



Judges 3-5

Tape #7071
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By Chuck Smith

CHAPTER 3

These are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many as had not known all the wars of Canaan; only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; namely, the five lords of the Philistines, the Canaanites, the Sidonians, the Hivites and all that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering of Hamath. And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim in the groves. Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim the king of Mesopotamia: --

Now, I want you to go back to Deuteronomy chapter 7, beginning with verse 1: *"When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you; and when the LORD your God shall deliver them before you; you shall smite them, and utterly destroy them, you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shall you make marriages with them; your daughter shall not give unto their son, nor their daughter shall you take unto your son. For they will turn away your son from following me, that they may serve other gods: and so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy you suddenly."*

That was the warning of God before they came into the land. And as we read in the Scripture tonight, after they came into the land - what did they do, but totally disregard the warning of God and did exactly what God told them not to do.

Many times people have difficulty with the Old Testament because God ordered such severe terms of judgment against the nations. They wonder why God would order utter extermination: 'Wipe them all out, don't leave any traces.' God declares the reason for these orders: 'If you allow them to remain, if you

allow intermarriages to take place with their children and your children, the ultimate result will be they will turn your hearts away from God. And if your heart is turned away from God, then the judgment of God will come upon you.'

So many times when God warns us, we pass the warning off as unnecessary: "Thank You, Lord. But I really don't need that. There's no way, Lord, that we would turn from You after all You have done for us. But I appreciate You warning me, Lord. It's nice, but it's not necessary." Watch out! God never warns you unnecessarily. I have always found in those areas where God has given me warning, those are the areas where I usually am going to have my biggest problem. God knows me. God knows me better than I know myself. And God doesn't warn me needlessly. [Interesting that just the very thing God said, 'Don't do,' they did; and just the very thing God said would happen if they did it, did happen.]

The reason why God ordered the extermination of the people in the land was that God intended Israel to be His instrument of judgment to judge these nations for their horrible, vile practices. These people were sacrificing their own children unto their gods, these people were worshipping their gods in the most licentious manners imaginable. And God was judging these people, and He was using His nation, Israel, as His instrument of judgment. And they had done things that were worthy of death. And God had pronounced the death judgment upon them and ordered them to be totally wiped out. But God knew that if they did not obey the command, because their worship was so sensual, so licentious, and so appealing to the senses of man, that His own people would be drawn in to these same vile practices and destroyed.

It would be as though you were hired by our school to be an attendant on the playground. And you have all of these beautiful kindergartners out there playing on the ground: frolicking, rolling in the grass, playing with their balls - beautiful little children. And you hear this yipping noise, and you look up, and here's a little rabid dog with foam running out the mouth coming towards the children. Now, you know that dog has rabies, you know because that dog has rabies it's going to die: there's no way that dog can live - the rabies are going to kill that dog. You also know that if that dog should bite one of these little children that are under your charge that the child will also get rabies and will either die, or have to go through the extremely painful Pasteur shots. Now, as an attendant out there on the grounds: your responsibility to watch over those beautiful innocent little children, with this mad dog that is going to die anyhow, being a threat to those children, would you be justified in killing that little dog? You better believe it.

These people were as mad dogs. The practices that they were engaged in would exterminate them if they were allowed to just go. They did pose a danger to the people of God: they could infect God's people with their deadly maladies. And that is why God

said, "Destroy them utterly. Wipe them out; don't let them remain. When I have delivered them into your hands, wipe them out completely so that they will not infect you with their perverted religious systems that would be destructive to My people."

[But Israel, rather than obeying the command of God, allowed them to remain, dwelt among them, and we read the tragic story here in Judges chapter 3, verse 5:] *The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to be their sons, and they served their gods.*

God's warnings and God's laws are for our benefit. God knows what are the ultimate consequences of certain actions. And God, in His love for you, would keep you from suffering the consequences of certain actions. But somehow, in a perverted way, we feel we know better than God, we feel that we can handle it: "Lord, thank you for the warning, but I don't need it. Lord, I'm able to manage here and I know what I'm doing." You never know what you are doing if you go against the law of God. You're playing the fool. It is a folly. God's law is intended for man's good, not for man's detriment. God's ways are best. If you're going to know life, and love long days, then keep the law of God. It's a good life.

But so many times we make that tragic mistake of thinking that 'it doesn't apply to me,' or 'I know better,' or 'it doesn't apply to this situation.' It does. And to violate God's law is only to invite pain, suffering, and disaster to you emotionally, physically. It may seem very exciting in the beginning: "*There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.*" And God gave them the warning, they disregarded the warning of God, they disobeyed the commandment of God, and now we begin to see the years that they are going to reap: the tragedy, the sorrow, the sufferings, the bondage - because they did not obey the commandment of the LORD.

The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, they forgot the LORD their God, and they began to serve Baalim and the groves. [The groves, of course, were the places of pagan worship in which the licentious sexual rites were practiced in the worship of the goddess of fertility, Ashteroth.] Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim for eight years. And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. [So he was a nephew to Caleb.] And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against the king. And the land had rest for

forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died..

So, here is the first -- unfortunately, it's not the last. This is the beginning of a pattern. The pattern of turning away from God, reaping the consequences by being delivered into the hands of their enemies, going into oppression and hardship; in the time of oppression and hardship--calling upon the LORD, God raising up a deliverer, being set free from their enemies, living for a time in peace and prosperity, and then going right on back into the same pattern of worshipping the other gods, turning their hearts away from the LORD: and it's a pattern that's just going to be repeated until you're going to get sick of it: adnosium after a while. You say, "What's the matter with these people? Why can't they learn?" And I imagine the Lord is saying the very same thing about us. So, the first apostasy, the first servitude, the first judge.

And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and so the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab --

The first king came from Mesopotamia: that's way up in the area of Assyria. The second came right from across their borders: the land of Moab. And this, actually, is the land that was inhabited by the tribe of Reuben. The Moabites were descendants of Lot through his relationship with his daughter.

And so the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, --

The people of Ammon were the descendants of Lot also by his other daughter, and Amalek was a perennial foe of Israel. The Amalekites were a nomadic group, sort of a nomadic tribesmen--Bedouin type of people: but they were the perennial enemies of Israel. They were the ones that attacked Israel shortly after they came out of Egypt and were defeated there by the LORD at Rephidim under the leadership of Joshua, [as Moses held up his arm, and as long as his arms were up--you remember the story, Joshua and his men prevailed. So they finally got by Moses and held up his arms that Israel might prevail over them.]

Amalek is a type of the flesh. God said, "*When you come into the land, and you are strengthened in the land, then I want you to utterly wipe out Amalek: destroy them completely.*"

Later on, under the reign of Saul, when Israel was strong, Samuel came to Saul and said, "The LORD wants you to go down and totally destroy Amalek: wipe them out completely. Don't allow anyone to remain alive. Wipe out their animals, everything." And Saul went down, saw some of the healthy animals and decided that they were too nice to destroy: so he brought them back. Utterly hacked up the bad animals. And as he returned, Samuel came out to meet him. And he greeted Samuel with the words, "As the LORD liveth: *I've done everything the LORD has told me to do.*" He

said, "If you've done everything that the LORD has told you to do, how is it that I hear the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the cattle? Don't you realize that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft?" He said, "Oh, well they were so fine, I thought I'd bring them back so we can have a big sacrifice unto God." And he said, "To obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken is better than the fat of rams. And in that you have rejected God from ruling over you, God has rejected you from ruling over his people." And the old man, Samuel, turned and started to walk away, and Saul said, "No, no--don't go," and he grabbed hold of him by the robe and Samuel just kept on walking. And the robe ripped off in Saul's hands, and Samuel turned and said, "So God is going to rip the kingdom from you, and give it unto another, [that will serve and obey him.]" Saul allowed Amalek to remain alive. [So at the time of Esther, Haman the Agagite- who was also an Amalekite, had plotted the destruction of the nation of Israel. Because Saul disobeyed God, it almost cost the nation itself.]

And Amalek, being a type of the flesh: God says, "Hey, don't make any covenant with the flesh--destroy it." "If you by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." God doesn't want us to make any treaties with our flesh. But if we try to make treaties with our flesh, if we try to make allowances--the Bible says, "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" --if you try to make a provision for the flesh, it will rise up--ultimately, to destroy you. That's why God orders the extermination.

[And so the children of Amalek joined with Moab-Eglon the king of Moab and they came across the Jordan] and they took the city of [Jericho] palm trees. So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years. [Notice the first servitude was just 8 years: God was easy on them when He raised up Othniel. Now comes Eglon the king of Moab and they are serving him for 18 years.] But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man who was left-handed: --

And being left-handed evidently ran among the Benjamites; sort of a genetic thing perhaps, I don't know. But many of the Benjamites were left-handed. Later on in the latter portion of Judges we're going to read about 700 men of Benjamin who could use a sling and hit at a hare's breath at a hundred paces. But left-handed seemed to be sort of a trait of the tribe of Benjamin for some reason.

And Ehud was a Benjamite, left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a tribute unto Eglon the king of Moab. [Usually the reigning kings would require an annual tribute from the people that he had subjugated. So they would have to bring tribute unto Eglon.] So Ehud made a dagger that had two edges, it was eighteen inches long; and he put it under his clothes on his right thigh. And he brought the tribute unto Eglon the king of Moab: and Eglon was a very fat man. And when

he had made an end of offering the tribute, he sent away the people that had carried the tribute. But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and he said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: and Eglon said, Quiet. And then he ordered all of his servants out. And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in his summer parlor, [which was an upper chamber of lattices so the breeze would blow through] which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. And he put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: and the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, and he couldn't draw out the dagger from the belly; [sort of...-yes: gross!] and his entrails came out. [Grosser. My sons used to love this story. They would always want me to read the story of 'Eglon and Ehud.'] And then Ehud went through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlor upon him, and he locked them. When Ehud had gone out, Eglon's servants came; and when they saw that the doors of the parlor were locked, they said, O he is covering his feet in the summer chamber. And they waited until they were ashamed: and, behold, the king didn't open the doors of the parlor; therefore they took a key, and opened them: and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth. And Ehud [in the meantime] escaped while they were waiting, and he passed beyond the quarries, [which were at Gilgal] and he came to Seirath. [So he was really moving.] And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew the trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he was before them. And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and they took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and didn't allow any man to pass over.

Now, there near Jericho, where the children of Israel had crossed over the Jordan to come into the land, there were fords where the people could cross the river- -shallow areas. And so what Ehud did was he and the men of Ephraim posted themselves at these fords, and as the Moabites, who were in the land - sort of as police and control, tried to escape back to Moab, they were there at the fords so they grabbed the guys and wiped them out.

And so they destroyed of the men of Moab about ten thousand men, who were [healthy] lusty, [strong men and] men of valour; and there escaped not a man. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore [or, eighty] years. [The second apostasy, the second servitude, and the second deliverance, under Ehud - the second judge.]

Now concerning Shamgar, the third judge- -we know very little. There's only one verse devoted to him here, and just a mention of him in the song of Deborah.]

After him the [third judge] was Shamgar the son of Anath,

which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: he also delivered Israel.

Now, the ox goad was that pole about 8 foot long that had a metal sharp end on it that they would goad, or prod the oxen with as the oxen were plowing. To keep them going, to keep them plowing, they would take and goad them with this 8 foot ox goad. Some of these ox goads were as much as 6 inches thick. It would take a pretty strong man to wield one of those ox goads. He did it. And with an ox goad, he killed six hundred of their perennial enemies: the Philistines.

Later, we remember in the story of Samson, as we get to him when we move along in Judges chapter 13: Samson, with a jawbone of an ass, killed a thousand of the Philistines.

Here is Shamgar -- but we don't know anything more about this guy. He's an interesting character: he's strong and God used him to deliver Israel. But that's all we really know about him.

CHAPTER 4

And the children of Israel again [third apostasy] did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead. [It seemed like as long as the judge that God raised up - lived, the people obeyed the LORD. As soon as he died, people forgot the LORD: "And again they did evil in the sight of the LORD."] And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin the king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; --

Now, they had already taken Hazor in an earlier battle when Joshua was alive; but evidently they didn't go up and clean the thing out, and they allowed the people to remain there. And now Jabin has become strong, and Jabin puts them to a tribute.

It would seem that it would be the northern tribes around the Galilee that were more affected by this king: for Hazor is just north of the sea of Galilee, probably 5 or 7 miles north of the sea of Galilee on up into the area of the upper Galilee. You come up out of the sea of Galilee, which is six hundred feet plus - below sea level, you come up above sea level, you get into the upper valley above the sea of Galilee, and as you're on the road on up towards Hermon you get very quickly to Hazor.

Hazor was a very powerful city in history. There are vast excavations there: there is a huge tell at Hazor. And here -- now, my guide has never taken me to the digs there at Hazor. I don't know why, but he always just passes by. Maybe because most of the bus is asleep by the time we get there. One day my guide's going to take me to Hazor.

So God sold them into the hand of Jabin the Canaanite, who was reigning in Hazor; and the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the

children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and for twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

Chariots of iron were equivalent to tanks in battle in those days. I mean, if you had a chariot of iron you had a formidable weapon against the infantry. Pulled by the horses, an infantry wouldn't have a chance against the chariots. And 900 chariots of iron is no small armament brigade. I mean, it's really a powerful brigade.

Deborah, the prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, who judged Israel at that time. She dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel would come unto her for judgment. [She was a prophetess, she was a judge in Israel, and they would come unto her for judgment.] And so she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and she said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, [and she's a prophetess, so she's speaking the word of the LORD] Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into your hand. And Barak said unto her, If you will go with me, I will go: but if you don't go with me, I won't go. [A brave man indeed.] And so she said, I will surely go with you: notwithstanding the journey that you take shall not be for your honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And so Deborah arose, and went with Barak unto Kedesh. [So his lack of trust in the LORD cost him the honor of the victory: it was to go to a woman according to Deborah.] So Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him. Now Heber the Kenite, who was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaïm, which is by Kedesh.

Now, Heber was a descendant of Moses' father in law. These people came in with the children of Israel into the land; but for the most part, being nomadic type Bedouin people, they settled in the wilderness around Arad and Beersheba. They went into the southern country - in the book of Joshua. But this one fellow moved on up to the northern part.

And it is interesting as you travel in Israel today, you will find Bedouins living all over Israel. Most of them are in the wilderness area. Just ever so many Bedouin tents and encampments between Jerusalem and Jericho. In each little juadi, as you look up into the juadi's, you'll see their tents, and the women out keeping the sheep, and if the busses stop then the little children come running up asking for bachshish. But there's just ever so many Bedouins in that area. But you go up to Galilee and you find

them encamped up near Galilee, you'll find them encamped in an area near mount Carmel. And just all over the land you'll come upon these Bedouin encampments, their tents, and their livestock that they have around them - and they still exist today. So to have a Bedouin in the northern part is not unusual; you'll find that today: you'll find them around the sea of Galilee, in the northern part of the sea of Galilee near Capernaum - there are Bedouin tents.

And so, this one Bedouin had left the normal habitat down in the wilderness area, had come on up towards the upper end of the sea of Galilee there at Kedesh: and he warned the king. Evidently he was on a good relationship with the king of Hazor - with Jabin - and he warned him that the children of Israel had gathered together there at Tabor.

Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the rest of the Kenites, pitched his tent in the plain, which is by Kedesh. And he showed Sisera [the captain] that Barak was gone up to mount Tabor. So Sisera gathered together all of his chariots, all nine hundred chariots of iron, and the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river Kishon.

Now, the river Kishon really isn't much of a river. It's just what we would call a stream. Usually when you go by Kishon today, it's actually hard to see it because there is so little water in it. You'll see the green trees that grow along the banks, but there isn't really much water in Kishon.

['And so he gathered together there at the Kishon with his nine hundred chariots of iron.'] And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, with the ten thousand men after him. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all of his chariots, and all of his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

Now, as we get into the song of Deborah we find that God did this by sending sort of a flood. And the chariots got bogged down in the mire, they couldn't move; and thus, they were sitting ducks for Barak's infantry who came pouring down out of mount Tabor and attacked them there by the Kishon and destroyed them: Sisera jumped out of his chariot, began to flee.

But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all of the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left. Howbeit Sisera had fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: [now this is the guy that had warned Sisera that they were camped there. Jael is his wife] for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the

house of Heber the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; and don't fear. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me a drink, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him a drink, and covered him. Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and she went softly unto him, and she smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. And so he died instantly. [Gross!]

There is some question as to the deceitfulness of Jael. However, there is that possibility - because there was a friendship there, that when Sisera first arrived, she of course recognized him because her husband had warned him that Barak was there in mount Tabor with some troops. And it could be that she was genuine in her offer of hospitality, but when, through his telling her: 'Look, if they come looking for me: tell them I'm not here,' she realized that he had been defeated. And so she was just determined to get on the winning side. And so, it was at that point that she came to the recognition, 'Hey, if I put my lot in with Sisera I'll be on the losing side;' and so at that point she drove the spikes through his temples and killed him because she realized that he had been defeated in battle. And that is a possibility, so don't get too hard on Jael for the deed.

And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, [and Barak himself was the fellow pursuing] Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show you the man that you are looking for. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples. So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin the king of Canaan.

CHAPTER 5

Now Deborah, being a prophetess and being a judge, sang this song:

Then Deborah sang and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, [and these are the lyrics:] Praise ye the LORD [or, Hallelujah] for avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. [They sent out to the men of Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand of them willingly responded to the battle cry.] Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel. LORD, when you went out of Seir, when you marched out in the fields of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens

dropped, and the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the LORD, even Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel. In the days of Shamgar [and this is the other mention of Shamgar, the third judge: and this is all we know] the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, and the highways were unoccupied, and the travelers walked through the byways.

It was dangerous because they had been subdued by their enemies, they wouldn't take the main roads, they would take little side roads to get from one place to another; they stayed off the main highways because they were occupied by their enemies. "They walked through the byways."

The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel. They chose new gods; and then was war in the gates: was there a shield or a spear among the forty thousand in Israel? [You could get forty thousand men and couldn't find a shield or a spear. I mean, they had really been subdued by their enemies.] My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Oh bless ye the LORD. [For these men who offered themselves willingly.] Speak, ye that ride on the white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way. They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: and then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates. Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead the captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam. Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty. And out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir come down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer. And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: for he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.

Now, she is talking about those who sent people to help in the battle and those that could not come. But with Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. Reuben was at least saying, "Hey, go for it; you know, we are in favor of it." There was verbal support. But not so among others.

Why did you abide in your sheepfold, to hear the bleating of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there was great searchings of heart. Now Gilead [that is half the tribe of Manasseh] beyond the Jordan:

"You stayed on the other side, you didn't come to help. "Dan remained in his ships:" or, that is, in his merchandising: didn't bother to help. "Asher continued by the sea shore, and abode in

his breaches."

Zebulun and Napthali were a people that jeoparded [or, hazarded] their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Meguro; they took no gain of money. They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. [And so, recognizing the place of God in their battle and in their victory.] The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. Then were the horses hoofs broken by means of the prancings, and the prancings of the mighty ones. But curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they did not come to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.

And so, she starts in this song: it's a song of victory praising God for those who willingly came to fight, chiding those who did not come. Finally, cursing Meroz for his non-involvement in the battle: "*Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they did not come to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.*"

The curse for doing nothing. Over and over again in the Scriptures we are exhorted to doing: warned against being hearers of the Word only, told that we should be doers of the Word. Jesus was constantly emphasizing what we ought to be doing, and warning against those who heard but did not do: "*He that hears my words, and does not do them, I will liken him unto a foolish man, building his house upon the sand...Not all who say, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of the Father.*" And so the curse against Meroz. He didn't do anything.

A lot of times I think a person says, "Well, I didn't do anything." And, yeah, that's the problem. You haven't done anything.

Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above the women in the tent. [Honorable gal.] For he asked of water, but she gave him milk; [milk is sort of a sedative, you know?] she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with a hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken him through the temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: and where he bowed, there he fell down dead. [Now she thinks of the mother of Sisera, waiting for her son to come home from battle:] The mother of Sisera looked out the window, and she cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? [My wife has taken this as a Scripture for herself: looking out the lattice and saying, "Why is his chariot so long in coming?"]

Why tarry the wheels of his chariots? Her wise ladies answered her, yes, she returned an answer to herself, [they are picturing the victories of her son,] Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, [beautiful robes] a prey of divers colours and of needlework, diverse colours of needlework on both sides, [I mean, this is a fancy, fancy robe: it goes on both sides] that was meet for the necks of them that take the spoil? So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when it goes forth in his might. And the land had rest for forty years.

So, Deborah finishes her song with declarations: *"So let all of the enemies of God perish: but let those that love the LORD be as the sun which goes forth in might."* Beautiful, poetic declarations. *"And then the land had rest for forty years."*