

**Sunday, November 15, 2020**

**Greeting:** God is good **all the time**. All the time **God is good**.

**Question of the Day:**

How many weeks are left in the church year? a) 2 b) 4 c) 6 d) 8

**Hymn** “Born Again”

**Call to Worship**

We lift up our eyes, seeking to know God.

**We attune our spirit to the One in whom we dwell.**

We seek to be faithful.

**We want to use the talents God gives us.**

We are here to worship.

**Praise be to God!**

**Prayer of Invocation**

**Fill us, gracious God, with a sense of your abiding presence. Awaken our spirits to realities unseen. May your Holy Spirit lead us. Amen.**

**Judges 4:1-23 Contemporary English Version**

After the death of Ehud, the Israelites again started disobeying the LORD. So the LORD let the Canaanite King Jabin of Hazor conquer Israel. Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, lived in Harosheth-Ha-Goim. Jabin’s army had nine hundred iron chariots, and for twenty years he made life miserable for the Israelites, until finally they begged the LORD for help.

Deborah the wife of Lappidoth was a prophet and a leader of Israel during those days. She would sit under Deborah’s Palm Tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, where Israelites would come and ask her to settle their legal cases.

One day, Barak the son of Abinoam was in Kedesh in Naphtali, and Deborah sent word for him to come and talk with her. When he arrived, she said: “I have a message for you from the LORD God of Israel! You are to get together an army of ten thousand men from the Naphtali and Zebulun tribes and lead them to Mount Tabor. The LORD will trick Sisera into coming out to fight you at the Kishon River. Sisera will be leading King Jabin’s army as usual, and they will have their chariots, but the LORD has promised to help you defeat them.”

“I’m not going unless you go!” Barak told her.

“All right, I’ll go!” she replied. “But I’m warning you that the LORD is going to let a woman defeat Sisera, and no one will honor you for winning the battle.”

Deborah and Barak left for Kedesh, where Barak called together the troops from Zebulun and Naphtali. Ten thousand soldiers gathered there, and Barak led them out from Kedesh. Deborah went too.

At this time, Heber of the Kenite clan was living near the village of Oak in Zaananim, not far from Kedesh. The Kenites were descendants of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, but Heber had moved and had set up his tents away from the rest of the clan.

When Sisera learned that Barak had led an army to Mount Tabor, he called his troops together and got all nine hundred iron chariots ready. Then he led his army away from Harosheth-Ha-Goim to the Kishon River.

Deborah shouted, “Barak, it’s time to attack Sisera! Because today the LORD is going to help you defeat him. In fact, the LORD has already gone on ahead to fight for you.”

Barak led his ten thousand troops down from Mount Tabor. And during the battle, the LORD confused Sisera, his chariot drivers, and his whole army. Everyone was so afraid of Barak

and his army, that even Sisera jumped down from his chariot and tried to escape. Barak's forces went after Sisera's chariots and army as far as Harosheth-Ha-Goiim.

Sisera's entire army was wiped out. Only Sisera escaped. He ran to Heber's camp, because Heber and his family had a peace treaty with the king of Hazor. Sisera went to the tent that belonged to Jael, Heber's wife. She came out to greet him and said, "Come in, sir! Please come on in. Don't be afraid."

After they had gone inside, Sisera lay down, and Jael covered him with a blanket. "Could I have a little water?" he asked. "I'm thirsty."

Jael opened a leather bottle and poured him some milk, then she covered him back up. "Stand at the entrance to the tent," Sisera told her. "If someone comes by and asks if anyone is inside, tell them, 'No.'"

Sisera was exhausted and soon fell fast asleep. Jael took a hammer and drove a tent peg through his head into the ground, and he died.

Meanwhile, Barak had been following Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. "The man you're looking for is inside," she said. "Come in and I'll show him to you."

They went inside, and there was Sisera – dead and stretched out with a tent-peg through his skull.

That same day the Israelites defeated the Canaanite King Jabin, and his army was no longer powerful enough to attack the Israelites.

### **Judges 5:1-31 *Contemporary English Version***

After the battle was over that day, Deborah and Barak sang this song:  
We praise you, LORD! Our soldiers volunteered, ready to follow you.

Listen, kings and rulers, while I sing for the LORD, the God of Israel.  
Our LORD, God of Israel, when you came from Seir, where the Edomites live,  
rain poured from the sky, the earth trembled, and mountains shook.  
In the time of Shamgar son of Anath, and now again in Jael's time,  
roads were too dangerous for caravans.

Travelers had to take the back roads, and villagers couldn't work in their fields.

Then Deborah took command, protecting Israel as a mother protects her children.  
The Israelites worshiped other gods, and the gates of their towns were then attacked.  
But they had no shields or spears to fight with.

I praise you, LORD, and I am grateful for those leaders and soldiers who volunteered.  
Listen everyone! Whether you ride a donkey with a padded saddle or have to walk.

Even those who carry water to the animals will tell you,  
"The LORD has won victories, and so has Israel."  
Then the LORD's people marched down to the town gates and said, "Deborah, let's go!  
Let's sing as we march. Barak, capture our enemies."

The LORD's people who were left joined with their leaders and fought at my side.

Troops came from Ephraim, where Amalekites once lived.  
Others came from Benjamin; officers and leaders came from Machir and Zebulun.  
The rulers of Issachar came along with Deborah, and Issachar followed Barak into the valley.  
But the tribe of Reuben was no help at all!

Reuben, why did you stay among your sheep pens?  
Was it to listen to shepherds whistling for their sheep?  
No one could figure out why Reuben wouldn't come.

The people of Gilead stayed across the Jordan.  
Why did the tribe of Dan remain on their ships  
and the tribe of Asher stay along the coast near the harbors?

But soldiers of Zebulun and Naphtali risked their lives to attack the enemy.

Canaanite kings fought us at Taanach by the stream near Megiddo –  
but they couldn't rob us of our silver.  
From their pathways in the sky the stars fought Sisera,  
and his soldiers were swept away by the ancient Kishon River.  
I will march on and be brave.  
Sisera's horses galloped off, their hoofs thundering in retreat.  
The LORD'S angel said, "Put a curse on Meroz Town!  
Its people refused to help the LORD fight his powerful enemies."  
But honor Jael, the wife of Heber from the Kenite clan.  
Give more honor to her than to any other woman who lives in tents.  
Yes, give more honor to her than to any other woman.  
Sisera asked for water, but Jael gave him milk – cream in a fancy cup.  
She reached for a tent-peg and held a hammer in her right hand.  
And with a blow to the head, she crushed his skull.  
Sisera sank to his knees and fell dead at her feet.  
Sisera's mother looked out through her window.  
"Why is he taking so long?" she asked.  
"Why haven't we heard his chariots coming?"  
She and her wisest women gave the same answer:  
"Sisera and his troops are finding treasures to bring back –  
a woman, or maybe two, for each man,  
and beautiful dresses for those women to wear."  
Our LORD, we pray that all your enemies will die like Sisera.  
But let everyone who loves you shine brightly like the sun at dawn.

**Response:** *The Word of God, for the people of God! Thanks be to God!*

### **Time of Prayer**

**How Is It With Your Soul?**

**Call to Confession**

Let us confess our need for forgiveness.

**Silent Prayer of Confession**

**Assurance**

We look to God for mercy and assurance. We praise God for forgiveness. And we join with Jesus in praying:

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

### **Answer to the Question of the Day**

**Time of Offering** *Thank you to everyone for your faithful generosity.*

**Offering Prayer**

**There is no escape from your judgment, O Spirit of Holiness, but neither can we flee beyond your limitless love. Use what we offer to bring encouragement and hope to many who have lost a sense of meaning for their lives. We pray that you will bless us and our offerings. Amen.**

**Message** "A Little History" Rev. Joyce Rich

**Blessing**

May God our Creator, **Christ our Savior,**  
and the Holy Spirit, **go with us now and always.**  
Amen. **And Amen.**

**Hymn** “Forever and Ever, Amen”

**Announcements**

**Read For Next Week:** Ezekiel 34:11-24; Psalm 100

*Liturgical resources drawn from: **Taught by Love: Worship Resources for Year A**, Lavon Bayler © 1998 United Church Press.*