **JAEL**. One became a respected leader, a **JUDGE** in the nation of **ISRAEL**; the other might be described as a **simple housewife**, (*Although there is NOTHING simple about being a housewife!*) **Thank GOD for all the “simple” housewives, especially the ones that touched my life! Both my grandmothers were housewives, my mom was one, and my wife is as well! The world could use a lot more virtuous women....both wives and mothers as described in Proverbs 31:10-31.**

These two women came from different walks of life, but they were both used by the **LORD** in remarkable ways. Since we are studying the **JUDGES OF ISRAEL**, we will focus most of our attention on **DEBORAH** as we consider the passage before us.

Well, we’re going to stick with the same outline as we look at *Cycle #3...*

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I. WE SEE ISRAEL’S SIN. (Vs 1)

In the words of the late Yogi Berra, *“It’s like deja vu all over again.”*
Or we could say, *“It is the same old song...just a different verse”*

We saw when we left off last week that the **LORD** used **EHUD** the **JUDGE** to **DELIVER ISRAEL** from **EGLON** and the **MOABITES**, and **SCRIPTURE** says that the land has **REST** for **80 years. (3:30)**

As long as **EHUD** lived and **JUDGED** the nation, the people followed the **LORD** and served **HIM**. But, when **EHUD** died, the people returned to their **SINFUL** ways. We are told that they *“...again did evil in the sight of the Lord.”* *Judges 5:8* further tells us that, *“...they chose new gods”*.

The people of **ISRAEL** did not learn from what had happened in the two previous **CYCLES**. Once again, they turned their back on the **LORD WHO** had **REDEEMED** them and brought them into the **PROMISED LAND**. They turned their back on **HIM** and began following the gods of the **CANAANITES**.

They forsook the **LORD GOD** who had **CHOSEN** them, for gods of their own choosing!

Anytime one walks away from the **LORD** and joins **HIMSELF** to anything other than the **LORD**, there comes a **SPIRITUAL VOID** in their lives. **ISRAEL** no longer had **EHUD** to **DIRECT** them, to **GUIDE** them, to **GIVE** them the **TRUTH**, and so they **WANDERED** from the **WAY!**

Sadly, the children of **ISRAEL** picture what we see all too often in many **CHURCHES** in our day. Some people follow the **LORD** for a while, but then **something causes them to drift away the LORD!** They end up turning away from the **LORD** and go their own way and then things don’t go so well for them and then they want to blame the **LORD** for their **CONSEQUENCES**.

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That something that causes them to drift might be the **DEATH** or some other event that removes a special loved one—A Pastor, teacher, parent, grandparent, or some other influential person. It is sad when one's **FOUNDATION FOR THEIR FAITH** is someone or something other than the **LORD!**

Sometimes it happens when a **PREACHER** leaves a **CHURCH**. Some will quit on the **LORD** and their **FAITHFULNESS** to **HIM!** It shouldn't be that way! Our **FAITH** should be in the **LORD WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US** to **SAVE** us, and not in any man!

We should determine to live **CLOSE** to the **LORD** and be just as **CLEAN** regardless of who is removed from our lives. Let's not lose our **FOCUS ON LORD!**

Hebrews 12:1-3—“1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

II. WE SEE THE SUFFERING AND SERVITUDE. (Vs 2, 3b)
When **ISRAEL REBELLED** against the **LORD**, **HE** responded by giving them over to their enemies for chastening. The **BIBLE** says **HE “sold them.”** Those words means to **“turn over; to give up to”**.

In other words, the **LORD** abandoned them to the life they **CHOSE** for themselves. They and their loved ones **PAID** a terrible price for their **REBELLION**. The condition of the nation is described in **Judges 5:6-7**. They were literally driven from their highways and their homes.

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There is still a high price to pay for **DISOBEDIENCE** to the **WILL OF THE LORD**. When we **CHOOSE OUR WAYS** over **HIS** ways, and when we **CHOOSE TO FOLLOW** other gods instead of **HIM**, we can expect **HIS** displeasure. **HE** will send **HIS** chastisement! *Deuteronomy 8:5—“Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.”*

Hebrews 12:6-11 (“For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth...”)

Revelation 3:19—“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

We find in **Judges 4:3b** that the king of Canaan **“mightily oppressed”** the children of **ISRAEL** for 20 yrs! *(The term “mightily oppressed” means to push, to oppress, to torment with strength of force)*

[Remember the first Cycle of **oppression** was for **8 years (3:8)**, the second Cycle of **oppression** was for **18 years (3:18)**. **The length of their CHASTENING appears to be tied to how long it took them to CRY out to the LORD in CONFESSIO**N and **REPENTANCE.**]

Proverbs 28:13—“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

Again I stress the importance of keeping **SHORT ACCOUNTS** with the **LORD** when we **DISOBEY!** We must quickly come to our senses, **CONFESS** and **FORSAKE SIN** and get back to **GOD!**

So, after 20 years of them being **mightily oppressed...**

III. WE SEE THE SUPPLICATION. (Vs 3a)
“They cried unto the LORD...”

We might wonder what was the final straw that caused them to **CRY** out to the **LORD?!**

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Was it the personal fleshly suffering and sorrow?
Was it the seeing their families affected?
Was it how it affected their livelihood? (Their finances)
Was it the weight of all these together!

Well, the **SCRIPTURE** says it was the 900 chariots of iron.
It appears that **THEY** gave it **THEIR BEST SHOT** over a 20 year period but finally realized they weren't going to be able to defeat 900 chariots of iron on their own (i.e. That is, they weren't going to be able to do it in the power of their **FLESH!** Their **FLESH** had **FAILED** them and they finally realized they **NEEDED THE LORD!**)
Cf. Judges 5:8

JABIN possessed a powerful army anchored by 900 chariots of iron. The helpless armies of **ISRAEL** were no match for this enemy, especially since it appears they were lacking in shields and weapons.

They were a **CONQUERED, DEFEATED** people with only **ONE HOPE**. Eventually, they came to realize the **LORD** was their only **HOPE**, they **CRIED** unto the **LORD** and **HE** heard them.

I can't tell you all the specifics of how the **LORD** will work in our life to get us back to where we need to be when we **SIN!** But this one thing I do know is this: We must **COME TO THE END OF OURSELVES** before we will find help from the **LORD!**

As long as we try to rely on our **FLESH**, we are destined to stay **MIGHTILY OPPRESSED BY OUR SIN!** (*e.g. The Prodigal Son*)

IV. WE SEE THE SAVIOUR (THE DELIVERER). (vs. 4-24)

Here we see the **SPECIAL MINISTRY OF DEBORAH**.

A. We See **DEBORAH'S POSITION!** (*vs. 4-5*)
The **BIBLE** is very clear; **DEBORAH** was both a **"PROPHETESS"** and a **"JUDGE"**. Her name means **"bee"**, and **SCRIPTURE** shows she was as **busy as a bee!**

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Matthew Henry says that her very name suggests the work of the **bee: industrious, sharp perception (discernment), great usefulness, sweetness to her friends, and sharpness to her enemies.**

The word **"PROPHETESS"** suggests that she had **the ability to DISCERN the MIND and PURPOSE of the LORD and DECLARE it to others.**

DEBORAH is not the only **"PROPHETESS"** mentioned in the **SCRIPTURES**. Others include: **MIRIAM** in *Exodus 15:20*; **HULDAH** in *2 Kings 22:14*; **ANNA** in *Luke 2:36*; and **the four daughters of PHILIP** in *Acts 21:9*.

Understand that there is no contradiction between this fact and the fact that **GOD** only uses men today in the **OFFICE of BISHOP, ELDER, or PASTOR, 1 Timothy 3:1-7** and the **OFFICE OF DEACON, 1 Timothy 3:8-13.**

GOD had **HIS** hand on these women and poured **HIS TRUTH** out through them in an age when there was not a complete **BIBLE**. In this age, we have a completed **BIBLE** and **GOD** does not call women to places that **USURP AUTHORITY** over men, *1 Timothy 2:8-15.*

The word **"JUDGED"** lets us know that **she settled disputes among the people of ISRAEL, Vs 5.** They came to her with their problems and she rendered **JUDGMENT**. Also, in a very real sense, **DEBORAH** was the leader of the nation during those dark days.

The **LORD** also used **DEBORAH** in a very real way as a **JUDGE** to **DELIVER HIS** people from the **BONDAGE** and **OPPRESSION** brought on by their **SIN!**

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- B. We See DEBORAH’S PROPHECY! (vs. 6-7)**
DEBORAH received a **WORD** from the **LORD** and so she called **BARAK**, to take 10,000 men and go to war with the enemy. The **LORD PROMISED** to **DEFEAT SISERA**, the **CANAANITE** general. The **LORD GOD** promised a great victory, if they would simply **TRUST HIM** and go to war!
- C. We See DEBORAH’S PROBLEM! (vs. 8-9)**
DEBORAH had a **WORD** from the **LORD**. She shared that **WORD** with **BARAK**, and found that **BARAK** was reluctant to follow that **WORD**. He was willing to go to battle, but only if **DEBORAH** would go with him. She agreed to go, but told him that since he depended on a woman, the **LORD** was going to use a woman to take out **SISERA!**

BARAK’S reluctance shows the sad state of the men of **ISRAEL**, nevertheless we see him used of the **LORD**.

Conclusion

Now we’re going to put up a stake right there and, **LORD** willing, come back next time and see more about this battle that took place and how the **LORD** used **DEBORAH, BARAK**, as well as a woman by the name of **JAEL**.