

Week #:	172	Series:	God's Judgment	Title:	Judge #4: Deborah
Scriptures:	Judges 4:1-10; Psalm 119:105; Exodus 16:31; Psalm 81:11-16				
Songs:	Honey In the Rock – Brooke Ligertwood (4:41)				
	Shout to the Lord – Darlene Zschech (4:37)				
	PRAYER:	Famous For – Tauren Wells (4:04)			
Video:	Judges Song – <i>What's in the Bible #4</i> (Time- 31:31-33:25)				

## Judge #4: Deborah

The first three judges in our study have been:

#1 – Othniel

- He was Caleb's nephew. Israel lived in peace after him for 40 years.

#2 – Ehud

- He was known for the physical feature of being left-handed. Israel lived in peace after him for 80 years.

#3 – Shamgar

- He was known for killing 600 Philistines with a farm tool, an ox-goad.

### Now we get to Judge #4 – Deborah

We are probably all very familiar with Deborah. We have heard of her bravery since we were small children. She is often touted as one of the women in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, that stands out, and she is known for being the only female judge.

Judges 4:1

<sup>1</sup> But after Ehud had died, the people of Isra'el again did what was evil from *ADONAI's* perspective.

Once more we find that the people of Israel are falling into that **CYCLE OF APOSTASY**. They turned away from Adonai, started accepting the culture and idolatry of the people around them – the people they did not drive out of the land as God commanded.

Judges 4:2

<sup>2</sup> So *ADONAI* handed them over to Yavin [Jabin] king of Kena'an [Canaan]. He ruled from Hatzor [Hazor]; and the commander of his army was Sisra [Sisera], who lived in Haroshet-HaGoyim. <sup>3</sup> The people of Isra'el cried out to *ADONAI*, because he had 900 iron chariots, and for twenty years he cruelly oppressed the people of Isra'el.

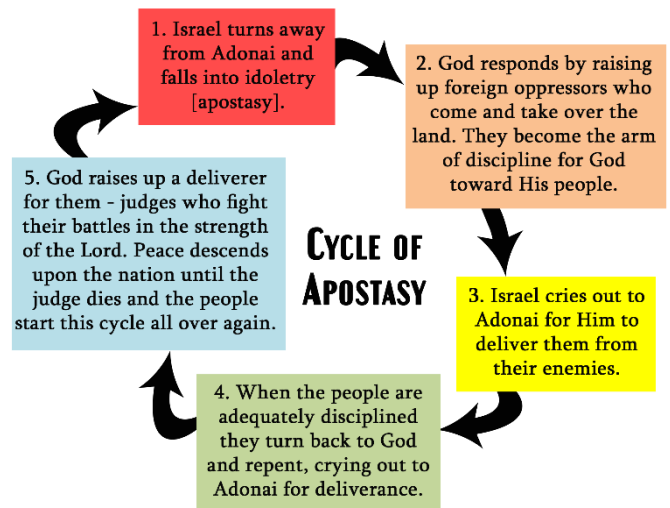
God's hand of protection lifts, and they are brought into bondage, once more, by one of these people they did not drive out of the land when they took possession. In this case it is the Canaanite King Yavin [Jabin] of Hatzor. He has a commander named Sisera, who had 900 iron chariots, and who oppressed the people of Israel with a cruel hand for 20 years.

Finally, after 20 years of oppression, the people turn back to God, and cry out for Adonai's help. He raises up someone who is going to lead them to victory against King Yavin [Jabin].

Judges 4:4-5

<sup>4</sup> Now D'vorah [Deborah], a woman and a prophet, the wife of Lapidot, was judging Isra'el at that time.

<sup>5</sup> She used to sit under D'vorah's [Deborah's] Palm between Ramah and Beit-El [Bethel], in the hills of Efrayim; and the people of Isra'el would come to her for judgment.



Deborah is a prophetess of Adonai. She is known throughout the region for sitting under a specific date palm called Deborah's Palm, and presiding over disputes. She was a well-respected lady, married to an influential man, and she was doing what Adonai had called and purposed her to do. She was walking in her anointing here. She was doing what Moses had done before when he sat at the entrance to the Tabernacle and presided over judgments. Deborah would listen to the dispute and tell the people what Adonai wanted them to do, and she knew this because she knew the Torah. Think about this – knowing the Torah by memory was something specific to men, not to women. Boys by the age of 12 were expected to know the Torah (the first five books of the Bible – the Law) by memory. Girls in this time period did not have to memorize the whole Torah, only the book of Deuteronomy. It is the book that deals with household issues – keeping clean, how and what to cook, etc. It is the Bible's *Homemakers Guidebook*.

Deborah was so well versed in the law that she was able to give wisdom to those who were in dispute with a neighbor. She guided these people in the ways of Adonai, and tried to bring as much peace to their lives as she could.

It also says that she was not just a judge, she was a prophetess, and Adonai had a job for her to do in that role.

Judges 4:6-7

<sup>6</sup> She sent for Barak the son of Avino'am [Abonoam], from Kedesh in Naftali, and said to him: "ADONAI has given you this order: 'Go, march to Mount Tabor [Tabor/Taba], and take with you 10,000 men from the people of Naftali and Z'vulun. <sup>7</sup> I will cause Sisra, the commander of Yavin's army, to encounter you at the Kishon River with his chariots and troops; and I will hand him over to you.'"

If we refer to our map, we can find these three places that have been mentioned:

1. Deborah was located between Ramah and Bethel in the region to the south where the tribe of Ephraim resided. The star represents where Deborah would have been in that region.
2. Barak is from Kedesh in the region to the north where the tribe of Naftali resided. It is just north of Hazor, which is where King Yavin [Jabin] was.
3. Mount Tabor/Taba is just south of Naphtali in the land of Zebulun.

Deborah sends for Barak, who lives north of King Yavin [Jabin], and calls him to come down to Ephraim where she lives. She delivers this message from God that he is to go to Mount Tabor with 10k troops from the tribes of Zebulun and Ephraim and they are to come against Sisera's army, and Adonai will deliver them to Israel.

It is worth pointing out here something we read above – Sisera's army had 900 iron chariots. The iron chariot is a significant weapon of war. Chariots were a fairly new invention at this point in history, but later they would reinforce the basket and wheels with iron plates to protect the riders and the vehicle. These iron chariots would have been ahead of their time – they were the best of the best. These chariots were often drawn by as many as 4 horses and presented a formidable opponent to foot soldiers as long as the chariot had room to maneuver and build momentum. In many ways, these iron chariots were some of the earliest light-armored vehicles in military history. And Sisera did not simply have a few of these weapons; he had 900. That's enough to devastate any military front line. Just the knowledge of his having these chariots, I am sure, kept the people from rising up against him before now.

Judges 4:8-10

<sup>8</sup> Barak answered her: "If you go with me, I'll go; but if you won't go with me, I won't go." <sup>9</sup> She replied, "Yes, I will gladly go with you; but the way you are doing it will bring you no glory; because ADONAI will hand Sisra over to a woman." Then D'vorah set out and went with Barak to Kedesh. <sup>10</sup> Barak summoned Z'vulun and Naftali to come to Kedesh. Ten thousand men followed him, and D'vorah went up with him.

<sup>11</sup> Now Hever [Heber] the Keini [Kenite] had cut himself off from the rest of Kayin [Kenites], the descendants of Hovav [Hobab] Moshe's father-in-law; he had pitched his tent near the oak at Tza'ananim [terebinth tree], which is close to Kedesh. <sup>12</sup> Sisra was informed that Barak the son of Avino'am had gone up to Mount Tavor. <sup>13</sup> So Sisra rallied his chariots, all 900 iron chariots, and all the troops he had with him, from Haroshet-HaGoyim to the Kishon River.

<sup>14</sup> D'vorah [Deborah] said to Barak: "Get going! This is the day when *ADONAI* will hand Sisra over to you! *ADONAI* has gone out ahead of you!" So Barak went down from Mount Tavor [Tabor] with 10,000 men following him; <sup>15</sup> and *ADONAI* threw Sisra, all his chariots and his entire army into a panic before Barak's sword; so that Sisra got down from his chariot and fled on foot. <sup>16</sup> But Barak pursued the chariots and the army all the way to Haroshet-HaGoyim. Sisra's entire army was put to the sword; not one man was left.

We know Deborah as the fourth judge, but as we learn here, God had a job for Barak. Barak was called by Adonai to lead this contingency of 10k men, and to free the Israelites from the power of Sisera / Yavin [Jabin]. Barak, however, was scared and thus dropped that calling. He felt inadequate. He felt he knew better than Adonai. He was willing to go only if someone else would take the lead. If he had had the strength of character to take the lead, perhaps he would have been listed as the fourth judge of Israel instead of Deborah. But as we see here, God listed Deborah as the fourth, and only woman, judge of Israel.

Names and their meanings are always interesting, so let's take a minute to break down the names in this part of the story, because they will be enlightening to what we have just read.

**DEBORAH:** The name is derived from the Hebrew word for **BEE / HONEY BEE.**

**LAPIDOT:** This is a Hebrew word for **ENLIGHTENED, LAMP.**

**BARAK:** This is the Hebrew word for **LIGHTENING.**

Deborah's husband, Lapidot, was a man of **enlightenment**, a man who led those around him to the light of God's word. We can know this because God felt the need to list his name specifically in the scriptures. If he had not lived up to this moniker then God would not have felt the need to list him here. He was a good man.

Psalm 119:105

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp for my foot and light on my path.

Lapidot was **enlightened** because he knew to look to the scriptures, just as David says in this Psalm. Lapidot was married to a righteous woman named Deborah, whose name means **honey bee**. Her job was to sit and preside over the people of Israel, giving them (enlightening them) with the word of God and judgments that would make their lives more peaceful with their neighbors. She provided a sweetness (honey) that comes with God's Word (his commands) being followed, thus bringing peace.

What a great view we have of this powerful couple that was used by God in such a time of turmoil and oppression!

In this story of Deborah and Barak, it is interesting that **LIGHTENING** could not do what God needed him to do, even though he was given the power to strike and cause fear in the atmosphere around him. Think about it. Lightning is a disturbance in the atmosphere which causes an electricity to build up. This build up then has to be dispensed. It cannot stay built up in the air. It has to find a place to strike. Barak was set up from the time of his birth/naming to be God's lightning strike.

We do not know much of the character of Barak, but we can assume that God had already been dealing with him in a manner which would set him up to be able to do what God was calling him to do. God saw in him something that He needed to use against these oppressors. Barak, however, did not see what God saw. He

only saw how he had failed. He only saw what he lacked. The problem with this is, God can, and often does, use where we lack, because this brings glory to HIM. In this case, HONEY BEE had to do what LIGHTENING refused to do. This sounds funny when you think about it. *Lightening* didn't have the power to do what *honey bee* did. Why? What did *honey bee* have that *lightening* didn't possess?

Honey is always tied to the sweetness of God. God even made his providential food in the desert, Manna, taste like honey.

Exodus 16:31

<sup>31</sup>The people called the food *man* [*manna*]. It was like coriander seed, white; and it tasted like honey cakes.

Psalms 81:11-16

<sup>11</sup>“But my people did not listen to my voice; Isra’el would have none of me. <sup>12</sup>So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to live by their own plans. <sup>13</sup>How I wish my people would listen to me, that Isra’el would live by my ways! <sup>14</sup>I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes. <sup>15</sup>Those who hate ADONAI would cringe before him, while [Isra’el’s] time would last forever.

<sup>16</sup>They would be fed with the finest wheat, and I would satisfy you with honey from the rocks.”

God’s plan was always to provide – just as He did in the desert. His provision will always come with a sweetness that seasons the difficult times.

So, Deborah’s name means, in essence, ***sweetness of God’s provision***. God provided what was needed at the time – someone strong enough to lead – when the one He had called and purposed, and even named for that purpose, did not want to live up to his calling. Deborah was already fulfilling her purpose for Adonai – she was presiding over the people as a judge. She was willing, though, to step into a new role immediately and fulfill this dropped purpose as well, because she had already been studying God’s Word. She had already been praising God and spending time in prayer. She was already prepared for whatever God needed her to do.

### **How often do we drop the ball on what God has called us to do?**

A few years ago, my friend’s pastor called for their leadership to choose someone with whom they could be honest, and make them an accountability partner. He gave five questions for them to go through each week. So, when my friend called and asked if I wanted to participate with her and be her partner, I was excited.

There are five questions we ask of each other each week:

1. Have you been spending quality time in God’s Word?
2. Have you given quality, priority time to your family?
3. Are you walking in what God has called you to do?
4. Have you compromised in any way?
5. Have you been completely honest?

Are you a Barak, or are you a Deborah? Are YOU Living up to what God has called you to do? Are you spending time in His Word so that you can get to know more of the character of God? Are you deepening your relationship with Adonai? I encourage everyone to find someone with whom you can be completely honest – not a spouse, and not someone you live with (like a parent) – someone who can help you live up to the potential God has for you. Pray about who this person needs to be. Then every week have a good chat with this person – be completely honest, and let God, through them, guide you in your purpose for the Kingdom during these pivotal last days.



The Great Sea  
(Mediterranean sea)