

## Judges Chapter 5 Part 7

Before we start by reviewing verse 23 and expanding on it, here is an outline that may help frame the topics covered. Understand that there is a spiritual component in all these actions. In my outline I am turning up the contrast to highlight this spiritual component.

This part of the Song of Deborah is like an awards ceremony with the reading of citations. It not only highlights the tribes and people who engaged in commendable faith-based activity, but also condemns those who lacked faith or even fought against faith. There is a sense in which these verses are a min-Hebrews chapter 11.

- I. Judges 5:12-13 Opening Remarks
- II. Judges 5:14-23 Israelite Actions
  - A. Commendation of Faith Tribes (5:14-15a)
  - B. Condemnation of Flesh Tribes (5:15b-17)
  - C. Citation for Spiritual Courage (5:18)
  - D. Spiritual Battle (5:19-22)
  - E. Judgement for Spiritual Cowardice (5:23)
- III. Judges 5:24-30 Non-Israelite Actions 5:24-30
  - A. Citation for Spiritual Courage by Non-Israelite (5:24-27)
  - B. Citation for Spiritual Numbness by Non-Israelite (5:28-30)
- IV. Judges 5:31 Concluding Remarks

This reminds us that such a ceremony will take place in the future for all believers:

**2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive compensation for his deeds done through the body, in accordance with what he has done, whether good or bad.**

We will review a verse from last week and expand on it.

### ***Judgement for Spiritual Cowardice***

**Judges 5:23 (NASB) ‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the Lord, ‘Utterly curse its inhabitants, Because they did not come to the help of the Lord, To the help of the Lord against the warriors.’**

**Angel of the Lord.** This is the second person of the Trinity, the pre-existent Christ. God Himself is cursing Meroz. Actually, the verb is in the imperative 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural: “You all” (Texas idiom) curse Meroz. God is ordering the cursing of Meroz.

**Meroz.** According to the Bible commentator Trent Butler, “We know nothing of Meroz.” Later he adds, “But Meroz is central to the repeated theme of blessing on free-will volunteering, battle participation, and personal initiative to defeat the enemy contrasted to cursing on those who do not participate and thus show love for Yahweh. Such a curse in this context reflects a group expected to show loyalty to Yahweh and to one’s own people, not a group without obligations whose refusal brought forth frustration that expressed itself in a curse.”

We must pause here to look at “curse.” It is used three times in this sentence, an emphasis. And, one of those times it is in the Infinitive Absolute form which in itself is an emphasis. Remember, this is being

said by the second person of the Trinity which should by itself get our attention. Another emphasis. So, there are three emphatic emphasizeers that emphasize the cursing of Meroz. Did I emphasize that enough?

Where does God first use this term for cursing? What we need to see is the usage of this verb in the Bible, in particular, the Torah. Genesis 3:14 on the “serpent.”

**Genesis 3:14 Then the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all the livestock, And more than any animal of the field; On your belly you shall go, And dust you shall eat All the days of your life;**

From this passage and others, apparently a curse results in a change for the worse of the one cursed. It is not just an incantation or an insult when God uses this term. There are real repercussions when God curses.

In Genesis 3:17, the ground is cursed because of Adam.

**Genesis 3:17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; With hard labor you shall eat from it All the days of your life.**

In this case, the ground is cursed because of Adam’s actions. As a result, Adam will have difficulty farming.

**Genesis 9:25 So he (Noah) said, “Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.”**

The result of Ham’s action is that one of his son’s is cursed, causing Canaan to historically become a servant to Shem and Japhet.

But, these curses in Judges chapter 5 is not just “cursed.” In this case, the emphasis is on the obligation to act: curse Meroz.

From what Biblical scholars have deduced, Meroz was near Barak’s hometown. If that is so, they may have been in the area of the tribe of Naphtali. So they may have been expected to join the battle. They may even have volunteered verbally but then backed out when it was evident they would actually have to go into battle. Reminds me of the Parable of the Two Sons:

**Matthew 21:28 (Jesus is speaking) “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’**

**Matthew 21:29 But he replied, ‘I do not want to.’ Yet afterward he regretted it and went.**

**Matthew 21:30 And the man came to his second son and said the same thing; and he replied, ‘I will, sir’; and yet he did not go.**

**Matthew 21:31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They \*said, “The first.” Jesus \*said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.**

**Matthew 21:32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even have second thoughts afterward so as to believe him.**

In Judges, the non-volunteering tribes were honest in their non-faith. Barak knew where they stood and didn't depend on them. However, it is possible he was depending on the men from Meroz to join the battle, but they didn't. We have seen that from time to time in the Congress. Some vote for something full heartedly when they know it will not pass. But, when it is likely a bill will make it to the President's desk and be signed into law, they back out. Remember that?

Let me ask another question: “Why do we know nothing about Meroz? Let me suggest that the curse was applied and the town and everyone in it was wiped out of recorded history except this one mention of being cursed. It was triple cursed by God. Even worse than Sodom and Gomorrah.

In American history, some of the people who historians judge the most are traitors. These are people of a nation who betray their own nation.

The point is, there is a result of the cursing. In this passage in Judges, the cursing apparently caused the inhabitants of Meroz to disappear from history.

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OK, so they got cursed out of existence. Then the question is why?

They did not come to the help of Yahweh.

What is the help of Yahweh? God doesn't need our help. But we can participate in God's actions to help. Remember the 10,000. They participated in God's plan. Here, the inhabitants of Meroz, apparently located not too far from Barak's home town refused to come to the "help of Yahweh."

It is God that is "helping." But He is using members of the Israelite tribes. He blesses them way beyond what they thought was possible. Although some of the tribes refused the call to participate, there is something more with the inhabitants of Meroz. It is not specifically said but it caused God to wipe them from history.

Help of Yahweh. "Help" is in construct with Yahweh, "the Help of the Lord/Yahweh." Since if we agree that God does not need man's help, then what is this? I can only make a suggestion that this is a title for God from the perspective of His provision for man. When I looked at the LXX version I almost expected the word *parakletos*. But it is the normal Greek word for help, "*boetheian*."

**Against the mighty ones.** The word "against" is not the preposition I expected to see. The one used in Hebrew, *be*, can be "against," when used with a verb of motion. Certainly "to come to" is a verb of motion. So many translators like the NASB and NIV translate this as "against." But, the dictionary meaning is "at, in or with." When used with a word meaning a multitude it means "in the midst" or "among." As I read it, the Help of God is the object.

This leads to the question of who the "mighty ones" are. If they are hostile, then "against" would make sense. If they are friendlies then "with" or "among" makes more sense.

The Young's Literal Translation (YLT) says "among":

**Judges 5:23 (YLT) Curse Meroz -- said a messenger of Jehovah, Cursing, curse ye its inhabitants, For they came not to the help of Jehovah, To the help of Jehovah among the mighty!**

Some comments about this translation. He says messenger of Jehovah instead of Angel of the Lord. He perhaps does not understand this is a title of the Pre-Incarnate Christ, the second person of the Trinity. He highlights the Infinitive Absolute by using the verb twice since there are two words in this, “Cursing, curse.” And he says, “among the mighty!”

Keil and Delitzsch agree with “among the heroes or mighty men.”

### ***Commendation for a non-Israelite***

**Judges 5:24 “Most blessed of women is Jael, The wife of Heber the Kenite; Most blessed is she of women in the tent.**

Much of what Jael did has already been covered in chapter 4. There are some differences that are not important for the discussion here.

It is mentioned both in chapter 4 and here that Jael is the wife of Heber the Kenite. This makes it clear that Jael belongs to a non-Israelite family. Yet, God allowed her to participate in His plan. This takes me on an excursion based upon Genesis:

**Genesis 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**

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Herman has previously talked about this verse. My intent is to look at some of the people who helped the Israelites and today, the Jews.

We often hear of antisemitism both past and present. What we do not often hear are the efforts of non-Jews to help and protect Jews. That is what I want to look at, in brief.

In the past, Rahab the prostitute at risk to herself and her family helped the Israelites.

**Judges 5:25 He asked for water, she gave him milk; In a magnificent bowl she brought him curds.**

**Judges 5:26 She reached out her hand for the tent peg, And her right hand for the workmen's hammer. Then she struck Sisera, she smashed his head; And she shattered and pierced his temple.**

**Judges 5:27 Between her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay; Between her feet he bowed, he fell; Where he bowed, there he fell dead.**

Let us stop here and see that today Jews identify those non-Jews that in times of war (in this case the Holocaust) come to the aid of Jews. The organization that does this is called Yad Vashem.



From Wikipedia:

**Yad Vashem** (Hebrew: יָד וּשְׁמָה; literally, "a memorial and a name") is Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. It is dedicated to preserving the memory of the dead; honoring Jews who fought against their Nazi oppressors and Gentiles who selflessly aided Jews in need; and researching the phenomenon of the Holocaust in particular and genocide in general, with the aim of avoiding such events in the future.

Established in 1953, Yad Vashem is located on the western slope of Mount Herzl, also known as the Mount of Remembrance, a height in western Jerusalem, 804 meters (2,638 ft) above sea level and adjacent to the Jerusalem Forest. The memorial consists of a 180-dunam (18.0 ha; 44.5-acre) complex containing two types of facilities: some dedicated to the scientific study of the Holocaust and genocide in general, and memorials and museums catering to the needs of the larger public. Among the former there are a research institute with archives, a library, a publishing house, and an educational center, and the International School/Institute for Holocaust Studies; among the latter, the Holocaust History Museum, memorial sites such as the Children's Memorial and the Hall of Remembrance, the Museum of

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Holocaust Art, sculptures, outdoor commemorative sites such as the Valley of the Communities, and a synagogue.

A core goal of Yad Vashem's founders was to recognize non-Jews who, at personal risk and without a financial or evangelistic motive, chose to save Jews from the ongoing genocide during the Holocaust. Those recognized by Israel as Righteous Among the Nations are honored in a section of Yad Vashem known as the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations.

Yad Vashem is the second-most-visited Israeli tourist site, after the Western Wall, with approximately one million visitors each year. It charges no admission fee.

Read from the Yad Vashem website: <https://www.yadvashem.org/>

“The Righteous Among the Nations, honored by Yad Vashem, are non-Jews who took great risks to save Jews during the Holocaust. Rescue took many forms and the Righteous came from different nations, religions and walks of life. What they had in common was that they protected their Jewish neighbors at a time when hostility and indifference prevailed.”

***Citation for Spiritual Numbness by Non-Israelite***

**Judges 5:28 “Out of the window she looked and wailed, The mother of Sisera through the lattice, ‘Why does his chariot delay in coming? Why do the hoofbeats of his chariots delay?’**

**Judges 5:29 Her wise princesses would answer her, Indeed she repeats her words to herself,**

**Judges 5:30 ‘Are they not finding, are they not dividing the spoils? A concubine, two concubines for every warrior; To Sisera a spoil of dyed cloth, A spoil of dyed cloth embroidered, Dyed cloth of double embroidery on the neck of the plunderer?’**

Then the final statement. The result of the faith of the 10,000 and others is that the nation was at “rest” for 40 years.

**Judges 5:31 May all Your enemies perish in this way, Lord; But may those who love Him be like the rising of the sun in its might.” And the land was at rest for forty years.**

The word “rest” is not “shalom,” but a word for quiet. After a busy day at work, you don’t need a lot of visitors, but just some quiet time.