

DEBORAH - A MOTHER IN ISRAEL

After the death of Ehud the Israelites were again enslaved. This time it was by Jabin, the king of Canaan. Sisera was the commander of his army and 900 chariots of iron symbolized their military might. The Israelites had been cruelly oppressed by the Canaanites for 20 long years and cried out to God for deliverance. As He had done before, God raised up a judge to deliver them (see Judges 2:16 - 19). This time, one of the Judges was a woman named Deborah. In Judges 5 is a victory song which she sang with Barak. In verse 7 she said: **“Village life in Israel ceased, until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel”**. As we rejoice with her, let us ponder her words and try to understand why God called her, and why she was considered a mother in Israel.

We know she was married, and that her husband's name was Lappidoth (Judges 4:4). We are left to wonder why God didn't call her husband to deliver Israel? We don't know if she even had any biological children, yet we are still told that she was a “mother in Israel” just the same. Like so many women throughout history, Deborah apparently was called by God to do something that the men around her could not or would not do. Please consider:

- Deborah was a prophetess (Judges 4:4).
- Deborah “held court” and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes settled (4:5).
- Deborah sent for Barak and told him that God wanted him to take 10,000 men of Naphtali and go fight Sisera (4:6).
- The Israelites were promised victory at the Kishon River (4:7).
- Barak said he would only go if Deborah went with him (4:8).
- Deborah went with him (4:9).
- Deborah predicted that God would deliver Sisera into the hand of a woman (4:9).
- God gave the Israelites victory and all the troops of Sisera fell by the sword (4:16).
- Apparently a great rain helped defeat Sisera (see 5:4, 21). Iron chariots lose much of their advantage in the mud.
- Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot (4:17).
- He sought refuge in the house of a woman named Jael (4:17).
- Sisera trusted her to protect him, but once he went to sleep she drove a tent peg through his temple and killed him (4:21).
- Deborah and Barak sang a song to celebrate the victory God had given them (Judges 5).

LET US HONOR OUR MOTHERS

Again, let me stress the fact that one does not have to have a biological child in order to be a mother. Mother Theresa proved that! Around the world are thousands of “mothers”, who like Deborah, have answered the call of God when the men around them could not, or would not do so.

During those dark and dismal days of World War II thousands of women took jobs on the assembly line because their husbands were “over there” fighting to keep us safe “over here”. Today, more than 50 later, we are at war again and thousands of other women are back at work trying their best to be both mother and father at the same time.

Mothers like Deborah are not just the result of men in the military, but also of other circumstances beyond their control. Almost everyone knows some woman who is raising a family without the help of a husband and father. Perhaps they should have to do so, but they do so anyhow. They get up early and go to be late. They get the kids off to school before they go to work. They come home at night to the never ending tasks of cooking, cleaning, and paying the bills. Sandwiched in between these unforgiving responsibilities are music lessons, church and school activities, and athletic events. God bless our mothers, not just on Mother's Day, but every day of the year.

Remember mothers, that in spite of all the obstacles she had to overcome, God still gave Deborah the victory! You too can be more than conquerors through Him Who loves you!