

Judges Chapter 5 Part 2

I want to start our lesson tonight by quoting from Phil's teaching on Sunday.

He was explaining the Greek word didaskalia, or doctrine from 2 Timothy 4:3.

“That word doctrine is indeed the word didaskalia. Again, ladies and gentlemen the Word of God is replete with this word, didaskalia, and forms of it. God is the ultimate arbiter of what is right and wrong. That's why He is going to judge the living and the dead. That's why God the Holy Spirit's function in us helps us to discern what's the right thing and the wrong thing to do in any particular relationship instance in the local body. Doctrine is not a bad word. Doctrine simply means this is all the truth God has given us about a particular subject. Sometimes that can be easy to find and sometimes it can be more laborious to get the nuance and details behind a particular doctrine or concept in the Word of God. As disciples, didaskalia is the exact thing that we are supposed to learn. Make no doubt about it, doctrine is not the goal of the Christian life. It's the means of the Christian life. It teaches us how to understand when we are in the filling of the Spirit. It teaches us that we need our faith to be in the filling of the Spirit. So, you can't discount learning the Word of God if you want to live a Christian way of life. But it is tough sometimes to learn the Word of God.”

You are here because you want to learn about yourselves, about your Christian life and to learn about who God is.

Before we get started with a review of chapter 5, let me emphasize the impact Bible doctrine should have on your thinking.

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

I emphasize certain passages because they had and continue to have an impact on my thinking. Each pastor-teacher will have his own special verses that had a dramatic impact on his thinking. One of mine, a recent acquisition is

Judges 4:6b ...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.

The answer to the question, “Why did God need 10,000 men to go into battle?” opened an understanding about myself and why I am still here after believing in Jesus Christ as my savior. God doesn’t need me. He wants me. And He wants you. He loves us. He is faithful to us.

Remember what Jesus said to the Jews when they claimed they were important as children of Abraham:

Matthew 3:9 “and do not assume that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father’; for I tell you that God is able, from these stones, to raise up children for Abraham.”

But God chose us in Christ to be witnesses to God’s work with front row seats, participants in God’s work in His plan, and share in the benefits by walking in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit.

I asked a question because of the prompting of the Holy Spirit. I already knew pieces of the answer. But asking the question here and receiving the answer made me realize to what extent the answer applied to me and to you.

At some point, you will thank God, not just because the Bible says to, but because you have a deep appreciation of what God has done in your lives.

Look at the Riskey family ministry in Mexico. There are stories Herman has told us. People who heard the Gospel and believed are so excited about what God just did in their lives that they are motivated to tell others. Not everyone is going to have a “conversion experience.” Spirituality is not about experience. But as you grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, your understanding of who God is and your appreciation for what God has done will increase. You will love God.

Outline of chapter 5 (Robbie Dean):

- I. Title (verse 1)
- II. Proclamation to Praise Yahweh (verses 2-8)
- III. Description of the Deliverance (verses 9-30)

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Let us review using some points:

1. Judges chapter 5 is a Hebrew descriptive praise psalm. It recounts God's victory over the Canaanites through the Israelite farmer army based upon Israel's faith, even the size of a mustard seed, demonstrating God's faithfulness and lovingkindness towards the sons of Israel.
2. The psalm was composed because of an emotional outpouring which recognized the character of God. Again, a note of caution. Spirituality is not based upon emotion. But at times spirituality may cause a believer to be overwhelmed with emotion, with appreciation for who and what God is. Take the Risley Family ministry. I am repeating myself. But their witness is a powerful one. From stories told in the Spring Valley Church, many Mexican individuals, once they believe in Jesus Christ as savior are motivated by the joy they have knowing they are saved, that they have to immediately tell someone else. There are songs in English that were composed because of an emotional response to what God did in that individual's life.
3. Hebrew poetry is difficult to translate and maintain the stylistic devices used to accentuate key events. Deborah, assuming she was the original composer, took liberties with the Hebrew language, making fun at different people. Also, as we go through the text, note the inherent parallelism. In some cases, there will be a statement. Then the next statement is almost a restatement using a different subject and different word which are similar to or expand upon the original statement.
4. There are obvious parallels between Judges 4-5 and Exodus 14-15, the exodus from Egypt. God delivered the sons of Israel from Egypt. He again delivered the sons of Israel from the Canaanites.

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5. Much of the book of Judges was written to remind Israel both past and present, of the all-mighty God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their God who delivers for His own sake. But the sons of Israel only benefit when they trust this God and not gods of wood and stone.
6. The first verse serves as a title and introduction to the psalm.
7. We were just getting to the point that the angelic conflict is perhaps mentioned here and in other places.
8. Although the word for faith may not show up much in the book of Judges, there are vocabulary words that demonstrate “faith in action.” One of those words is from the Hebrew word for free will offering or volunteering. When we depend on the Holy Spirit in faith, we are volunteering for God’s plan. The Holy Spirit empowers us to carry out His plan. It is not our power, but that of the Holy Spirit.

Judges 5:1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying, (Biblical inerrancy tells us that this is actually what they said)

Judges 5:2 “For the leaders leading in Israel, For the people volunteering, Bless the Lord!”

Leaders leading. Remember this may be a humorous play on words with the word pharaoh: the pharaohs pharaohing in Israel. On the one hand it is humorous. On the other hand, as a result of faith, men have returned to being leaders. Robbie Dean emphasized that leadership in Israel was mostly lacking during the time of the judges. But, there were times, even for brief moments that some, not all, stepped up, perhaps haltingly with faith the size of a mustard seed.

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Volunteering. Free will volunteering while in the service of God (i.e. depending on God, for us, depending on God the Holy Spirit) is faith in action.

Because I consider this word important here in this context and its applicability to our lives, I am going to repeat the quotes from the TDOT.

“For all occurrences of the word group in the OT, as well as in Postbiblical Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic, the element of free will is determinative. The act of giving, the gift, and the decision are all free and voluntary. The basic meaning of the root *ndb* can therefore be defined as “prove oneself freely willing.”

Remember: Free Will. Positive Volition. Willingly. “The act of giving, the gift, and the decision are all free and voluntary.”

Concerning the verb and noun, “In the majority of its occurrences, it means “freewill offering” and refers to the offerings of private individuals outside the regular sacrificial system.”

Remember: A freewill offering is “outside the regular sacrificial system.” There is no definition of exactly what is offered. You are free to offer to God something of your choosing. Here is the gravy in the believer’s life. I trust God and he blesses me. I walk with faith dependence on the Holy Spirit and I receive rewards. It has to be voluntary.

“There is a difference between *ndb* and other synonyms. “Nonetheless, this very difference made it an especially appropriate vehicle for expressing praise, joy, and thanksgiving to Yahweh freely and unconditionally.”

Remember: “...praise, joy, and thanksgiving...” to God “...freely and unconditionally.” We offer prayers of thanksgiving. We sing praises to God in joy.

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“In some cases, the hithpael or hithpaal (Aramaic) of the verb *ndb* suggests a free decision or choice of a particular action. Examples include the willingness to go into battle expressed in the Song of Deborah (Jgs. 5:2,9)...”

Bless the Lord. This is worship of God. God blesses us in so many ways. And then we reflect those blessings back to God.

Judges 5:3 Hear, you kings; listen, you dignitaries! I myself—to the Lord, I myself will sing, I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel!

Hear you kings; listen, you dignitaries!

From Robert Chisholm: “The address to kings and rulers (v. 3) sets the tone for the entire poem. Yahweh’s battle with the Canaanites was a test of power to determine whether King Jabin of Canaan or Yahweh would rule over Israel (see v. 19). This song of victory was appropriate because all kings needed to know of the royal splendor and power of victorious Yahweh, the God of Israel.”

But this address to kings and dignitaries has a wider application than just to the battle in Israel. Are the physical kings and dignitaries present to hear this psalm? No. But the “dignitaries” in Heaven are present and are listening to the psalm. So perhaps this is a tacit indication of the angelic conflict. We know in the Church Age that angels are watching us and learning about the character of God through His actions.

Hear. This is the standard Hebrew word for hearing. Like the “Shema” in

Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!

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Except, here in Judges the “hear” is in the plural.

I would be remiss if I didn’t also include:

Deuteronomy 6:5 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Give ear. This word is often used in the Psalms and other poetry like in the Psalm of Moses:

Deuteronomy 32:1 “Listen, you heavens, and I will speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth!

Again, heavens and earth may include angelic beings and hence we are again in the realm of the angelic conflict.

I myself—to the Lord, I myself will sing, I will sing. Since both Deborah and Barak are singing this psalm, the “I” applies to each individually. That is the easy part. But, this sentence is a little complicated. Let’s take it piece by piece.

There are actually four “I” in this sentence. There are two overt I’s as pronouns: “I to the Lord, I,” and two I’s as part of the conjugation of the verbs to sing: “I sing, I sing.” So if you were slavishly literal in translation, it might sound like: “I to the Lord, even I, I sing, I sing. Here is Young’s Literal Translation:

Judges 5:3 Hear, ye kings; give ear, ye princes, I, to Jehovah, I -- I do sing, I sing praise to Jehovah, God of Israel.

The emphasis, as in some other places in the Bible is overwhelming. Have you ever had someone repeat a phrase over and over again to your face in order to emphasize and ensure you will not forget what was said?

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Well, here you have it. The joy that Deborah and Barak have in their hearts is welling up inside them and bursting out like a West Texas oil gusher.

Now for the difficult part.

I sing, I sing. From the English you might think the same Hebrew word is repeated. You might even think that this would be a Hebrew infinitive absolute which would emphasize what is being said. No! Here there are two different verb roots for sing. Yes, they both mean sing. So now I go to God the Father in prayer. “Why do you have two different words for sing?” The answer has to do with what a psalm is. A better question is to approach the subject from what a psalm is. Since this is a psalm, a hymn, what is that composed of? Obviously, there are words and there is music either with instrumental accompaniment or just using the voice as a musical instrument while singing the words. The first word for sing has already been used in verse 1,

Judges 5:1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying,

“Sang,” followed by “saying” indicates, in this context, the content of the psalm, the words, the praise itself, the doctrine if you will since this is a Bible psalm. And that is what we have on the written page. In the English we are reading the words of the psalm. But there is no musical score from which we can give the words musical life. True, in the English. But not exactly true if you read the Hebrew. The Hebrew text has something called “cantillation.” From Wikipedia:

“A primary purpose of the cantillation signs is to guide the chanting of the sacred texts during public worship. Very roughly speaking, each word of text has a cantillation mark at its primary accent and associated with that mark is a musical phrase that tells how to sing that word. The reality is more complex, with some words having two or no marks and the

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musical meaning of some marks dependent upon context. There are different sets of musical phrases associated with different sections of the Bible. The music varies with different Jewish traditions and individual cantorial styles.” (The underline is mine, not Wikipedia).

Here is the Hebrew text of Judges 5:2

בְּפָרַע פְּרָעוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהַתְנַדֵּב עִם בְּרָכּוֹ יְהוָה:

Here are some of the cantillation signs:



There are many more. So, in the text are signs that have musical content. The explanation of these is long and contains many historical stories. In some cases, these signs may have been used as hand signals to the choir from the choir director.

The point is this: the first word for singing, in the context, appears to refer to the text, the doctrine, the praises being sung. The second word is from the root meaning psalm. It may originally derived from “plucking,” as in plucking a stringed instrument. According to the TDOT, “In this case the basic meaning would be “pluck (strings).” That is perhaps an over-simplification. The point again, is that this word is associated with the musical part of singing. And that is what a psalm is: words that have a doctrinal content as well as a musical life. It almost begs of an analogy with an organism: the body or content plus the spirit of life, the dynamics. That is the believer’s life, going back to Phil’s statement which emphasized doctrine and the filling of the Holy Spirit. Doctrine, or content, plus the filling of the Spirit, the dynamics, is the spiritual life of the believer. In a sense, each one of us, when walking in faith dependence on the Holy Spirit, is a divine song.