

Recap of 5/7/17 (Judges 4:9-5:31):

1. Barak and Gideon, two of the heroes of faith listed in God's "Hall of Faith" in Hebrews 11:32 needed a "faith-lift." They both won great victories for God yet their faith needed a boost. When God chooses someone to use, He looks for faith, even "little" faith. It is not the size of our faith that counts but the object of our faith. And God the object of our faith cannot fail.
2. Once again the Israelites fail God and God raises up the Canaanites to enslave them for 20 years, under Jabin and Sisera, his general, who was responsible for cruelly oppressing the Israelites (4:3). The nature of Israel's failure is summarized succinctly in a devotional entitled "The Wrong Crowd:" "God didn't want His people forming alliances with people who held value systems that were the complete opposite of His character. The foreign nations surrounding Israel worshipped many gods, and their religious ceremonies included immoral [and often unimaginable] rituals. God knew how easily influenced humans are, and He clearly didn't want His people involved in these practices" (Men's Devotional Bible). The application is clear, God is still concerned about His people forming alliances (even personally) with those who are opposite His character.
3. Barak, encouraged by Deborah, prepared to meet Sisera's superior force. He won the victory "by the sword" (the human means, 4:16) and by a supernatural storm which disabled Sisera's chariots and forces (the divine means, 5:4-5, 20-22).
4. Sisera's army defeated, he fled to the tent of Heber the Kenite (4:11, 17-21), whose wife Jael killed him with a tent peg while he slept. She chose to side with the God of Israel and completed Israel's victory over the Canaanites by killing their leader. Was what she did right? Andrew Bowling answers: "In terms of basic moral principles, her treachery is questionable; but her desire to be in line with God's purposes is an act of faith. **Even genuine faith is compromised by depravity**" [emphasis mine]. Another author (Dr. James M. Gray), critical of Jael, said this of himself: "...these are questions too deep of his soul to fathom, and he would be careful not to be found replying against God."