

A) The Backdrop:

- 1) Judges depicts the life of Israel in the promised land from the death of Joshua to the rise of the monarchy. It is an account of frequent apostasy, walking away from God which provokes the chastening of God.
- 2) **Book also tells of the urgent appeals to God in times of crisis and having God raise up leaders through whom God works for purposes of victory and peace.**

B) The On-Going Issue:

1) After arriving in Canaan, the people quickly forgot the acts of God and they subsequently lost sight of their unique identity as God's people. They settled down and attached themselves to Canaanite morality, gods, religious beliefs and practices, as well as Canaanite social life.

C) The Theme:

How God brings about temporary victories through unexpected human agents. Phase one of the judge stories reveal the faithfulness and effectiveness on the part of Israel's leaders and judges.

D) The Unsung Heroes During Time of Battle – Deborah & Jael

Deborah:

- 1) Her name means "bee" and she is the only judge said to have been a prophet.
- 2) She was a dispenser of justice, especially needed when Israel "once again did evil in the eyes of God".
- 3) **Interpreted by Balak as crucial to Israel's victory – highly regarded and this "identification" disrupts the male dominant theme of honor and shame.**
- 4) Communicator of divine strategy – demonstrates the hand of God at work through a non-conventional chosen vessel.

Jael:

- 1) Non-Israelite woman used by God to help save the Israelite people – viewed as God's response to Balak's refusal to go without Deborah.
- 2) Her insertion proves to be the climatic point of the entire battle scene – her "luring" of Sisera into her tent violated the hospitality code.
- 3) She acts as a mother taking care of a little child and the author depicts Sisera's behavior as having given-up his manhood and **Jael's response highlights her deep loyalty to her family's previous alliance with Israel.**

Takeaway: We can be confident that God is at work in and through our lives to accomplish God's will.

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE – DEBORAH & Jael
JUDGES 4:1-24 (LESSON 1)
THIRD BAPTIST CHURCH BIBLE STUDY
FEBRUARY 7, 2019