



Obey Jesus and Honor Him **Judges 4:8-9**

Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go." And she said, "I will surely go with you. Nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. (Judges 4:8-9—ESV).

Deborah became a renowned prophetess and judge in Israel, so much so that the Israelites came to her to settle their business or personal disputes. Her task was not easy, because she spoke for the LORD, and settled disagreements among the Israelites in a time when the Israelites were once again doing evil in the sight of the Lord, and while Israel was suffering once again from God's judgment, a judgment designed to lead His people to turn back to Him. God's punishment consisted in causing an evil, oppressive king to defeat the Israelites in battle and rule over them.

Think about how difficult that time would be especially for those trying to obey and serve the true God! The true believers suffered from living with evil people inside Israel and from oppression by evil people outside Israel. In this situation, where the people did not have Bibles yet, or the ability to have the written Word of God in their homes, if they truly wanted to hear from the Lord, they had to go to Deborah. The Bible shows us how remarkable she was as a Judge in Israel!

After 20 years of oppression, the people of Israel finally turned back to the LORD, and the LORD told Deborah that the time had come for her to call His people to take up arms against their former enemies and defend their country. Under direct orders from the LORD, Deborah became a military leader and commander of an army of Israel. Though we do not know if she personally ever wielded a sword, she commanded those who did. Deborah summoned a military commander named Barak and told him explicitly what the Lord commanded him to do. Beginning with the words, "The Lord the God of Israel commands you," she gave Him the Lord's detailed battle plan for everyone him to pursue.

Barack would not do what the Lord commanded him without demanding conditions, without the condition that she would go with him. It would be like one of us saying to Jesus, "I will obey You, if you will do this [fill in the blank] for me!" As true followers of Jesus, the Lord of the universe, we sometimes forget that He is our Commander in Chief and without setting conditions we should obey Him as He has revealed His Word to us in the Bible. Unlike Barak, as those who have received Jesus as our Lord and Savior, He is always with us and lives within us while at the same time seated at the right hand of God on the Father's throne. Jesus will not ask us to do anything without His being with us and helping us every step of the way. Because Barack would not obey LORD as the LORD commanded without demanding that Deborah go with him, he did not receive the honor the LORD would have given him if he had trusted in the LORD and obeyed His word as spoken through Deborah. Without the Bible as we have it, Deborah had proven repeatedly through fulfilled prophecies that the LORD spoke through her with all wisdom and power, but Barak doubted the LORD and her at a crucial moment in his life and the life of Israel. Though Barak refused to do as Deborah told him, the LORD freed His people through the hand of a woman as Deborah prophesied (told Barak). As followers of Jesus Christ, when we obey Him without setting conditions, we honor Him and we prefer that all honor will go to Him for whatever He does in and through us.

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