

## Judges Chapter 4 Part 7

The Book of Judges, in my humble opinion, has been misnamed. It should have been titled the Book of Deliverers or better, the Book of Saviors. Doing that causes the reader to then compare individual deliverers with THE Deliverer, Jesus Christ.

There were deliverers for Israel in the Book of Judges. Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world (John 4:42). And Jesus still delivers in the New Testament as Phil explained on Sunday. In particular, Paul said:

**2 Timothy 3:10 But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,**

**2 Timothy 3:11 persecutions, sufferings, such as happened to me at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me!**

Note that Paul said” the Lord delivered me!” He is witnessing to what God did to deliver him. God delivered the sons of Israel from the Canaanites through Barak and the 10,000. By doing so, God created 10,000 witnesses to the work of God. I imagine some of them couldn’t stop talking about that deliverance. So today, as I have said, you too will have deliverances about which you can witness.

Jesus is a deliverer.

Jesus was a prophet as well.

Moses set the standard for being a prophet. But in Deuteronomy chapter 18, there is mention of THE Prophet who was Jesus Christ.

The point is that the Bible is about Jesus Christ in many different ways.

**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.

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**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 Zaanannim, which is near Kedesh.

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

**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.



**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.**

Now let us pick up where we left off last week.

**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.** Although “Yahweh” is the second word in the Hebrew sentence, we deal with it first. God did the work, not Barak, and not Deborah. God made Barak successful in battle against all human odds.

**Routed.** This is actually the first word in this verse in the Hebrew text. Maybe in context “routed” might be a valid translation of the Hebrew word. But, according to the TDOT there are ten uses of this verb with God as the subject. It further says, “In this usage [with God as the subject], nine of the occurrences employ these verbs as technical terms for evoking panic, “holy terror.”” PANIC & HOLY TERROR. Let’s look at some of the another instance of this verb in the Old Testament in order to get a feel for this panic.

When the sons of Israel were crossing the Red Sea, they were chased by the Egyptians. God took care of the Egyptians. As the Egyptians crossed the Red Sea on dry land after the children of Israel...

**Exodus 14:24 But at the morning watch, the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion.**

**Exodus 14:25 He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians each said, “Let me flee from Israel, for the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians.”**

Our word is in Exodus 14:24, “confusion,” but the effect is manifest in verse 25: “Let me flee...” Teachers used to teach in high school that panic can cause the “fight or flight” response. Some people when confronted with an acute stress, such as a large magnitude earthquake or an immediate phobia (arachnophobia, the fear of spiders, for instance) may jump up from a sitting position and run blindly. In the case of the Egyptians, they “fled.” Logical thought is lost. Panic thinking, intense fear, followed by running without being guided by logical thought.

Later in Exodus, God promises the sons of Israel protection as long as they trusted Him...

**Exodus 23:27 I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.**

Here God has linked “terror” to “confusion” or as we might translate it, “panic.” Here is a comment on this passage from the TDOT: “The personification of terror to be observed here also appears in Ps. 88.16(15); Job 9:34; 13:21; 33:7; and most clearly in Ex. 23:27(J). Yahweh dismisses the people with the promise: “I will send my terror before you.” Like the “angel” (v. 20) and “fear” (v. 28), so here terror appears as an independent entity. It acts at Yahweh’s instruction, brings about confusion and flight of Israel’s enemies (v. 27), and thus mediates

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the delivering immanence and protecting presence of Yahweh to his people.”

I spend time on these words because it is my desire that you get a small taste of the intensity of what God did for Israel.

**Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army.** God built up the powerful spectre of Sisera’s army. From a human perspective, it was impossible for Barak’s farmers to be successful against an experienced general commanding a well-trained and experienced army, armed with the latest weaponry which Israel does not possess. And now, God, put the fear of God, HOLY TERROR, into their enemies. As we will see, he also caused rain and a resulting torrent/flood to aid in wiping them out. But, he used Barak’s army to 1) train them, 2) make them witnesses to God’s power and faithfulness and 3) let them share in God’s plan to wipe out this formidable army “by the edge of the sword.”

I love some of the Hebrew here. “Before” Barak is literally “in his face.” Barak is seeing first hand with his eyes wide open God working through the weather, through the terrain and through empowering his troops to win an impossible battle.

The “edge of the sword” is literally “mouth of the sword.” It is like the swords have become wild animals ripping apart the enemy troops. When viewed from this perspective, for me at least, this narrative takes on a very graphical panorama. The word for panic includes commotion, sounds, etc. These are the sounds of battle. Men screaming in pain as they die with no hope. They don’t know the answer to the question, “What happens when I die?” They will go to Torments awaiting the final judgment sending them into the Lake of Fire and the “Second Death.”

Sisera fled on foot. “Fled” is the same Hebrew word used in Exodus 14 “Let me flee from Israel.” The general in charge of the army that is getting hacked to death, flees. The Israelite force has been empowered by God (Yahweh). Sisera, in panic, full of fear for his life, is fleeing. Alone.

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His god has failed him. His army failed him. His king failed him. So he runs toward someone he is sure will protect and aid him. Heber. He is a man at peace with king Jabin.

But before we get to Heber, let us read a paragraph from Josphus that gives us another, human, perspective on this very battle. “So the battle began; and when they were come to close fight, there came down from heaven a great storm, with a vast quantity of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in the face of the Canaanites, and so darkened their eyes, that their arrows and slings were of no advantage to them, nor would the coldness of the air permit the soldiers to make use of their swords; while this storm did not so much incommode the Israelites, because it came in their backs. They also took such courage, upon the apprehension that God was assisting, that they fell upon the very midst of their enemies, and slew a great number of them; so that some of them fell by the Israelites, some fell by their own horses, which were put into disorder, and not a few were killed by their own chariots.”

Let's take a short side trip. Yahweh is the God of Israel. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is our God. Jesus Christ is the “Lord of the Armies.” Baal, the storm god, is the chief god of the Canaanites. Yes, I said storm god. So there is an implied irony here. The Canaanites have the storm god on their side. But in this battle, they lose because the weather, in particular, a storm, was against them. Their god, the storm god was a god of wood and stone. He was not the Living God, Yahweh, Jesus Christ. The application to us is that in the face of impossible odds, trust the power of God the Holy Spirit. When Jesus ascended to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to take up residence in each and every believer. When trusting the power of the Holy Spirit, we participate in God's plan, share in His glory, and above all are protected by Him. As a result, we become personal witnesses to God's work in our own lives.

**Judges 4:16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not even one was left.**

**Barak pursued.** Pursuit is what an army does when it has defeated the opposing army and caused it to retreat. If you want to seal your victory, you pursue a retreating army and destroy it. That is what the Egyptians did at the Red Sea. Unfortunately for them, they were fighting the living God.

**Exodus 14:9 Then the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.**

**The Egyptians chased.** This is the same word used of Barak chasing after the Canaanites. Except, God turned an advantage into a disadvantage.

**Exodus 14:26 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Reach out with your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen.”**

**Exodus 14:27 So Moses reached out with his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the Lord**



**overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.**

**Exodus 14:28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained.**

Pharaoh had chariots, horsemen and army. That is similar to what Sisera had. Pharaoh pursued the children of Israel. Barak pursued the Canaanites. In Pharaoh's case, "not even one of them remained." In Barak's case, "not even one was left." Even in the Hebrew, the phrase is almost the same. One extra word in Exodus 14.

Is it dawning on you that there are some interesting parallels between Judges 4 and Exodus 14? I suspect it is intentional on the part of the Holy Spirit. God acted in Exodus 14. You might say God did the most for the sons of Israel at the exodus in creating a nation, His nation, His people. Now in Judges 4, He is doing a lesser work to deliver them.

There is a similar scenario. A hostile force is challenging Israel in both cases. In the Exodus case, Israel had no army and no weapons. God did all the work. In Judges, Israel had an army and weapons which were not a match for those the Canaanites had. But, God allowed the Israelite "army" of farmers to participate in His plan, by faith. Where is their faith you say? Against all odds, they willingly followed Barak into battle. You will see that in chapter 5 others refused the call from Barak. Zebulun and Issachar responded to the call.

There is similar vocabulary. The opposing forces had chariots, horsemen and an army (infantry). The opposing army was defeated due to water. In the Exodus, water engulfed them. In Judges, there was a flash flood

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accompanied by hail into the faces of the Canaanites. Both opposing forces panicked (same Hebrew word). Both opposing forces fled (same Hebrew word). I could go on.

The point is that God is in charge of history. He already picked sides: His side and those that trust Him, especially those that trust Him day in and day out. Are you on God's side?

Barak chased the Canaanites and perhaps other hostile peoples all the way back from where they started, Harosheth-Hagoyim. Perhaps that last of them died within sight of their homes. Don't mess with God's people.

Again, they died by the edge of the sword. As I said previously "edge" is mouth. It almost personifies the sword with having a mouth. Actually, it makes the sword into something like a wild ravenous animal. I don't know what that would be called other than to personify. Animalize?

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

**Sisera fled.** This is the second time Sisera is said to flee. He fled in verse 15 and he continues to flee. Now he flees on foot. No longer does he have his chariot. It is probably stuck in the mud in the River Kishon.

Here is an interesting parallel between Sisera and Barak. Deborah called Barak to her tree. She gives him a message from God: a message of victory. Sisera flees to the tent of another woman, Jael, who called him to her tent. Here, Sisera receives a "message" of death (a tent peg through his brain) much like Eglon did at the hand of Ehud. Except here, a woman does the deed.

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**There was peace.** The word is “shalom,” peace. Remember that Heber is not a son of Israel, even though some of the Kenite’s helped the sons of Israel. But this peace is used by Jael to deceive Sisera. Again, this is similar to what Ehud did to Eglon. Ehud feigned being a friend only to kill him as he might kill a sacrificial animal.

**Judges 4:18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my master, turn aside to me! Do not be afraid.” So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug.**

**Jael went out to meet Sisera.** How did Jael know Sisera was headed her way? We may never know. She obviously was aware of the battle that had taken place. She probably saw Barak and his farmer troops “marching as to war.” She seems to have an understanding that Sisera has been defeated and needs a place to hide and rest.

**Master.** She addresses him with the Hebrew word “adoni,” translated lord or master. It is sometimes used of God. By all appearances, she is treating him as a friend and ally. Deception. In both chapter 3 and here in chapter 4, deception is used to put the “victim” at ease before the kill.

**Judges 4:19 And he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a leather bottle of milk and gave him a drink; then she covered him.**