

Episode 6-3: Crushing the Enemy's Head Part 1

Resources:

Websites

[Biblical Counseling Training Conference](#)

Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Welcome back listeners. As you've noticed, we've had a few different co-hosts here recently, and if you're a longtime listener of the podcast, you will recognize our next co-host, Alexandra's back with us.

Alexandra: Hi Janet.

Janet: Doing a couple of different series on different women of the Bible, correct?

Alexandra: Yeah. I'm excited.

Janet: I am too.

Alexandra: I'm pumped.

Janet: She is ready. She hasn't been on in a while. She's letting it all out on this one. So, I am encouraged. I think we're gonna do a two part series that's really on the story of Deborah and Barak and Jael and what God was up to in the middle of all of that. So, Allie, get us started on this and really what made you want to do this?

Alexandra: So, that's a really great question. I feel like, well, let me ask you a question.

Janet: Okay.



Alexandra: Let's take me off the hot seat and ask you a question. So with the story of Deborah, there's a lot of sermons out there about the prophetess Deborah. What would you guess is the majority of sermons online about her? Like what would you guess they're about?

Janet: When I hear Deborah mentioned, it's to say, see women can be leaders too.

Alexandra: Yeah, I agree. It's usually used in evidence to support like gender equality in leadership positions.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: I would argue that's not why Deborah is in the Old Testament, and I am really excited to walk through this passage in the book of judges.

Alexandra: I think it's also very confusing. People.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Have you seen those women's ministry shirts that are like, this is true women's ministry and it's. Like Jael with a tent peg, like hardcore? Like I think

Janet: fierce women.

Alexandra: Right, exactly. I think people just look at the story and it can be very confusing.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Like why is this in the Bible? What's the point of the story? So I, because of that, and I just was like, I wanna figure this out. This is kind of mysterious to me and I wanna figure this out. And as I studied this a few years back, I just. Man, it's, there's so much there. And I ended up naming my daughter her middle name is Jael, 'cause I love this story so much. Okay. So let's, let's just set the scene. This story takes place in the book of judges. So as I was studying this to prepare for this podcast, I was like, okay, I'm gonna reread through just the book of judges.

Alexandra: And I started and I was like, oh, wait, wait, wait. No, I to go into this. I feel like I need to like reread Joshua. And I started into Joshua and I was like no, I need to reread Deuteronomy. Like there's just so many layers going into judges that if you don't really know a lot of what has happened leading up to this point, it's hard to understand the nuances of the story.

Alexandra: So let's go back to Deuteronomy seven verses one through 11. We're not gonna read through it today, but Janet, would you be willing to just summarize what that passage is about?

Janet: Yeah. So I was reading that earlier just seeing that God chose them and he wants them to be separate from the world to show the world who he is and what he's like.



Janet: And so he gives them commands to destroy all of the, pagans that were there. They have to be holy. They're not to be contaminated by idolatry. And he goes on to also clarify for them. It's not because they're better. It's just because he chose them and the only way they could live out, what he chose them for was to live separated and holy and to eliminate the things that would contaminate them.

Alexandra: And remember, this is the people that have come out of slavery themselves, have spent a long time in the wilderness. So these are not people that have like experienced prosperity for a long time.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: They're coming into this with probably a lot of baggage. And ultimately they did not obey that command. And we see this tension of, you know, in John 17 it says that we're called to live in the world, but not of the world. And that's kind of where we see this all the way back in Deuteronomy. Because the values of the culture, they will master you.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Like there's not one person of this world that is stronger than the culture, on our own strength. I mean, I think of like even celebrities that proclaim to be believers. Like, I don't know Justin Bieber. But I'm like, I really am hesitant to judge them harshly because man, the culture that they live in

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Is so dark. I mean, I live in,

Janet: it's so powerful.

Alexandra: Yes. And I live in the Midwest. I mean, it is vanilla here.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: Compared to all that over there. And so, really what we see in this passage from Deuteronomy is the importance of where you make your home. Like you can't live in a place where you can, you know, that's where you let down your guard and you need to keep that place, make sure it's as holy as possible.

Janet: Yeah. Yeah.

Alexandra: So at this point, Moses had brought the Israelites to the Promised Land, so I like to think Moses brought them to the Promised Land. Joshua brought them into the promised Land.



Janet: Yep. Yep.

Alexandra: So then once Joshua died, the Israelites failed in obeying Yahweh. So that command that we referenced in Deuteronomy seven, the Israelites only partially obeyed. So instead of destroying everything, they put the Canaanites to force labor. We don't have

Janet: 'cause that made more sense to them.

Alexandra: Yes. And we don't have time to go into all that.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: But you just think of their history and like what likely went into that decision? I think it's fascinating. I'd love to love to discuss this if we had him all the time in the world. But then they did live amongst the Canaanites.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And then we see the start of the pattern of the judges here. Okay. So now we're through Joshua. We're into judges one. Joshua dies.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: And they lose the accountability.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: So as soon as their accountability dies, they, the Israelites go right back.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Into their sin.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Into idol worship. And so, Janet, how do you think this is relatable today?

Janet: Well, my first thought is, I mean, I can personally relate. You know, without accountability, I struggle more. And it reveals where my heart is, but I think it also reveals my own weakness. Like even if I desire-- talks about the flesh is weak. And so I think in counseling, like when I think about counseling cases, at some point we either start meeting less often or we end it all together. And at that point you begin to see where their heart truly is. So do they revert to old patterns? Or not are they so strong that they never revert? Are they humble and, and want to honor the Lord enough that they actually seek out and find accountability and find community,



because they know they're weak and they wanna honor God? I mean, I think I need what God has provided. And accountability and community, and so did they. And when their leader died in that vacuum, at least it appears instead of looking for what's gonna help us continue to move forward, they just went right back.

Alexandra: I think the counseling example is super fascinating and relatable here because ultimately you want your counselees to depend on the Lord.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And that you are just a tool of ministry.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: But I've gone through biblical counseling myself. It is easy to lean on the counselor.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: Because they're there. It's interesting, I was going through the judges with my kids and we were talking about this very thing of just like we see this pattern in the judges of the judge dies and then the Israelites go back to their old ways.

Alexandra: And what I had said to my kids is, you know, in all the ways that I'm asking you to obey during the day, if you're doing it just to appease me or just because you don't want the consequences that I give out for disobedience. If that's your motive, then as soon as I am not present, you are going to turn to sin.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: Because your motive is only surrounding people pleasing or just the comfort of not having to go through consequences. But if your motive is I want to honor Christ in this situation, I could be there or not. It doesn't matter. Like that's going to dictate how you act. And so I think that when throughout the judges, we see that the Israelites, I don't think their motive truly was, I mean, this is not everyone. And we will give examples.

Janet: Sure. So in general, as a culture.

Alexandra: Yes. Yes, exactly.

Janet: Yeah. For them.

Alexandra: And so, I think the overall point I'm trying to make is that if your accountability dictates whether you're obedient, then I don't know that your motive is truly Honoring Christ.



Janet: Yeah. Yeah.

Alexandra: Okay. So, motive is key here. All right, so now let's get into, so we talked about a little bit into judges one, let's talk about judges two. So, Janet, would you read judges two verses 11 through 19, please?

Janet: Sure. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. They abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them and bowed down to them, and they provoked the Lord to anger.

Janet: They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the ashteroth. So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had warned and as the Lord had sworn to them and they were in terrible distress.

Janet: Then the Lord raised up judges who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them, yet they did not listen to their judges for they whorred after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the Lord and they did not do so.

Janet: Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers going after other gods serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways.

Alexandra: So that's basically a summary of the book of judges right there. And that is the exact pattern that we see.

Janet: Yep. Over and over.

Alexandra: Yes. And so how would you describe this? Like, I know we're kind of, I'm trying to lay a really strong base. That's kind of my style. I love to know, like the background of a story before we get into the nitty gritty, but Janet, how would you summarize the cycle that we see throughout the time of the judges and which direction it goes?

Janet: Well, Nancy Lee Wolgemuth talks about four words when she did her Ruth study: disobedience, discipline, desperation, and deliverance. And I will just say this, you're not gonna get this far, but whenever I see this cycle in the end, by the time we get to Samson, they're not desperate and they're not even asking for deliverance and God delivers them anyway. And you're like, what a God of Hesed in the middle of all that. But that's the pattern.



Alexandra: Yeah. And it gets darker and darker with every judge.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: I mean, the infamous last line, like everyone did what was right in their own eyes at the very end of the book.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: So it's a very sad cycle we see throughout this book. Okay, so now we're at judges three. Janet, could you read judges three verse nine please.

Janet: But when the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel who saved them.

Alexandra: Okay, so now we see what the role of a judge is. Okay, so this is like the entrance of the judges and there were 12, it's argued, you could say 13, but there are mainly 12 judges in the book of judges. And the role is that God used them to be a deliverer, to save people out of oppression. Okay, so the role of a judge is twofold. One aspect of their job is that they are a military leader. Like that's what it means by the judge saved them. It wasn't that they saved their soul from hell. It was, they literally like used military force and command to save them out of oppression.

Alexandra: But the other aspect of this is that the judge was also a prophet, which is basically a guiding representative of God. So for the first time when we get to judges four, which is what this, I know I'm spending a lot of time in the beginning of the judges, but by the time we get to Judges four, that job has now been broken up between two people, which is very

Janet: unusual.

Alexandra: Yeah, very unusual. So we have Barack and Deborah. Barack is the military leader. And then Deborah is the prophet that God appointed. And so I'm just gonna give a super quick summary of judges four and five. And then today's episode, essentially we're just gonna go through the first half of this story and then the next time this episode comes out we will go through the second half of the story.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Just to give you a quick overview of what we're talking about today. So essentially in Judges four and five, Israel is oppressed by the King Jabin of Canaan and his top commander is Sisera. And so we are in the cycle that we talked about earlier, disobedience, discipline, desperation, deliverance. We are in the discipline portion of this cycle.



Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: So Yahweh uses Deborah to call Barack to lead Israel's army against Sisera. And she promises that Yahweh will give victory. Remember, she's the prophet, she has the authority to speak on behalf of Yahweh.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Barack hesitates to go without Deborah. So she accompanies him, but warns him that the honor of the victory will go to a woman.

Alexandra: So during the battle, there's a lot of interesting things that happen here. We're gonna go through that when we get to that part of the passage. But essentially God brings it on. And he like really shocks everyone. Sends the Canaanites into a panic and delivers the Canaanites into Barack's hands. Sisera abandons the battle. He sees that they are losing and so he flees. He abandons the battle and he runs off, and he arrives at the tent of Jael, who is the wife of Sisera's ally, and later kills Sisera by driving a tent peg through his temple. So Jael is fulfilling Deborah's prophecy that a woman will take the honor.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Yahweh uses Jael to complete the victory over the Canaanites. So like I said, this is Judges four and five. It's important to note that 'cause I will bring this up later. Chapter four is the prose account of Deborah, Barack and Jael. So essentially,

Janet: and prose means just the actual story.

Alexandra: Yes. The narrative. We're walking through this chronologically. As if I am retelling the story to you.

Janet: Getting the facts.

Alexandra: Yes.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: Chapter five is a song that is sung by Deborah, Barack and the Israelites, and that is considered the poetry version. And so it is not chronological and it actually offers some additional insights that give more flavor or emotion to the story. And most importantly, we see in chapter five, how God worked behind the scenes and how he is the true hero

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Of this story. Okay. Are we ready to get into judges Four?



Janet: Let's do it.

Alexandra: Let's do it. Alright. Can you read for me, Judges four, one through 10 and then we'll skip to verses 14 and 15.

Janet: And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord after Ehud died. That was the last judge.

Alexandra: Yeah. And and note it says the people again.

Janet: Yes. So we're back to the pattern.

Alexandra: We're here. Pattern of spiritual addiction. They've relapsed again

Janet: and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, King of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim. Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help. For, he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for 20 years.

Janet: Now, Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah, between Rama and Bethel in the Hill Country. In the hill country of Ephraim and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barack, the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, has not the Lord, the God of Israel commanded you, go gather your men at Mount Tabor taking 10,000 from the people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun. And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops. And I will give him into your hand. Barack 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.

Janet: Then Deborah arose and went with Barack to Kadesh and Barack called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Kadesh, and 10,000 men went up at his heels and Deborah went with him. Verse 14, and Deborah said to Barack up for this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the Lord go out before you?

Janet: So Barack went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men with him. And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barack by the edge of the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot.

Alexandra: Okay, so we'll finish the second half of the story in the next episode, but right before you started, it's the end of chapter three said The land had rest for 80 years and the people again did what was evil in the side of the Lord, after Ehud died. Ehud was the previous judge. Okay, so



one thing that I wanted to ask you, Janet, is what dangers do you see when people experience excessive rest? Because they had rest for 80 years?

Janet: You know, it's funny, I think that's a lot of what we see in our culture. You know, you go to other countries where life is harder and in many ways there's more joy and there's more living for their purpose. But I think we can become very apathetic. We can get too comfortable when what we're told in scripture is we're supposed to be battling sin and Satan while we're here on Earth. And I think instead we can just get enamored with the spoils that we have of rest and make them our goal to where we're almost entitled to the rest. And anything that's hard work is almost offensive.

Alexandra: You know, that reminds me of the Hunger Games, the capital you know, like that excessive rest.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Ezekiel 16:49 says that essentially corruption can consist of pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease.

Janet: Ooh, prosperous ease.

Alexandra: That's really convicting.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: I my husband and I went to Africa before we had kids and I remember I was in a conversation with someone there and we were doing like these English , and this guy said he always wanted to ask questions about America before our lessons. And I was like, okay, each lesson, I'll give you 10 minutes to ask questions about the US.

Alexandra: And then we are like, we're not spending our whole time talking about the US. But one of the questions he asked for me, he was like, oh, is it true that people eat for pleasure?

Janet: Wow.

Alexandra: And that really, I mean, that really like, hit me,

Janet: that's a kick in the gut.

Alexandra: It really was. I was like what do you even say to that? You know? And so just this idea of like a life of excess

Janet: Yeah.



Alexandra: Is really dangerous for us. And I think in our western world, the pattern in the judges, we see it twice in chapter three. We see it in chapter five, chapter six, where they, as soon as the people are delivered, they get a time of years, decades of rest. And then that I think is so like it is what led to them turning back to idolatry. And I also think of David, he experienced prosperity for 40 years before his sins with Bathsheba and Uriah.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: Like this is connected, people, like Godly people, we don't do well with excessive rest.

Alexandra: Ephesians two, eight through 10 says that we're saved by faith for good works. And I just think that like working hard is such a protection for our souls.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Yeah, if you need conviction, just Google Sluggard in the Old Testament.

Janet: Well, when I'm needing some conviction, I'll remember that.

Alexandra: Yes. There you go. Okay. So verse two talks about Jabin King of Canaan. So, the word the name Jabin, it was likely not like his actual name and history. It's likely a title, kind of like Pharaoh.

Janet: Huh?

Alexandra: So if you think of like Exodus the Pharaoh,

Janet: yes.

Alexandra: They think it was Amenhotep the second, they don't know that for sure, but there's record of him having lost a son, his firstborn son.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: So they think so, like his name was not Pharaoh. His name we think is Amenhotep, but we call him Pharaoh, 'cause that was his title. He was King of Egypt. So anyways, we'll refer to Jabin as Jabin, but he is, and history is, he probably had a different real name.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: Okay. It says that he oppressed the people cruelly for 20 years. So this Canaanite oppression was Yahweh's response to the Israelites unrepentant idolatry. And honestly, it's a



warning to us that we do need to take unrepentant sin in our life seriously. God will allow what he hates in order to accomplish what he loves.

Alexandra: And so, Janet, do you have, as a counselor, do you have any counsel for anyone who is listening who may feel conviction right now about unrepentant sin in their life?

Janet: Well, the first thing I see in that is to realize that even the, you said the oppression was his response to their unrepentant idolatry. And that's true, and I love that you said after that he's wanting to accomplish what he loves. He's not wanting to destroy them. He's using the oppression to get to their hearts. Now, whether they'll do that or not, that's up to them. But we need to see that as a severe mercy. Because he could have just killed 'em all, but he didn't, he allowed the hardship. The rest clearly did not help their souls, and he allowed the hardship, even the cruel hardship.

Janet: But we have to remember, it was to accomplish something he loves and he loves them and it was to actually free their hearts.

Alexandra: So what you're saying is that there's a difference between punishment and discipline?

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: That God wasn't punishing them, he was disciplining them for a purpose.

Janet: Right. And so, you know, if I'm feeling convicted right now, know that that's what your savior's like. Run to him. We don't have to just say, oh, I'm so bad. I need to make it better now. And I'll be good. Well, good luck. But he delights to redeem and help you. Hard things happen for a lot of reasons, and I will never sit here and say, I know exactly why that happened to that person. But we do know that one of the reasons can be because of unrepentant sin.

Janet: So if I am suffering and I am aware of unrepentant sin, I don't need to say, well, I deserve it. I guess I'll just-- I run to my savior. 'cause what he wants me to do with that is go to him. He already knows the sin I've been clinging to. He's not fooled, and his arms are open. So see this as part of his mercy, and run.

Alexandra: It's so interesting talking with you like you're a counselor and a Bible teacher and I'm a Bible teacher for women's ministries.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: But it's interesting to come at this from the different perspectives. 'cause you're like, see God's mercy and his grace, and I'm like, yeah, in chapter five, eight it says, when new Gods were chosen, then war was in the gates. So like you don't want war in your life, like get rid of the sin. So I think that's just such a balanced perspective, Janet. I love it.



Alexandra: So here in this verse, we also see that Jabin had at his hand, 900 chariots iron chariots at that. So at this time, which was around 1200 bc which is actually like, not to nerd out, but like a very important point that I'm gonna bring up later.

Alexandra: I'm gonna try to contain myself that this happened around 1200 b. But yeah, it was the top military technology at the time. So this meant that the Israelites who did not have iron chariots they had really no hope of over throwing his power over them. And so remember they were being disciplined, so they did not have the blessing of Yahweh on them.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Which means if they tried to challenge Jabin, they would be doing it in their own strength.

Janet: Which is failure. Yeah.

Alexandra: Yes. Yes, exactly. So it's interesting, after 20 years, finally the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help. I just thought it was interesting.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: After 20 years of that,

Janet: you're like 20 years? Yeah.

Alexandra: So, Janet, question, why do Christians sometimes delay in running to God even if our sin is making us miserable?

Janet: Well, I think that can obviously be a variety of reasons, but you know, things for us to consider. Sometimes I'm mad at him because I just want my idol. And I can remember hearing Amy Baker say once, you know, when I want my idol, the comfort of God is not comforting.

Janet: So when I'm living for my idols in any way, I don't wanna run to God because I know he doesn't guarantee my idol. Like I can't go to God and say, please help me have an easy life where it's all about me and everybody does whatever I want all the time. I have no confidence he'll do that, so I don't go to him. I'd rather try to find another way to get what I actually want, because I don't want God. It's irrational. But it also means that in that moment, I am so deceived. And the phrase that goes through my head in those moments is and Satan Smiles.

Janet: And in that moment, I don't agree with God that his way, even though it's foreign to my flesh, is best for my soul. It's what I was designed for. And if I don't believe it's best for my soul, I'm gonna do what I think is best for me and not go to God until i'm desperate.



Alexandra: Yeah. And that goes back to like God doing what he hates in order to accomplish what he loves.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: He gets us desperate for him.

Janet: To that point. Yes.

Alexandra: And that is truly like his grace in our lives. All right, now we meet Deborah verses four and five. So finally everyone listening is like, finally please. Okay. So Deborah was a prophetess. That means that she spoke on behalf of Yahweh and showed the Israelites the wisdom of God. So essentially she represented God's character during the consequences of their sin, like it was because of Deborah, the Israelites got to see God's care for them through Deborah,

Janet: Through Deborah.

Alexandra: which is like, even if you are going through consequences of sin today and you are saved by grace, like God is still gonna walk through that with you. He's still gonna care

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: For you through that. The word Deborah means bee. So, she made herself very useful to the public. I don't know who said this, but someone once said she was sweet as honey to those who went to her for help but was stinging to enemies. So some commentator,

Janet: quotable quote.

Alexandra: Yes. Okay, so Yahweh provided Deborah to Judge Israel under the Canaanite King Jabin's oppression. And we don't see how Deborah arose to leadership. Judges 5:7 says, I, Deborah arose as a mother in Israel. And it might've just a gradual slow rise to leadership. We will get to this later, but Canaanite culture, towards women, so dark.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: So messed up. And it is likely because of that, that Deborah's rising to power, if you will, was pretty much unnoticed by the Canaanites because they, it wasn't like, oh, this enemy was living far away. It was like, no, they were in their borders. And so it is likely that they just didn't take Deborah seriously

Janet: hidden in plain sight. 'cause they would never look at a woman.



Alexandra: Exactly. So one thing you will not see in this story is the role of the priests. And it really, it's

Janet: interesting.

Alexandra: It's so sad. Their silence in the story just screams failure. And because their idol worship, the priests have essentially lost their effectiveness as prophets for God. And I don't know if like Yahweh just didn't speak through them anymore, but as the designated men leading spiritually. It's just sad that they just weren't part of the story at all.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: And actually it reminds me of Revelation 2 that the warning of like, when you abandon your first love, like God will take away your lampstands.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And so just, yeah. Such a spiritual tragedy here. In the previous verse the Israelites again crying out to God for help. And then we see Deborah communicating God's response to the people's cry.

Alexandra: But it's important to know that Deborah's just communicating God's response. She is not the tool. She's not the answer

Janet: right

Alexandra: to their cry. And it's one of the reasons why she's not listed in Hebrews 11 and Barack is, which is

Janet: so interesting.

Alexandra: Yeah. Super fascinating. We'll talk at the end of this episode about Hebrews 11 and why Barack is in there. 'Cause it's like, how did you make it in there buddy?

Alexandra: Okay, so in verses six and seven now Deborah is confronting Barack and she's essentially saying, go like march to Mount Tabor with 10,000 men. And it's really interesting here. She says that she's giving the prophecy and she says that Yahweh will draw out Sisera to meet you by the River Kishon with his iron chariots, with his troops. And the chariots are like, why? Barack is scared of them. And so logically, you can see why Barack is like, I don't see this happening.

Janet: Right.



Alexandra: Like, you're gonna bring these men with their technology and I don't have anything to match that. And somehow you're gonna deliver them into my hands?

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And it's just really interesting. You see the 900 chariots referenced every time that Deborah talks to Barack. And so, the promise is that yeah, Yahweh will draw out Sisera. he'll meet them at the river and he'll give them to Barack. So, this is not a highlight point in Barack's career. He essentially wanted his mommy to go with him.

Alexandra: What is your gut reaction? Janet, when you read this? I probably am not as gracious as you when you're reading.

Janet: Well, it's not attractive. We could say that. You know, in the past year or so, I have really thought a lot about, and we've done an episode on weakness. And I, I don't think that we should be saying Barack should be stronger.

Janet: It's that our weakness is intended by God to draw us to find strength in him. Barack could have done that. He could have said, I am fearful, not Deborah, go with me, but Yahweh help me. Like, it's okay to be weak. We are weak. What does Paul say? When I am weak, then I am strong. But instead. He chose to put Deborah in harm's way to make himself feel better.

Alexandra: yeah.

Janet: Which is the opposite of God's calling on him.

Alexandra: Such a good point, Janet. If he had just changed that phrase instead of saying, Deborah, if you'll go with me

Janet: Yaweh, yes.

Alexandra: If God, if you would go with me.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: I know I can do this.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: I asked a couple friends and family who are in the military to read judges four and five and give me their perspective. And my brother Ethan is an army ranger. And one of the things that he had brought up was, I wonder what it would be like to be the troops under Barack, to see Barack hesitate like that.



Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: And how would that feel like knowing that God is calling you to go out, to gather and to go down this mountain to the river, like how would that feel?

Janet: And follow this guy?

Alexandra: Yeah. And this guy is like wavering.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Just interesting. So Barack, you know, he's received his order. He was assured of victory.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: So what do we see Barack putting his trust in?

Janet: Well, at that point it seems to be Deborah.

Alexandra: Absolutely. And I think,

Janet: you know, not God, it's Deborah.

Alexandra: Yeah. And I think just, I know I have very much failed at this of putting my leaders, especially if you have like a mentor you really admire.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Like making them the object of my faith instead of imitating their faith. Barack was in the Hall of Faith, you know, Hebrews 11. So we do know, like he eventually does walk by faith, but he did trust Deborah more than he trusted Yahweh.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And his promise of victory. So ultimately, Barack is trusting people more than he trusted God to lead him. And yeah, that's pretty much failing at the biggest task that you were given. Like Barack, you had one job, right? Like this was your moment to live out being a judge. Deborah is considered to be the weaker vessel, but she had the stronger faith. So in verse nine, now we see that Deborah's response to him is that I will go with you, but the honor is going to go to a woman. And in the culture at that time. For the audience this book was written for, to die at the hands of a woman is considered the ultimate humiliation. Abimelech will later commit suicide rather than be exposed to the shame



Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Of it. And so, this is a humiliating response from Deborah.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: From the Lord. Okay, so then verses 14 and 15, I'm just going to reread it for a minute. We see that the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barack by the edge of the sword, and Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot.

Alexandra: And so the question is like, why would Sisera abandon his iron chariot?

Janet: Abandon the things that was keeping him safe?

Alexandra: Yes.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And so we read more of what happened in chapter five. So Janet, will you read Judges five verses four and five, and then 20 and 21?

Janet: Sure.

Janet: Lord, when you went out from Seir. First of all, I love that it's God that marched.

Alexandra: Yes.

Janet: Which is cool. Okay. When you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled and the heavens dropped. Yes. The clouds dropped water. The mountains quaked before the Lord even Sinai before the Lord, the God of Israel. From heaven the stars fought. From their courses they fought against Sisera. The torrent of Kishon swept them away. The ancient torrent, the torrent, Kishon. March on my soul with might.

Alexandra: Thank you. So, okay, now we see what happened at the battle. Like we don't really see a lot of what happened in chapter four, but here it tells us that essentially, you know, Deborah had prophesied that Yahweh would deliver Sisera at the river.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: And that Sisera would have his chariots. Chapter five says that on a meteorological level, spiritual warfare broke out. And it's really interesting. The Canaanites believed that the stars were heavenly powers that controlled the weather. And so, like even the Canaanites could, I think that one of the reasons why they were starting to panic is that they, you know, there was stuff happening in the sky.



Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And there was a huge storm that essentially broke out. And it was the rain caused the river to rapidly rise and flood, which made the iron chariots completely unusable,

Janet: which that's crazy. You know, like we're looking at it and it's like, what am I gonna do against these things? And all it took was a bunch of mud.

Alexandra: Yes.

Janet: And the Lord did that.

Alexandra: And there was,

Janet: and they couldn't even use him.

Alexandra: No way that Sisera could have prepared for this.

Janet: Oh, no. No.

Alexandra: So now the question is who gets the honor? Barack was told that his glory would go to a woman.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Sisera later dies a shameful death at the hands of a woman. So Barack we, I think see him seeking glory here. So again, one of my friends in the military, one of the things that he had brought up is I wonder why Barack was hesitant to obey Yahweh if he had this promise. He was like, I wonder if part of it was, I have these 10,000 men. I don't want them to die.

Alexandra: But one thing that I think of is he might've been afraid of failure. Like he wanted the glory.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And he wasn't assured of getting it. We see it in verse 16. I mean, Barack woke up. We didn't read that today, but as soon as Sisera flees the battle scene, he sees that I mean, we learned that every one of his men dies at the hands of the Israelites. And as that is happening, Sisera panics and leaves, and Barack is no longer scared at that point. Barack just takes off after him. And, so you can tell he's hungry for it.

Janet: Yeah.



Alexandra: He's like in it. He's ready. And so unfortunately when we get to the next scene, which we'll talk about next episode he sees that he will not get that glory as predicted.

Alexandra: So, Janet, when you were reading chapter five, I love that you brought up Lord, when you went out from Seir.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And so. Who really gets the glory here?

Janet: Yes. Yes. God did it.

Alexandra: It's not is. Yeah. It's not Jael. It's not Deborah. It's not the woman. It's that God is the divine warrior. So the same one who allowed Jabin to take the Israelites captive is the one who delivers them.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: He's the one that routed Sisera's army to Barack's feet. At the end of the chapter, it says that the Israelites saw God subdue Jabin, the King of Canaan. So it wasn't anyone else, not Jael, it was Yahweh.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: The Song of Praise sung by Deborah and Barack in chapter five shows how God is the true hero. So in chapter 5:31, at the very end it says: so may all your inner enemies perish, oh Lord. But your friends, meaning God's people, a friend of God, be like the sun as he rises in his might. And so this was a song that was sung we see in chapter five verse one, that this was a song that was sung by Deborah and Barack saying that, you know, Jabin and Sisera and the Cananite army, they're all not their enemies. They're the enemies of Yahweh. And that's honestly Barack's finest moment in the story.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Is when he praises Yahweh for being the divine warrior.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: So as we're talking about just God getting the glory, one of the passages that came to my mind was from Psalm 23, classic, right? It's on like every pillowcase from Hobby Lobby or whatever. But Janet, would you be willing to read Psalm 23 verses one through three?



Janet: Sure. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Alexandra: I love that Psalm, and I love that God does all things for my good, for his name's sake.

Janet: For his name's sake. Yep.

Alexandra: He is committed to do all things for his glory, and he is unapologetic about that.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: I love Habakkuk 2:14 that says, the Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the water covers the seas. I mean,

Janet: yes.

Alexandra: How much water is over the sea.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: It covers it. I love that God will get the glory regardless of my choices. Meaning if I follow the Lord, he'll be glorified by like the world, seeing that God's word is true. You know, you follow God and the blessings of the fruit of the Spirit will, God willing, be evident in my life, but God will also be glorified if I'm not following him

Janet: because they'll still see that his word is true.

Alexandra: Exactly.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: So like we said at the beginning we tend to only hear sermons about the prophetess Deborah if it's trying to support females in leadership positions. But we actually see that Deborah, she did not take over Barack's role. She used her influence and power to encourage him to obey and to lead courageously and I just think that is such a beautiful example, I mean, they were not married, but that is like a good imagery of a complimentary marriage.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: You know? Like as wives, we're not to take over our husband's roles, but we are to use our, like if we have wisdom, if we have passion, if we,



Janet: whatever gifts and abilities god's given us,

Alexandra: use it for your husband to lead in a way that glorifies God.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: So Deborah was not the conventional judge or prophet. Ultimately, we see that the men were not leading. So God raised up women, and I think this is just such a good reminder that God's will is not dependent upon any one man.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Israel was stuck and the men refused to lead, so God provided a mother to instruct them and push them. You know, God spoke to Balaam through a donkey. Yeah. He's not limited by the biblical counseling movement. He's not limited even by Christians. So if you know someone who is not submitting their lives to Christ, pray for God to send unconventional people into their lives. Also, if God is calling you to do something and you're so scared of failing, that you choose not to follow him, a humble reminder that you know God is not limited to you.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: He doesn't need you.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: He will move on and use the next woman who does have faith that God will lead and keep his promises. I mean, we see that in Esther. Right?

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: That, that reminder. I also just wanna give an encouragement to single moms. I mean, we have an epidemic of single moms in this country, and God will give grace to women to accomplish what cannot be accomplished in their own strength.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Matt Chandler said in a sermon series on marriage one time where the ideal lacks grace abounds. And so,

Janet: oh, I love that.

Alexandra: Yes. Just commit your way to Christ.

Janet: What a phrase.



Alexandra: And the Lord will give you what you need.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: To do well. Lastly, Hebrews 11. It's the Hall of Faith. Just a wonderful list of just very inspiring men and women of the Lord who had chose to follow Yahweh despite hard circumstances. Barack is listed in there.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: In verse 32, and not de Deborah. Deborah Is the one who we see has a wonderful faith in here, but Barack gets the quote unquote reward.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And in the same way. You know, Jesus is the one who had perfect faith, perfect submission, and we get the reward.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Hebrews includes Barack and also Gideon, Sampson, Jephtha and in the end, Barack did go with Deborah. And because of that, Yahweh is honored and he did deliver the Israelites out from the Canaanite oppression because of Barack going.

Alexandra: I heard this in a sermon recently. Our church went through the book of Hebrews last year. By the time this comes out, it'll be last year. And one of our pastors reminded us that Barack is in the hall of Faith, not because he was flawless, but because he acted on his faith. And, you know, Matthew 17:20 talks about faith as small as a mustard seed. So,

Janet: and I love that because, you know, you had said maybe he was going out for glory. And, and that's absolutely possible. Maybe he was a doubting, fearful man. And it makes me think of Thomas, what did God do with the disciple that doubted? He didn't say, why can't you be like the other people? He said, come and see. Stop doubting. He met him right there to help him to not doubt. And I look at the fact that once, it's almost like I could imagine if it was more fear and not believing God, doubt, all of that is sin, when the flood comes. Something he never anticipated was that all of the chariots he was afraid of would be disabled.

Janet: And he sees him leave. I could imagine him thinking, oh my word God really is going to, it's true. Oh my word. And what little faith he had, he activated. You know? And I look at that and go, and God doesn't say, to be in the hall of faith, you need to be amazing. You just need to activate faith.

Alexandra: Amen.



Janet: And in that moment, he did.

Alexandra: And yeah. When we do live by faith, God is so glorified.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: And so listeners, just, I encourage you to think through how is God calling you to walk by faith this week? And just remember that he will take care of you, not because of the amount of faith that you have, but because he does all for His glory.

Janet: Excellent. Thank you and I hope listeners, you're excited to hear the rest of the story in the next episode.

To keep from missing any future episodes, please sign up for our newsletter on our webpage faithlafayette.org/JJP From there you can also subscribe to this podcast on Apple, Google, or Spotify. You can also visit us on our Facebook page or Instagram at Joyful Journey Podcast. If you have questions or comments for us, you can email us at joyfuljourneyquestions@outlook.com. Joyful Journey Podcast is a ministry of Faith Bible Seminary. All proceeds go to offset costs of this podcast and toward scholarships for women to receive their [MABC through Faith Bible Seminary](#).

Host Janet and her husband, Brent, also speak at a variety of conferences as a way to raise money for the seminary. If you want to look at what they offer or book them for a conference, [go to their website](#).