

## Power Hour Lesson Summary for June 4, 2017

### “Deborah and Barak”

**Lesson Text:** Judges 4:1-10

**Background Scripture:** Judges 4, 5

**Devotional Reading:** Hebrews 11:29-40

### Judges 4:1-10 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, now that Ehud was dead. <sup>2</sup> So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. <sup>3</sup> Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help.

<sup>4</sup> Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. <sup>5</sup> She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. <sup>6</sup> She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. <sup>7</sup> I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’”

<sup>8</sup> Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.”

<sup>9</sup> “Certainly I will go with you,” said Deborah. “But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.” So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. <sup>10</sup> There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him.

### TODAY’S LESSON AIMS

**Learning Fact:** To describe the relationship between Deborah and Barak.

**Biblical Principle:** To examine how Deborah and Barak led Israel during a trying time.

**Daily Application:** To encourage others to accomplish the task God has given them to do.

### INTRODUCTION

#### “Let’s Ask Granny!”

“Granny” was one of the sweetest, kindest, most humble persons in the congregation. “Let’s ask Granny!” was frequently heard when the leaders of the church needed additional input on an issue.

Granny knew the Bible’s precepts and principles better than many. Her wisdom had been accumulated through decades of Bible study, personal experience, and observations of the flow of events in her world. She held no official position of authority. But people willingly received her counsel, and she was willing to give it—especially when biblical concepts were involved.

Some are leaders by position. Others are leaders by their very natures. (And, of course, some are both.) A church's official leaders demonstrate wisdom when they recognize what has been called "leadership from below" and seek to learn from those such as Granny.

The lesson will help us better understand the importance of leadership skills as we examine how a leader of Israel, known as a judge, led her nation through a trying time.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

**Time:** about 1225 B.C.

**Places:** Ephraim; Kedesh

Joshua had been appointed by God and commissioned by Moses to lead Israel in conquering Canaan (Deuteronomy 31). But something was different when Joshua passed off the scene in about 1370 B.C.: no one was appointed to succeed him! The solution was very simple. God was in charge, and each tribe or unit would obey God and take care of its area.

In Joshua's farewell addresses (Joshua 23, 24), he warned the Israelites again, just as Moses had done, of what they would experience if they served other gods. But they did serve such gods, and Judges 2:10 explains why: "another generation grew up who knew [not] the Lord." What followed was disaster after disaster. If one generation does not teach the next generation about God, then tragedies follow.

The book of Judges is concerned primarily with the sin-cycles that Israel experienced during the period of the Judges. To date that era with precision is difficult. By one calculation, there were 330 years between the appearance of the first judge (Judges 3:9) and the passing of the last (1 Samuel 25:1). But depending on the interpretation of Acts 13:20 and other factors, some calculate the period to span 450 years.

Regarding the sin-cycles themselves, these have been summarized in terms of four stages: *sin, sorrow (or servitude), supplication, and salvation*. A different way of stating this cycle is *rebellion, retribution, repentance, and restoration*. When the Israelites worshipped other gods, they suffered. When the people eventually repented, the Lord would send a deliverer, known as a judge. Then the cycle repeated itself (see Judges 2:10-19).

The lessons of this unit are biographical studies of 4 of the 12 judges recorded in the book of Judges: Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. These 4 plus Othniel and Ehud are traditionally said to be the 6 "major judges" in light of all that is recorded about them. They were military deliverers; thus the word *judge* should not cause us to think exclusively in terms of civil magistrates (although Deborah was both, as we shall see).

The longest period of peace recorded within the book of Judges is the one of 80 years between Ehud and Deborah (Judges 3:30). The lesson takes us back to about 1225 B.C. as that period of peace comes to an end.

### What Do You Think?

- What are some ways to prevent negative things from happening during times of leadership vacuum in the church?
- How do we keep cultural expectations regarding gender roles from being a greater influence in the church than the Bible itself?
- What are some ways to encourage others in their ministry tasks?
- What has to happen for Christians to exhibit the leadership qualities of Deborah?
- What character traits do you look for in those whom you would accept as mentors? Why?

### POINTS TO PONDER

1. Tragedy follows when one generation does not teach the next about God (Judges 4:1-3).
2. God can prepare strong leaders during times of trouble (v. 4).
3. Good leaders identify problems, and those who can implement the solutions (vs. 5-7).
4. Have no fear, but trust in the Lord with all your heart (v. 8).
5. Good leaders work together to help implement God's perfect plan (vs. 9-10).

### CONCLUSION

#### Pick Your Heroes Carefully!

A counselor asked his client to think of the people he knew whom he admired. Then he was asked to consider what those people had ever done that was worthwhile. The client replied, "As I think about it, all they have ever done is to complain. They never do anything else." He was advised to evaluate what he had said, and then to find some new heroes.

The account of Deborah and Barak illustrates that each respected the other. It also suggests that the soldiers in Barak's army trusted his leadership. The combination of interpersonal respect and God's help were the ingredients for success. And so it is yet today. Hebrews 11 encourages us to pick our heroes carefully! If their lives are not godly, how can they be our heroes?

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, grant us the wisdom to select godly men and women as our heroes and mentors! But most of all, empower us by your Spirit to imitate Christ. We pray this in His name, Jesus. Amen.

### THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Who we follow today shapes who we become tomorrow.

### ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is "**Gideon**" and describes the encounter where an angel of the Lord challenged Gideon to face the Midianites in battle. Study Judges 6-8.