

Judges Chapter 4 Part 6

Judges 4:6 Now she sent *word* and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, “The Lord, the God of Israel, has indeed commanded, ‘Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun.

Judges 4:7 I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his many troops to the river Kishon, and I will hand him over to you.”

Judges 4:8 Then Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.”

Judges 4:9 She said, “I will certainly go (walk x 2) with you; however, the fame shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take (walk), for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah got up and went (walk) with Barak to Kedesh.

Judges 4:10 Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and ten thousand men went up with him; Deborah also went up with him.

Barak deploys from Mt. Tabor; Sisera deploys to the River Kishion

Judges 4:11 Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, from the sons of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaananim, which is near Kedesh.

This verse is interjected into the narrative. By itself, it seems an unneeded intrusion. This is a flag that there is something important based upon the information here that will become evident later in the narrative.

Now Heber the Kenite... There are differences between the LXX and the Masoretic text on Heber, specifically the word “Kenite.” Rather than dwell on what may be true, I’m just going to read what Merrill Unger says in his Bible Dictionary: “Kenites, a group of metal smiths who traveled throughout the mineral-bearing region in the Wadi Arabah. They were descended from the Midianites, and developed extraordinary skill in metal work. They early settled down along the S. W. shore of the Dead Sea, S. E. of Hebron (Judg. 1:16). Hobab, the son of Reuel, was a Kenite and acted as a guide to Israel in the wilderness (Judge 1:16; 4:11).”

So, Heber was not a son of Israel. But the descendants of the Kenites were aligned with the sons of Israel.

Judges 1:16 Now the descendants of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up from the city of palms with the sons of Judah, to the wilderness of Judah which is in the south of Arad; and they went and lived with the people.

Separated. The Hebrew word can mean separated, dispersed or divided. Genesis 10:32, the genealogy of Noah contains this word:

Genesis 10:32 (NASB) These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their descendants, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.

Genesis 10:32 (Young's Literal Translation) These [are] families of the sons of Noah, by their births, in their nations, and by these have the nations been parted in the earth after the deluge.

It is possible there is an implied contrast with the city name Kedesh. This city name can mean something like holy or separated (i.e. to God). According to the TDOT, "most interpreters" understand the root to mean separated, sunder. Here there is a different separation which would indicate a separation away from the sons of Israel and an affinity with the Canaanite king.

We have clarification of this in verse 17:

Judges 4:17 Now Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was peace (shalom) between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

This is similar to what we learned about Ehud being a friend of king Eglon. Being a friend allowed Ehud to get close enough to the king to kill him. A similar action will occur later in this chapter. But, it will not

Judges Chapter 4 Part 6

Judges 4:1-24

be Barak that gets the glory but a woman, the wife of Heber. And like in chapter 3, this is used by the woman to deceive Sisera that he is safe in her husband's tent. And this woman may not even be from the sons of Israel.

Pitched his tent. That is a good translation.

Oak. The NASB note says "*terebinth.*" Oak is often used for the translation.

Here is a note which may not clarify much from biblehub.com: "It is clear that the translators are uncertain which translation is correct [i.e. oak or terebinth], and it would seem not improbable that then there was no clear distinction between oak and terebinth in the minds of the Old Testament writers; yet the two are very different trees to any but the most superficial observation." This is a tree.

But there is another tree in this chapter. Deborah sat under the "palm tree of Deborah" (verse 5). The palm tree is a fruit tree. The oak tree has nuts. Both appear to be landmarks. They link Deborah, the friendly connection to God and Heber a friendly connection to the enemy of God.

Judges 4:12 Then they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.

They told. First, who is "they?" We are not told. We might assume that Sisera had his own intel people who kept tabs on the sons of Israel. Now they see troop movements and report back to Sisera. A similar word is used in 1 Chronicles 20:2 for someone who came to Jehoshaphat to tell him of an invading army. Let's just assume Sisera has an intel organization and that is who told him.

Judges 4:13 Sisera summoned all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all

the people who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon.

Summoned. Same root that Barak used when he called for volunteers from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun in verse 10. The mustering of troops is similar on both sides.

From the human perspective of the sons of Israel, Sisera has an overwhelming superiority in numbers of troops and the use of iron chariots which the sons of Israel did not have. Yet, God is positioning the Canaanite troops in such a place that a torrent of water will wipe them out. Such a thing has already occurred in Israelite history: the crossing of the Red Sea. I'm getting ahead of the narrative. I'll answer questions on the torrent of water when we get there.



Judges 4:14 Then Deborah said to Barak, “Arise! For this is the day on which the Lord has handed Sisera over to you; behold, the Lord has gone out before you.” So Barak went

down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

Uh Oh! I found another word that's going to take some time to digest.

Arise! When I first read this, I knew there is something important in this word. I had to ask God to reveal to me its importance. It is not a rare word. It is used more than 600 times in the Old Testament. It has a variety of meanings depending upon the context. So, rather than doing a word study from the entire Bible on this word to discover its importance in this context, let us look at how it is used in the book of Judges. This may provide enlightenment on why this word is used here in verse 14 and why it is important in this narrative. There are other words that could have been used, like our friend "to walk." But, God didn't use "walk," He used "Arise," or "Get up!"

The first usage in this book is in Judges 2:10

Judges 2:10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and another generation rose up after them who did not know the Lord, nor even the work which He had done for Israel.

Another generation rose up. Here is a change of generations from a believing generation to an unbelieving generation. This appears to be happening in the US today. More and more people are not just unbelievers, but are becoming more and more hostile toward Christianity. When a Methodist church in Dallas decides to have a joint service with Muslims it is considered an enlightened church by some. But if a Christian church is looking to gain enlightenment from Muslims, then that church has lost its way. But in the case of Barak, he through the power of God delivers the nation which produces 10,000 witnesses to

Judges Chapter 4 Part 6

Judges 4:1-24

God's power. These witnesses will cause a new generation to rise up, one that knows first-hand the work of the Lord on their behalf. Arise Barak. You have been empowered by God. Arise believer! You have been empowered by God.

Judges 2:18 And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who tormented and oppressed them.

Raised up judges. In our context in chapter 4, Barak is not the judge. Deborah is. In other words, in chapter three Othniel is said to be a deliverer and a judge. Ehud is said to be a deliverer and perhaps a judge as well although not specifically so stated.

Now in chapter 4, judge and deliverer are split, perhaps due to Barak's hesitancy to trust God. Yet eventually he does. But by splitting the function of judge and in this case, the direct connection to God's word, and the function of deliverer we get details of both that we didn't get in chapter 3. If you look at the narratives, you see a trend. Except for Shamgar who is apparently not an Israelite and not a judge, the narratives increase with each deliverer. The Othniel narrative is Judges 3:7-11 (5 verses). The Ehud narrative is Judges 3:12-30 (18 verses). In the Barak narrative, two entire chapters are included. The second chapter, chapter 5, contains a long poem praising God.

Judges 3:9 But the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, and the Lord raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to set them free, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

Judges Chapter 4 Part 6

Judges 4:1-24

Raised up a deliverer. Here is the appointment of Othniel as deliverer. The text does not explain the mechanics of this. Did the Angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Christ appoint him in person or was it done some other way? We are not told. Just the fact that the Lord (Yahweh) raised him up.

Judges 3:15 But when the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. And the sons of Israel sent tribute by him to Eglon the king of Moab.

Raised up a deliverer. Again, the mechanics of appointing Ehud as a deliverer are not included in the narrative.

Judges 3:20 Then Ehud came to him while he was sitting in his cool roof chamber alone. And Ehud said, “I have a message from God for you.” And he got up from his seat.

And he got up. Here Eglon, the enemy king, got up from his seat. A different usage. It is interesting that God raised Ehud to deliver Israel from Eglon. Then Eglon “raised” himself to stand face-to-face against Ehud. Then Eglon dies by Ehud’s dagger.

Judges 4:9 She said, “I will certainly go with you; however, the fame shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Judges Chapter 4 Part 6

Judges 4:1-24

Deborah got up. This is a similar use to Eglon getting up or standing up from a sitting position. But in this case it is the good gal that does it, not the bad guy. And figuratively, she as judge is raised up. Now in our passage Judges 4:14 the deliverer is told to get up.

Arise! Deborah is saying get up and do your job in spite of the impossible odds from a human perspective. Walk by faith and not by sight, Barak! And do your job as the deliverer. One might make the case that here is the appointment of Barak as deliverer figuratively. He responded in faith previously to God's command to assemble troops. But that action, although necessary to deliver Israel, does not in itself deliver Israel. Only winning in battle will he deliver Israel. And of course, it is actually God delivering Israel, but there has to be a small amount of faith that God uses.

If I wasn't sitting behind a podium with a camera trained on me, I would jump up and use a leg to simulate kicking Barak in the butt while saying "Get up Barak!" Often in our own lives, God has to kick us in the butt for us to get with the program of faith. So you have an impossible situation facing you like Barak. In our lives, "the battle is the Lord's." God has essentially already said that in verse 7, "... I will deliver him into your hand."

Now, I am going to go on a little excursion based upon that phrase, "the battle is the Lord's." It is often used when teaching about Faith-Rest. It is a powerful concept. When we first learn this promise, we understand that we must trust God to act. But, what is a promise if it doesn't take us to the character, the essence of God. Are you using the sentence as an incantation? If you say it enough it will become true in your mind? Here is an insight from Robbie Dean: The first step in the faith-rest drill is to mix faith with a promise. The second step is to think through the doctrinal rationales that are embedded in that promise. We come to a certain conclusion, and the conclusion isn't simply a statement of that

Judges Chapter 4 Part 6

Judges 4:1-24

proposition. We come to the conclusion that God is in control.” (3John lesson 13). And later in the same lesson he says, “It goes back to His integrity; it is His character once again. So the rationale that undergirds this whole promise is the rationale of God's character. This is why we have to understand the essence box.” The promise Robbie Dean is speaking of is actually in the book of Isaiah, but the principle is the same. Promises in the Word of God should remind us of, should carry us to the character of God and our relationship to Him. Abba, Father. We may claim a promise, but it is God’s essence that fulfils any promise. We must exercise our relationship with God as Justice, Righteousness, Love, Omnipotence, Omniscience, etc.

We must not use promises as incantations. They are connections between the believer walking by faith and the essence of God. We are invoking action on God’s part. Wow!

Back to “Arise!”

Earlier in this chapter, Deborah as prophetess, sends and calls Barak. These words in appointment passages have theological importance. The word “send,” is from a Hebrew word that is sometimes translated by the Greek word “apostello.” Barak received a commission. Deborah also “calls” Barak. The apostle Paul was “called” (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:15). We also hear of Isaiah being called as well as other prophets, like Samuel.

Now, the word “arise” is from the same root as is used to raise up a deliverer for Othniel and Ehud. Except in this case, we see the mechanics of it. We see the ~~man~~ God behind the curtain.

Barak rises up as a deliverer.

Consider one more thing. In Judges 2:10 “another generation rose up after them who did not know the Lord,…” A generation in the Bible from a prophetic perspective is sometimes considered to be 40 years. There are

Judges Chapter 4 Part 6

Judges 4:1-24

many other numbers thrown out, like 20 or 30 years but 40 provides a convenient round number that I have heard used in explaining prophecy.

At the end of Judges chapter 5 it says:

Judges 5:31 ... And the land was at rest for forty years.

When I read this, it made me consider the possibility that as a result of Barak the deliverer, delivering Israel using 10,000 “witnesses,” that while those 10,000 were alive there were people in the land who knew the Lord and had seen His works on their behalf. Barak had “helped” God raise up a new generation who knew God. Wow!

Now for the battle itself.

Judges 4:15 And the Lord routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera got down from *his* chariot and fled on foot.

The Lord. First and foremost in this verse, the Lord did the work here. He made Barak successful in battle against all human odds.

Routed. This is another important word that I want to spend time on. So we will continue here next week.