

JUDGES 4&5

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# DEBORAH & BARAK

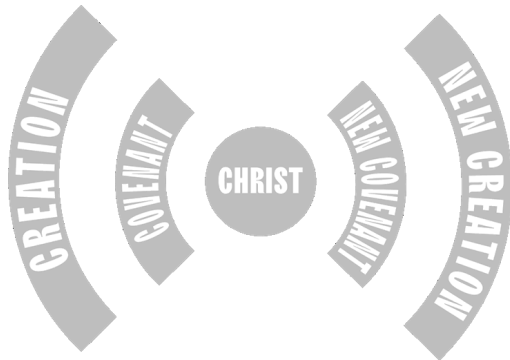
## GOD WINS?

Last week, Ehud was a bit of a letdown after Othniel. But not because Ehud was disabled in his right hand- winning through a disabled warrior actually brought God more glory. The real reason Ehud was a letdown was that he depended on false gods, going out of his way to visit stone images both before and after he killed King Eglon. That's the very idolatry the Judges were meant to be saving Israel from! This week we'll see a pattern develop, where increasingly, little by little, each "saviour" Judge is more and more part of the problem themselves...



We've just read the main story of Deborah and Barak, Jael and Sisera. Now **read Judges 5** where Deborah and Barak retell the same story in a song of celebration. You'll see some of the same themes again, but also some new ones...

6. It turns out Barak wasn't the only one reluctant to fight (see verses 7-8, 15b-17 & 23). But then others were more like Jael (see verses 2, 9, 13-15a, 18). Which quality is particularly praised in verses 2, 9 & 18?



## 2 TIMOTHY 1

<sup>6</sup> I [Paul] remind you [Timothy] to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. <sup>8</sup> So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. <sup>9</sup> He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup> but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. <sup>11</sup> And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. <sup>12</sup> That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

7. According to verses 3-5 & 20-21, it was ultimately God himself who won the battle. How should that affect people's willingness to offer themselves for him?

8. Verses 24-31 contrast the fates of two women: Jael and Sisera's mother. What's the key difference between them which accounts for their fates? (esp. v31)

## LIVING GOD'S STORY

Over time, Israel becomes more like Barak than Jael. Not trusting God to win, so not willing to offer themselves in battle. By Judges 15, the men of Judah even capture Israel's own judge Samson, and offer him to their enemies the Philistines, to avoid battle themselves! Like all humanity since Creation, Israel can't obey God's call to offer themselves because they can't trust God in their hearts. Their Covenant doesn't fix that.

But Jesus Christ, as God's own Son, is different. Jesus offered himself for us, even dying on the cross in our place, in obedience to his Father. Jesus knew that God wins and resurrection awaits those who trust in him (see e.g. Philippians 2:5-11).

Since Jesus offered himself for us and rose to give us new life by his Spirit, we can be changed to be like him. Under the New Covenant, there are no wars to fight (our war is against our own sin). So we won't necessarily risk our lives in that sense. But we will need to show the courage of Jesus himself: **Read 2 Timothy**.

9. Inferring from what Paul says, what seemed to make Timothy afraid of sharing the gospel? What can make *us* afraid to show and share Jesus in our lives?

10. What victory has Jesus already won? (v9-10,12) How should this help to still our fears?

Like Barak and Israel generally, we'll find it's not easy to offer ourselves, or risk ourselves, in obedience to God. We might risk our comfort, reputation, popularity, our place in society, as we obey God's call to show Jesus in our actions and share Jesus with others. But unlike Israel, we have seen Jesus do it first. We've seen how Jesus died for us. We've also seen that Jesus was then raised and glorified, because ultimately God wins. We have the Spirit of Jesus to remind us of this when we're afraid for our future. Let's pray that we can have courage to show and share Jesus, knowing that in Jesus, God really does win.