

Song of Three Mothers

Judges 5:1-31

1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: 2 "When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the LORD! 3 "Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes! I, even I, will sing to the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel. 4 "LORD, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth trembled and the heavens poured, The clouds also poured water; 5 The mountains gushed before the LORD, This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel. 6 "In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, In the days of Jael, The highways were deserted, And the travelers walked along the byways. 7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel. 8 They chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates; Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel. 9 My heart is with the rulers of Israel Who offered themselves willingly with the people. Bless the LORD! 10 "Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, Who sit in judges' attire, And who walk along the road. 11 Far from the noise of the archers, among the watering places, There they shall recount the righteous acts of the LORD, The righteous acts for His villagers in Israel; Then the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates. 12 "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, sing a song! Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away, O son of Abinoam! 13 "Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles; The LORD came down for me against the mighty. 14 From Ephraim were those whose roots were in Amalek. After you, Benjamin, with your peoples, From Machir rulers came down, And from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter's staff. 15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; As Issachar, so was Barak Sent into the valley under his command; Among the divisions of Reuben There were great resolves of heart. 16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, To hear the pipings for the flocks? The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart. 17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan, And why did Dan remain on ships? Asher continued at the seashore, And stayed by his inlets. 18 Zebulun is a people who jeopardized their lives to the point of death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield. 19 "The kings came and fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; They took no spoils of silver. 20 They fought from the heavens; The stars from their courses fought against Sisera. 21 The torrent of Kishon swept them away, That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on in strength! 22 Then the horses' hooves pounded, The galloping, galloping of his steeds. 23 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the LORD, 'Curse its inhabitants bitterly, Because they did not come to the help of the LORD, To the help of the LORD against the mighty.' 24 "Most blessed among women is Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite; Blessed is she among women in tents. 25 He asked for water, she gave milk; She brought out cream in a lordly bowl. 26 She stretched her hand to the tent peg, Her right hand to the workmen's hammer; She pounded Sisera, she pierced his head, She split and struck through his temple. 27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; At her feet he sank, he fell; Where he sank, there he fell dead. 28 "The mother of Sisera looked through the window, And cried out through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?' 29 Her wisest ladies answered her, Yes, she answered herself, 30 'Are they not finding and dividing the spoil: To every man a girl or two; For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments, Plunder of garments embroidered and dyed, Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?' 31 "Thus let

all Your enemies perish, O LORD! But let those who love Him be like the sun When it comes out in full strength." So the land had rest for forty years.

The book of Judges is a really dark time in the nation of Israel. The kingdom did fine for the time of Joshua and those who had lived with Joshua. But after that generation was gone things turned into a cycle of evil, oppression, repentance and then deliverance. Most of the times of deliverance were only a few decades.

That may be why I do not preach much on the book. Especially the last section of the book that is so terrible and disgusting. I am not saying that the Bible is disgusting. It only tells the story to the times.

In the part we are considering today an old enemy of Israel has arisen to take back control of the land that Joshua and his generation had secured. One of the lessons of Judges is that when God's people become morally weak they are also not able to protect themselves.

So the people have come under the control of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, Jud 4:2.

We are not told how long they have been under his control but we read in 4:3 that " And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD;" This is the repentance. So God raises a deliver in the judge Deborah.

She calls on Barak to raise an army and to go to deliver the people. But Barak will not go unless Deborah goes with him. When the battle is engaged it seems that God gives them an miraculous victory but Sisera gets away. He runs into a place and meets up with Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite. There she kills him by driving a tent peg through his head while he slept.

After the victory Barak and Deborah sing the song of chapter 5. In the song three women are mentioned, all mothers it would appear. Deborah, Jael and Sisera's mother whose name we do not know.

So then in this song we have three very different mothers. They are the mothers that I want to look at today.

I. Deborah

A. The only woman judge in the book of Judges.

1. Probably the only woman leader of the Old Testament.
2. The Judges were not only deliverers but they were literal judges.
3. The people would often have disputes and they would come before the judges who would decide the cases.
4. There may have been more judges that we have listed, and only the ones who brought the nation out of times of oppression are mentioned by name.

B. She refers to herself in the song v-7 says, "Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Arose a mother in Israel"

1. Motherhood has been with us since Eve.
2. It is not something that cavemen developed of the centuries.
3. When God made Eve He did more than make Adam a helper.
4. He created the female side of humanity, to mothering and nurturing side.
5. That is not to say that mothering is the only thing that mothers are good for. That is what the feminist hear when Christians talk about mothers.
6. But it is to say that mothers are especially fitted for nurturing.
7. Mothers are made to bring to the family the parts that the father naturally lacks.

C. But mothers were made for more than mothering as was Deborah.

1. She was a judge.
2. It appears from the book of Judges that the judges were called by God to those positions and I think we can be sure that Deborah was called by God as well.
3. God endows mothers with many great qualities and abilities.
 - a. They can run business, be judges, or many other professions.
 - b. Many of those can be used in the home.
 - c. A good wife and mother can multiply the income of the family through her management of the money.
 - d. But the opposite is true. A foolish woman can throw more stuff out the back door than any man can bring in through the front door.
 - e. And many times mothers have to step into positions that were traditionally filled by men.
4. When the time came she called on Barak to go to war to deliver the people.
 - a. But Barak would not go unless Deborah would go with him.
 - b. This did not bring praise but shame, because God would take the victory from him and give it to a woman, Jael.
 - c. But she went to the battle and gave the needed support, probably more spiritual and intellectual than any thing else.
 - d. And God gave them the victory.

II. The second woman is Jael, wife of Heber.

A. After the battle was over Sisera fled for his life.

1. He could not get away on horse or chariot so he runs.
 2. He comes to a residence, a tent, where he thinks he can be safe and hidden.
 3. He needed a place to rest and rethink what to do.
 4. So he asks Jael for a drink of water.
- B. She gives him cream to drink.
1. He thought this a special blessing since it would not only quench his thirst but would also build his strength.
 2. But what he did not count on was that it would lay heavy on his stomach and put him into a deep sleep.
- C. Jael then carries out her plan against this destroyer of Israel.
1. She drives a tent peg through his temple with such force that she impales him to the ground.
 2. For this she is the hero, not Barak.
 3. I am sure that she was afraid.
 4. I am sure that she was not looking forward to the task but she did what needed to be done.
 5. Otherwise the Canaanites might have been reorganized to rise again against Israel.
- D. It would be nice if everything went well in life.
1. But that is often not the case.
 2. And mothers are left to pick up the pieces and do the hard work that has to be done for her family.
- III. Sisera's mother was a mother also but not the same.
- A. She was a wicked woman who supposed that delivering the girls to the men was an acceptable thing.
- B. She had for years lived knowing of the suffering and pain that her son and his army were afflicting on an innocent people.
- C. She still had the mothering attitude toward her own but had no care for others.
- D. Mothers have come a long way baby.
1. I can remember when women would not smoke for the shame that society put on them.
 2. I remember when the taverns were filled with men while the mothers were

at home taking care of the children.

3. I remember the days when a father might abandon the family but a mother never would.
4. Today mothers march for equal rights.
 - a. The right to kill their unborn children.
 - b. The right to force the government to raise their children.

When I was a child I didn't have much because my family didn't have much.

But I could always count on the people in my life.

Toys we did not have, but I had a mother everyday, 24-7-365.

I had a great dad also who taught me many things, for by example that out of a book or through long talks.

I had a mother and a father who taught me what family was and how it worked.

We have lost that and we are paying for it in the children of the day.

May God send us mothers who will mother.