

Deborah

I am Deborah, a prophetess in Israel. I had raised my own children and was chosen by the LORD to be “a mother in Israel.” My husband, Lappidoth, was a good man – as far as he went. But he was not involved in the day-to-day raising of the children. I was the disciplinarian. It was the LORD’s provision to train me for the role I was to assume.

It seems that the entire nation was stalled in a cultural adolescence and the Canaanite religions, with their seductive sex worship, were too much for the men of Israel! The LORD God of Hosts chose me, in place of some man who apparently refused to obey the call. Even Barak, who should have been a fearless military leader, hid behind my apron strings!

I had been judging disputes for some time in the hill country of Ephraim, when I was given a clear revelation, intended to be passed on to Barak. "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’"

Would you believe it, Barak said, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go." That sounds more like a six-year-old rather than a teenager! Of course, I went with him – I don’t recall if I held his hand. The LORD gave us a great victory but shamed the male of the species by giving the decisive blow – literally – to a woman, Jael, wife of Heber.

We women are gifted with mercy and a distaste for violence, but the LORD had revealed to Jael, that Sisera’s evil had earned him a violent death. She drove a tent stake through his temples while he slept in her tent, having already lost his entire army.

In a rejoicing mode, Barak and I sang a song of praise. By the way, I even got Barak to sing the melody while I harmonized. And did I mention before that there were earthquakes? Well, there were, and also signs in the sky – it seemed that there was a conflict of the stars. There was violent weather and a sudden catastrophic flood of the river Kishon. What could be the relationship unless it was a judgement by the LORD most high. And to make sure nobody missed it, there was the voice of the angel of the LORD crying out “Curse Meroz,”

And to be sure everybody also understood the justice behind this great victory over the Edomites of Seir, we get a glimpse of Sisera’s mother who saw war as a shopping trip.

"Through the window peered Sisera’s mother; behind the lattice she cried out, ‘Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why is the clatter of his chariots delayed?’ The wisest of her ladies answer her; indeed, she keeps saying to herself, ‘Are they not finding and dividing the spoils: a girl or two for each man, colorful garments as plunder for Sisera, colorful garments embroidered, highly embroidered garments for my neck—all this as plunder?’"

Then said I, "So may all your enemies perish, O LORD! But may they who love you be like the sun when it rises in its strength." Then the land had peace for forty years.

Judges 4 and 5