

Mothers Day Judges 5:6-9 & 19-31

Today we will not just look at motherhood, but womanhood. In this day of liberation, we are still looking for strong Godly women. Too many times the church has taken a stance of oppression and has overlooked the place God has for women. The church historically has viewed women through the eyes of the curse, and not through the eyes of God. If we believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever, then when we explore this passage in the Old Testament, we must get a deeper understanding of God and the women that He chose to use.

Let's begin with looking at the mother of a military commander; a Canaanite general. There are some things that will never change. A mother will always worry about her children when they are away. When I use the term child, I am not speaking literally, because regardless of your age you will always be your mother's child. She will worry about you when you are late, and she will see the good in you even if you are an evil military commander.

General Sisera was just such an evil man. He sought to recover the lands that once were ruled by King Hazor. He is the leader of a great army that has superior weapons. Note that in verse 8 of this song, it makes the statement that Israel had no shields or spears. I am sure this is poetic exaggeration, but the point is that they were powerless and unprepared for battle.

He had iron chariots and had cruelly oppressed Israel for over 20 years according to 4:3. So, let's look at the mother and her son (5:2)

We see Sisera's mother peering through a window. She is anxiously waiting for her son to return from battle. She has that mother's senses that something is wrong. Her servants try to ease her mind, but their speech gives us clues into the kind of general and man that Sisera was

In verse 29 the statement is made that maybe he is late because they are still dividing the spoils. We can read between the lines that land is not all that they want. There is an underlying greed that prevails. They are preying on the oppressed and seeking to gain from them, basically stealing from them.

Then an illusion as to what the ladies really think is happening. It is subtle, but there is mention of a girl or two for each man. The graphic picture is that "hey mom, your son also may be late because he is involved in taking advantage of these conquered people's women." Yet even with this now spoken reality, I know that this mother would excuse any sin because she loves her son.

I have known many people in prison, and who lived lives of debauchery, which in spite of this could have relationships with their mothers while their fathers spurned them. Why is this? Is it because men can't love as deeply as women? No, it is in this maternal bond that we see a glimpse of God, even in a pagan general's mother. There is justice, but we

see a never ending cycle of God, continually loving Israel, even after she falls back into idol worship over and over and over again

Mother #2 – Deborah.

Deborah in this song is portrayed as the mother of Israel. We learn from ch 4:4 that she was a prophetess and the wife of Lippidoth. She was not just a spiritual leader and counselor but God had appointed her and raised her up to be one of the judges in Israel. The previous judges were warriors who arose during a crisis and helped restore Israel back to God, and lead them against their enemies, while God gave the victory. Deborah had no desire to be a warrior. V5 tells us that she held court and helped to decide disputes. The people must have recognized her wisdom and trusted her discernment. We do not read anywhere that they had a problem with her because she was a woman. Certain denominations today would have a church split over a woman leader, yet we see God and His people following not only a woman, but one who is a prophet. This means that God would literally speak through her to the people!

The Prophetic Utterance:

Deborah sends for Barak, and gives him his marching orders from God. He is to go and lure out the general Sisera and God will give him into Barak's hands. Seems pretty cut and dry doesn't it? Barak however tells Deborah that he is only going to go if she goes with him. He either didn't like being told what to do and thought it is easy to order me to go, but if you really believe God will save us, then come to the battle where this famous killing and raping general will be along side of us. Then I will believe you. By doubting God's prophet he doubts God. Because he doubts God, God will still give the victory, but not the honor.

Deborah agrees but makes another prophetic utterance. Since you have chosen to not trust and have asked me to go, then God will give the honor and the victory to a woman. Just think how Barak felt hearing that Deborah was going to get all the honor for this victory. Or at least it appears that she will get the glory, because after all, she is the only woman on the battlefield, right?

We see that not a man was left after this battle (v 16). The battle was a complete success except for the fact that the general that was missing. He had escaped and thus even though Barak won, the victory was not complete in ancient times without the opposing General's capture.

Jael: (v17)

Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Jael. Jael was the wife of Heber the Kenite. These people were skilled at working with metal. It seems that Heber left his people to work his trade near the Cannanits because of their need for iron chariots and weapons. We can assume that he felt pretty safe in the tent of an ally. Especially since Middle Eastern culture only allowed the father and husband into the tent of a woman. Jael allowing this General into this tent was certain protection.

She invited him in and covered him up. She comforted him and told him not to be afraid. He asked for water, but she gave him (5:25) curdled milk that was allowed to ferment. This beverage allowed him to relax. She then did the unthinkable (remember they are allies). The law of hospitality is very strong in the Middle East. You are obligated to protect a guest...period. But she picked up a tent peg and a hammer and drove it through his temple and into the ground. I am not sure that 4:21 needed to add that he died.

A pagan woman was given the victory.

God can use whomever He wants for His plans. He uses women, men, pagans, and the faithful. He is not limited. We however try very hard to put God in a box and control Him. He continues to show us time and time again that He will not be controlled by use, and that His plans can't be thwarted by our vanity, lack of trust, unfaithfulness, etc. He is always ready to rise up a leader.

He is always ready to take us farther into the Promised Land.

He will use whatever means necessary. We just need to be willing and open to His word, direction and creativity!