

Deborah: Prophet and Judge: STRIVE TO BE AN EXCEPTION.

Written by admin

Tuesday, 02 August 2011 08:12 -

"... Village life in Israel ceased, ceased until I Deborah arose, arose a mother in Israel." Judges 5:7 (NIV)

After settling in Canaan- the Promised Land, the Israelites made a covenant to serve God only. However, after the death of Joshua and the birth of a new generation, they fell into an endless cycle where they rebelled against God, were overrun by enemy nations, delivered by a God fearing judge, remained loyal to God while the judge lived, and again forgetting God when the judge died. Deborah was the fourth such Judge out of the twelve recorded in the book of Judges. She was the only female Judge of Israel and she demonstrated leadership by helping the Israelites defeat the Canaanites. She was also a prophet. Her story is told in Judges 4 and 5.

Deborah whose name means "bee" was the wife of Lapidoth (which means "torches" in Hebrew). She dwelt under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim where the children of Israel went to her for judgment.

Israel at this time was a sinful nation steeped in idol worship with all men doing what they thought best. God decided to use Jabin, King of Canaan, as His tool of Israel's punishment.

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King Jabin, with Sisera as his army commander, maintained brutal control over the lives of the Israelites for 20 years. The people cried out to God.

Deborah who was judge at the time called upon Barak and told him that the Lord had commanded him to take an army and fight against Sisera's army at Mount Tabor. Barak told her that he would go to battle only if she accompanied him. She agreed to go but told him that, *"because of the way you are going on about this, the honour will not be yours but the Lord will hand over the honour to a woman"*

Barak and Deborah went with 10,000 men to Mount Tabor and Sisera came to meet them. The Lord "discomfited" all of Sisera's chariots and hosts. Their chariot wheels got stuck in the mud, allowing Barak and his men to fall upon them and slay them all.

Sisera alone escaped and fled to the tent of Heber the Kenite whose wife Jael drove a nail through his head while he was sleeping, thus bringing victory to the children of Israel and freedom from bondage. The honour for killing Sisera went to a woman, Jael as per Deborah's prophesy.

After that battle there was peace in the land for 40 years with Deborah as Judge. The "Song of Deborah" in Judges 5 recounts this victory. Verse 7 extols Deborah's contribution, *"Village life in Israel ceased, ceased until Deborah arose, arose a mother in Israel."*

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Deborah was a great leader to her people and serves as an inspiration to modern day women who seek to lead and serve others. Her story shows that God calls women to hold positions of authority and leadership. God appointed her judge at a time when women were not allowed to hold public office.

Deborah did not limit God. She accepted to be used by God using the womanly wisdom she had been given. She brought a feminine responsiveness to a male dominated office and sought to inspire change through empowering, encouraging and

motivating the people rather than imposing and forcing her ideas. Her commitment to nurturing fit the title she gave herself "Mother to Israel"

There is controversy about whether Deborah was really married or not and if she had children. Some say that the phrase "the wife of Lapidoth (or torches)" meant that she had a fiery temperament. Some also think that it may have referred to the torches in the tabernacle, signifying that she worked in the tabernacle. Others find it reasonable to believe that she was probably married to a man named Lapidoth. As for children, we don't really know if she had any or not. Deborah is called a "mother in Israel" but this could refer to her role as a leader and judge over the children of Israel whether or not she also had physical children. In the full gospel sense, every woman who loves and serves the Lord, keeps his commandments, and who promotes righteousness in her family, church and the wider world is entitled to the designation "mother in Israel".

Deborah was exceptional and stood for godly wisdom in a time of human reasoning, when

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“every man did what was right in his own eyes.”

Are you exceptional, doing what you know is right as everybody follows worldly ways?” Strive to be a “mother in Israel” and lead others towards the right path.

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