

Episode 6-4: Crushing the Enemy's Head Part 2

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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, Joyful Journey Listeners, if you heard the last episode, you heard Alexandra beginning to talk us through the story that's about Deborah and Barak and Jael. So if you didn't, I really think you should stop and go back and listen to that one. But if you did, we're now here for the rest of the story. So Alexandra is back with us to help us see the end of the story and learn even more about what God was up to.

Alexandra: We just wanna give a little disclaimer at the beginning of this episode. This episode contains mature themes that might not be appropriate for little ears. So this is more of a PG 13 episode, if you will. So we just wanna let you know ahead of time, if you're in the car with little ones or whatnot, maybe pause this and come back to it another time. Alright.

Janet: Okay.

Alexandra: Let's go! So last week we talked about, or last episode, excuse me, we talked about Deborah and Barak.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: And what led to this epic battle. So Janet, what was something that you were challenged or encouraged by in part one of this series?



Janet: I think for me it's thinking about God's graciousness to Barak. I want to say he was such a bad military leader, but the reality is I'm weak in a whole lot of ways too. And God is gracious to me and He draws me back. And I just see Him doing that with Barak and in the end, Barak gives God, all the credit for it and maybe all of that process helped put Barak where he needed to be. And helped grow him in just the right way that God was determining through that. And it makes me think that it encourages me to have the faith and the courage to take my weakness to God. And then to trust Him for the strength to do whatever He calls me to do.

Alexandra: I love that. I feel like we balance each other out. You're a good cop. I'm bad cop because I'm like, Barak, you had one job. Okay, so let's talk about Judges 4 and 5. So we talked last week about how we're seeing this cycle happened throughout the book of Judges. We're now in the second set of Judges. We're after Ehud. So the cycle is disobedience. The Israelites disobedience leads to Yahweh disciplining them. In the discipline, they get desperate finally for God. And then God graciously provides a judge to deliver them.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: So in Judges 4 and 5, specifically, the Israelites enjoy an extended time of rest, and that ease leads to spiritual laziness. The judge leading God's people dies and then the Israelites fall away from Yahweh and begin worshiping pagan gods, mainly Baal and Asherah, which we didn't talk about Baal and Asherah last time, but that is the main two gods during the time of the Judges.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: That we see them being tempted to fall away from. Judges 5:8 says, when new Gods were chosen, then war was in the gates. So God allowed the Israelites to be taken captive and oppressed by cruel enemy kings. Specifically in Judges 4 and 5, we see this as from Jabin.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And as leading Commander Sisera. So then the Israelites would crowd to God he would hear them and rise up a judge to be both the prophet and military deliverer. And we are currently in the discipline phase of this cycle. So like I said, Israel is being oppressed by King Jabin of Canaan and his top commander who has 900 iron chariots, which is the top technology in the military at this point in time.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: There are two judges ruling over Israel, Deborah, who is the prophet, and Barak, who is the military leader. We talk a lot about the role of a judge. So again, this is your second encouragement to go back and listen to the last episode. And actually I had mentioned last episode about 1200 BC. I will finally address that in this episode. I promised last episode I



would, and I will address it in this episode. I actually think it's a really cool, interesting fact. So Janet, we saw courage in Deborah, not passive fear. What are ways that women today can have courage like Deborah?

Janet: I just think about the fact that biblical love takes such courage. It means when I'm told by Jesus, love each other the way I have loved you. How did He love us? Sacrificially, did what was best for us to His own hurt, to His own death. So Jesus trusting His father all the way to the cross as He chose love for the Father and love for us. And I think as women, we get to do that. So with other women and with men, and certainly, women or men, whatever leadership roles they have, and certainly in the home, it's my husband, but in other places it could be a man or a woman in a role over me that I am not afraid to encourage someone else's leadership. That's what I see her doing.

Alexandra: And it's easy to just think, I'm just gonna take over.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: I see you not, I see you flailing.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: I'm just gonna take over. And that is not what Deborah did.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: God calls Barak to lead Israel's army against Sisera, promising him that Yahweh will give him victory at the river, the Kishon River, despite Sisera leading an army with 900 chariots and Barak hesitates to go without Deborah. So she accompanies him, but warns him that the honor of the victory will go to a woman.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: So during the battle, Yahweh sends a storm that floods the river Kishon disabling Sisera chariots, and leading to Israel's triumph. And then what we're gonna get to today, Jael, the wife of Sisera's ally, later kills Sisera by driving a tent peg through the temple of his head, fulfilling Deborah's prophecy. And Yahweh uses Jael to complete the victory over the Canaanites. So we have some drama that we dropped off at.

Janet: No kidding.

Alexandra: In Judges 4, Deborah says, 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. The only woman that we've seen so far is Deborah. But the identity of "the woman" is delayed as long as possible. And there is



just this sense of mystery and drama about it. And we talked a little bit, a lot about, this actually last episode, but I think that the identity of the woman is delayed because Jael is not the true hero of the story.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: It's God, alright, Janet, can you read for us Judges 4:11?

Janet: Now Heber, the Kenite had separated from the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak of Zaanannim, which is near Kedesh.

Alexandra: Great job.

Janet: You give me all these words. Yes, I think I got 'em.

Alexandra: Last episode, I had you read the first part of this passage and then cut to the battle scene. But what you don't see unless you read it all the way through, is that right in the middle of this, we have this new character coming to the story Heber, the Kenite. And so I just wanted to give a history of the Kenites so that we can better understand like, why is it significant that they're telling us that he's a Kenite? So the Kenites, were not Israelites. But they were descendants of Moses' father-in-law. So when Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, the Kenites were permitted to come too. They lived, Judges 1:16 says that they lived in Judah's settlement. And so they were followers of Yahweh. They were not, God's chosen people, but they were followers and they were respected for their loyalty to Yahweh, for their hospitality and to their faithfulness to God's people. They did not betray God's people. And so when the Israelites moved into the Promised Land, they were starting to build houses, build cities, vineyards, developing agriculture. The Kenites were a nomadic tribe. They lived in tents, which is very important to the story. They were sojourners. So in verse 11, we see this very suspicious activity. Heber separates himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent as far away from them as possible.

Janet: Interesting.

Alexandra: It's actually, yes, it's very interesting. It's speculated that his camp might have been somewhere in between Jabin and Sisera and Barak, and some scholars wonder if he was the informer in the next verse that lets Sisera know, hey, there's 10,000 troops like coming together at Mount Tabor. Because Heber would've been close enough and have enough knowledge of the Israelites to have that awareness. So that's not proven, but some scholars do wonder about that.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: So Janet, what does it say about Heber's values, if he was separating from people who followed Yahweh and pitched his tent near God's enemies?



Janet: Certainly. Just from looking at that, it looks like he didn't want to be aligned with the values of Yahweh, and maybe he had been around Canaan and the Canaanites long enough that his values aligned more with theirs now.

Alexandra: Which is very concerning. We will break down the Canaanite values. But yeah, this is not good.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: This is not good. So at this point in the story, Sisera is notified that Barak is marching his troops of 10,000 men and Sisera meets him at the river. Something wild happens in the sky. Essentially, the Lord releases a horrific, powerful storm and it immediately floods the Kishon River and Sisera's men panic. So if your main instrument of war is an iron chariot and it's no longer effective, if it's in water.

Janet: Wow.

Alexandra: So there was no way Sisera could have prepared or expected this. Sisera's men turn back and they flee to their commander's headquarters. But Barak and men pursue and it says that not even one person survived. So Sisera jumps from his iron chariot and he runs past the capitol and continues fleeing North. Barak sees him and at some point he begins the pursuit. So what we read next, Barak is, we don't know how close behind, but it's not a long, this is a very quick secession of events of what we're about to read. Janet, can you read for me? Judges 4:15-24?

Janet: And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army before Barak by the edge of the sword. And Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot. And Barak pursued the chariots and the army to Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left. But Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, for there was peace between Jabin, the King of Hazor and the House of Heber the Kenite. And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord; turn aside to me; do not be afraid." So he turned aside to her into the tent and she covered him with a rug. And he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him. And he said to her, "Stand at the opening of the tent, and if any man comes and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say, 'No.'" But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died. And behold, as Barak was pursuing Sisera, Jael went out to meet him and said to him, "Come and I will show you the man whom you're seeking." So he went into her tent, and there lay Sisera dead, with the tent peg in his temple. So on that day, God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan before the people of Israel. And the hand of the people of Israel pressed harder and harder against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.



Alexandra: There's a big storm happening, Sisera flees and he sees this lone tent, the tent of Jael and Heber's not there. Again, we don't know where he is.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: But it's speculated he is probably off near Jabin. So at some point, Barak sees him and begins pursuit. So not only had Heber moved his tent as far away from the Kenites, who are allies of Israel, moved it as far away as possible. But this verse makes it sound like some sort of peaceful alliance was understood between Heber and Sisera.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: So we know that from Judges 4:3, that at this point, King Jabin had been oppressing the Israelites cruelly. Jabin was in their borders and they knew the land better than the Israelites. But worse than that, they worshiped pagan gods probably Baal. So this has some implications on his cruelty, Jabin's cruelty. He did not value life. So Baal, just some quick facts about him, he was a fertility god, supposedly would produce children, crops, and defeated enemies. The worship of Baal included ritual prostitution. It required human sacrifice, often the firstborn child. Horrible.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And 1 Corinthians 10:20 calls that demon worship.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: This angers God. This is not between Israel and Canaan. This is between Yahweh and Baal.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: This battle is a spiritual warfare. Heber, it's so sad, he's abandoning Yahweh's values to the Canaanite values, and it's here that we see this. Heber's alliance is aligned more with Baal than with Yahweh.

Janet: As I've not studied this in depth before now, and so it's so interesting to think about that because I'm like, okay, why would he have done that? If he's seen Yahweh's values and then he sees their values, what would've been attractive? And when you said they were being oppressed cruelly, I thought maybe this was a way to avoid it being cruel. To him, this was his way out. So instead of, I want to honor God. When honoring God means I'm gonna be treated poorly, I give that up.

Alexandra: Suffering.



Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Deep suffering.

Janet: Then I'll give it up and I will go to the Canaanites where whether I agree with him or not, maybe I'm just pragmatic. I just don't want to suffer. I'm gonna be on the winning side, whoever that is, that's where I wanna be. And then I think if the commentators are right that he was a spy, if we know about that, that's so infuriating. It's oh my word, he heard about it, and what's that gonna, and God was using it. To get Sisera to go exactly where God wanted Sisera to go.

Alexandra: Free the people.

Janet: Like it's amazing 'cause God orchestrating even working through, if he was a spy,

Alexandra: He's not limited to anything.

Janet: No.

Alexandra: He can use anything to accomplish His will.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: It's just so interesting. Even we're gonna, I don't wanna ruin the surprise, but we're gonna bring up the book of Exodus later on in this episode. But even Pharaoh could not stop God's plan.

Janet: That's right.

Alexandra: For the Israelites.

Janet: That's right.

Alexandra: Not even Jabin can stop God's plan. Not even Heber can stop God's plan.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: For his people. God is not limited by your sin. And it's actually very comforting 'cause He is not limited by my sin either.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: So if He wants to accomplish things, like I've seen that in my life. Okay. Okay, so now Sisera meets Jael. So I mentioned this earlier, the Kenites, they were known to be nomadic tent dwellers.



Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: So Sisera sees this lone tent and recognizes it immediately. The entire time, I think Jael is just calculating and you see her initiate everything.

Janet: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. She's the one who tells him to come in.

Alexandra: She goes out to him.

Janet: Yep. Yep.

Alexandra: If Heber is the one that informed Sisera of Barak gathering his troops, she have may have been already aware of this battle that was about to be happening or that currently was happening actually. She goes out to meet Sisera. She initiates speaking to him. She assures him, don't be afraid, and she invites him into her tent. So at this point we see that Sisera says that he's thirsty and she not only offers him water, she gives him rich milk, and she covers him with a rug. Now there is, man, there is so much I would love to write a book about this topic, honestly. But one thing we don't have time to get into today is all the themes of mothers.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And this, Deborah says, I arose as a mother of Israel. We see later in chapter five, a reference to Sisera's mother and here, Jael is treating his.

Janet: She's being motherly.

Alexandra: She is. She's covering him with a rug and giving him milk. Lots of more to go through, if you ever wanna do more deep dives on this story. There's lots more there. Okay. At this point, Sisera falls asleep. It says that he was exhausted from the battle. Sisera instructs her right before he falls asleep to lie if anyone comes for him and we don't see Jael affirm this. Once Sisera is asleep, Jael takes a tent peg and a hammer, and she drives it through his temple. And so as a reminder, they were tent dwellers.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: So Jael's familiarity with the tent peg is because she no doubt had hammered down tent pegs into the ground over and over again to secure tents. And so this may be a bit of a stretch, but Janet, what are some ways that we can look at Jael's choice of tools and consider our own daily tasks? I'm not saying that God's going to use you as an instrument of war, but what are some ways that we can look at this and see some application?

Janet: Yeah, I think it's interesting 'cause when you first hear the story, what I would think is I could never do that. But I didn't live her life. Like I wasn't as comfortable with it as she was. So



what is in a regular part of my life that my ordinary using of whatever I typically would have, how can I use that in ways that would be extraordinary, in ways that would be doing what she was doing, honoring the Lord?

Alexandra: I think it's also just an encouragement to be faithful with the mundane tasks that you have today. Because you have no idea what God has planned for you. Nobody told Jael, hey, you better really take this tent peg job seriously.

Janet: Yes. You need to know how to do this.

Alexandra: Yes. Like you're gonna be known forever for driving these tent pegs in the ground so make sure you're like really.

Janet: True.

Alexandra: Those triceps better be strong, girl. No one told her that. And so just, you have no idea how God is going to use your skills that you are, that feel mundane today.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: For your next season.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Okay. So Jael's murder. Let's talk about it. It's morally ambiguous.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: But possible motivations. So we don't know how much influence the Kenites worship of Yahweh impacted Jael. We don't actually know if she feared God. It's possible that Jael desired peace with Yahweh over peace with Jabin.

Janet: It is interesting that. It appears that she and her husband are not on the same page.

Alexandra: That is true.

Janet: And so to think about the fact that if he was some kind of a spy that may be how she got her information that she uses and in the opposite way that he would want her to. And you just see God orchestrating through all of that, even the difficulty in their marriage, if she's following him.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: And he's leading her this direction and for whatever reason she doesn't appear to want to be under Jabin.



Alexandra: Yes. And chapter five, it says, Jael most blessed of women.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: But we don't know.

Janet: No.

Alexandra: It also says we are in the days of Jael. So the Israelites are, there is an element of where we are praising Yahweh for Jael. But it's not super clear if Yahweh is seeking to honor, or excuse me if Jael is seeking to honor Yahweh, we can really read between the lines.

Janet: But she seems to want Yahweh to win and Jabin to lose. But why? We don't know.

Alexandra: But God uses her anyway.

Janet: Yes, He does.

Alexandra: Let's talk about the Canaanite treatment of women.

Janet: Which may have been part of what encouraged Jael to not want to be a part of that.

Alexandra: I completely agree.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Canaan, you could summarize it with, they desire honor over the value of women, and I think it is similar to Sharia law.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: In the book of Judges, that women are both the scapegoat and the commodity and it declines with each judge. It gets more and more dark and graphic to the point where I don't even, we can't even talk about it on this podcast. It's so graphic.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: And terrible. Sisera's mom, we are given some psychological insight to her dread as she waits for her son. So Janet, will you just read that it's Judges 5:28-30. So at this point, Sisera is not coming home and everyone's getting a little anxious. Because they're not out the battle scene. They don't know what's happening,

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: We see how Sisera's mother comforts herself as she waits for her son.



Janet: Out of the window she peered, the mother of Sisera wailed through the lattice: 'Why is his chariot so long and coming? Why tarry the hoof beats of his chariots?' Her wisest princesses answer. Indeed, she answers herself, 'Have they not found and divided the spoil?- A womb or two for every man; spoil of dyed materials for Sisera, spoil of dyed materials embroidered, two pieces of dyed work embroidered for the neck as spoil.'

Alexandra: So Sisera's mother comforts herself knowing that he is coming back, arrayed in fine linen, just finished completing his conquest of the Israelites in the most vulnerable of ways. And it's no doubt that this is based on things that have happened in previous victors.

Janet: That's probably what always happens. Yep.

Alexandra: So in verse 30 it says, have they not found and divided the spoil?- A womb or two for every man. So Janet, why is it significant that a Canaanite woman sees this as normal, calling women nothing but a womb.

Janet: It's so shocking. First of all, even the phrase, when I hear a womb I can't imagine how hurtful. That would be if someone only saw me as a womb and to think that she has been raised and in that culture for so long that in her mind that's normal. And she's praising the fact that he can do that.

Alexandra: She's numb to the horrific nature.

Janet: Yes. It's crazy.

Alexandra: Women were valued only for their bodies.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Sexual gratification or reproduction, and it's just so interesting, women are listed here as property. It's equal to fabric. It says, have they not found and divided the spoil or the prizes of war? A womb or two for every man; spoil of dyed materials.

Janet: Crazy.

Alexandra: It's women and fabric are the prizes of war to be divided amongst the Canaanite men. These were the two highest prizes of war. So Janet, you have a lot of experience as a counselor with working with women of trauma. What are some of your thoughts as you read this?

Janet: I have not used this passage, but probably would now. I think it would be something that women who have been through a lot of horrendous things they could relate to, that's how they have felt and for them to see in this story. God hates that.

Alexandra: He does.



Janet: But for them to see, yeah, I can relate. That is, for some of them, their mom was part of it. And to know, yeah, that can happen when that's the culture that you are in. But it's the exact opposite of Yahweh's culture. It's who He's fighting against.

Alexandra: Absolutely. And then just, you referenced the two different cultures; Canaanite culture, rape was the prize.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: And then you have in the same chapter, the same portion of Judges in Yahweh's culture. He raised up women as reverent leaders.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: This is the two opposites. And it's true today, Christianity is the only religion that truly gets the value of women. Feminism is basically, you should become man. We have, any other cultural, I'll use the word religion, if I don't even have, I could go down a whole rabbit hole right now of just how men seek to just snuff out women. Truly Jesus is the only one that says, I created women in beautiful ways. And when women live out their feminine.

Janet: Easy for you to say.

Alexandra: Exactly. Live that out for the glory of God. That's powerful.

Janet: And I love, you know, your point that women are in feminism, I can do whatever a man can do. So what I'm doing is valuing men and saying, I have value because I can be like a man. And some might even say that's what Deborah was doing. But I love how it says she was raised as a mother in Israel. She was not a prophet. She was a prophet. She did not behave in the way as male prophets. Because she did, she led out of her motherliness, where male prophets led out of their manliness. And so they still lead, but God doesn't ask me to be a man in order to value me. He raised her up and asked her to use the way he designed her as a woman- motherly and that in that way she was to lead.

Alexandra: I love it. So I think just something else to note here, when we look at this insight into his Sisera's mom, this would've been the fate of God's women if Sisera had won.

Janet: Yes. Yes.

Alexandra: Very sad. Okay. So if you think of Heber and just Jael's marriage to her, we don't, or to him, we don't know. We are not given insight into what that was like. But we're talking about motivations for why she murdered Sisera. Okay. How I think of it in modern terms is Heber is if you had a guy whose grandparents were believers and then this guy left the culture that he grew up in to join a gang that commits violence against women.



Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Like how would you as that guy's wife, how would you feel? Not good.

Janet: No.

Alexandra: I'll tell you that much.

Janet: No. And yeah, and to know I can't just walk away.

Alexandra: Exactly.

Janet: So I'm here. I'm recognizing that the direction this is going is gonna get harder and harder for me.

Alexandra: Exactly.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: I had mentioned earlier, I'm nerding out that this was I think it's very cool, but this happened around 1200 BC. At the beginning of the Book of Ruth, we see that book takes, it says verse chapter one, the beginning of the chapter. It says that this takes place in the time of the Judges.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: They estimate that when Naomi, so Naomi had, was in Bethlehem, left for Moab.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: With her husband. Her husband and two sons die. When Naomi and Ruth are heading back to Bethlehem, which is not like, I'm not great at geography, but it's not in this area that we're talking about. When Naomi and Ruth are heading back to Bethlehem, it takes place. They estimate around 1200 BC. So you see all this wickedness with Canaan and all of the, the talk of how the men of Canaan treated women. And then you have Boaz.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Righteous, generous Boaz. And so just to give a little shout out.

Janet: Wow.

Alexandra: Our next series that you and I are gonna go through that's gonna come out later this year is gonna be on the book of Ruth.



Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: And I think this mini series that we're doing, this two part series is a great precursor to the book of Ruth.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Because it's taking place culturally around the same time.

Janet: Which makes Boaz's godly treatment of Ruth even more amazing.

Alexandra: It does. Absolutely. So we have no idea what Jael experienced in her own home, but it's clear that she was exposed to Canaanite treatment of women. I don't know that Jael's murder of Sisera was premeditated against him.

Janet: I don't know that she knew he was gonna come running up.

Alexandra: No. Oh, that's very true. That is very true. But there is clearly resentment in her heart towards what Sisera stood for. The theme of women in this story is so obvious that we cannot ignore the possibility that it could have been a resentment towards her husband's abandonment of a culture.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: That allowed a woman to rise up as a prophetess, going to a culture where assault was so acceptable.

Janet: And how that may have impacted how he was treating her.

Alexandra: Yes. Very much so.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: So Judges 5:27-28. I'm gonna read it for you guys. It's again, Judges 5, gives a little bit more color to the just straight facts that we read in Judges 4. It says, she sent her hand to the tent peg and her right hand to the workmen's mallet; she struck Sisera; she crushed his head; she scattered and pierced his temple. Now, when you see things repeated in the Hebrew language, it's intentional.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: You would know that more than me being married to the Hebrew guy. You're like, yes.



Janet: I've heard that.

Alexandra: So verse 27 says, between her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still; between her feet, he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell - dead. Sisera died between her feet. The word for dead means to assault, to devastate, to be violently destroyed. So it's just we see what a horrible guy Sisera is. And the way he was killed, Yahweh had a lot of justice.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Against a very cruel man.

Janet: That would've been probably the worst way he could ever imagine dying between the feet of a woman.

Alexandra: Yes. A lot more that we could say there.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: But we'll just leave it at that. So earlier I mentioned that Jael is we don't know her true motives. We can guess.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: Based upon what we know of this passage, she is considered to be a hero of the Israelites. But she also committed murder. So there is this tension in the Old Testament, throughout the whole Old Testament, the Bible always makes sure that we see the flaws of every single hero.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: So Janet, how do you recommend that we view Jael?

Janet: I think the way we have been, I don't think the point of this story is to exalt her. But to exalt the God that orchestrated all of this and to the degree that what she did was an act of wanting to be faithful to Yahweh. That'd be great. We don't know why she did what she did. We know that God used it. We know that God used it to deliver his people. And even afterward. Who knows, maybe that would've drawn her closer to God even because of what happened afterward. But I think it's good because we don't. I can't find really anybody in the Bible that I can go, that's the person I'm gonna be just like, other than Jesus.

Alexandra: Yeah.

Janet: And I think that's the point. We don't need to try to do that with anybody.



Alexandra: Yeah. Jesus was the only one who was blameless.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: Everyone else you can see.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: A lot of scars.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: Ultimately, I think Jael points to the greater hero.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And I think Deborah and Jael point to Christ. Deborah, we see her being tender towards God's people. She's nurturing, compassionate, she provides wisdom. She calls Israel to trust in Yahweh. She is a prophet, but honestly, she does have that, I wouldn't say she is a priest, but has that role that the priest would have to intercede with Yahweh.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And so with Jael, Jael is fierce. She crushes the enemy. She delivers God's people from oppression. She's courageous. Victorious. So we see these aspects of the story that point to Christ.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Jael though achieving victory for Israel was temporary.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: We get through the song of Deborah and Barak and Judges 5 and we're feeling great. It's amazing victory. Janet, can you read for us, not to put a depressing spin on this story, but let's just get to the facts. Can you read the end of chapter five and the beginning of chapter six?

Janet: And the land had rest for 40 years. The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years. Here we are again.

Alexandra: Yes. So we're left for longing with something more.

Janet: It's never enough.

Alexandra: It's temporary. This victory was temporary. Deborah and Jael, they point to Christ.



Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: And what hope we have is that where Deborah and Jael and Barak's actions led to victory and rest. It was temporary and it eventually led to oppression again. And Christ, though He will defeat the enemy permanently.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: And our rest will not be excessive. It will be everlasting. Christ will gather His people. As Deborah gathered the Israelites, Christ will defeat the enemy as Jael defeated the enemy.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: But he will do that forever.

Janet: Amen.

Alexandra: So this is, okay, welcome to nerd out with Alexandra.

Janet: Oh, here we go.

Alexandra: Here we go. Okay, in the Old Testament. Judges 4 and 5, we mentioned this earlier. Judges 4 is the prose account. So the narrative recounting in chronological order of what happened here.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: Judges 5 is the poetry version, so it's the song and it's Deborah and Barak and the Israelites sing praises to God over what happened in chapter four. Offering some more insights.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And flavor and emotion, and we see how God worked behind the scenes and how He's the true hero. There's only one other spot in the Old Testament where this happens.

Janet: Where what happens?

Alexandra: Where what happens? That's the question. Where we have a narrative account and then they restate what happened in song.

Janet: Okay, got it.

Alexandra: The only other place that happens is after Moses parts the Red Sea.



Janet: Thinking the Red Sea and then the song of Miriam.

Alexandra: Yes, exactly. Exodus 14 and 15. We see the two accounts of the same story in narrative and song. Where God used Moses to part the Red Sea, and he led the Israelites out of slavery and free from Pharaoh's oppression. So the biblical reader would read Judges 4 and 5 and immediately think of Exodus 14 and 15. And what's even more interesting is that the three elements that appear in the battle of Barak versus Sisera, which is intervention of heavenly forces.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: We see in chapter five, the stars were fighting. There was sudden flooding. There was crippling of chariots. Yes.

Janet: Wow.

Alexandra: This also happened in Yahweh's victory at the Red Sea. So Janet, would you read for us, Exodus 15:7-13?

Janet: Sure. In the greatness of your majesty, you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger. It consumed them like stubble. By the blast of your nostrils, the waters piled up. The surging waters stood up like a wall. The deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy boasted. I will pursue. I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils. I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them. But you blew with your breath and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who among the gods is like you Lord? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory working wonders? You stretch out your right hand and the earth swallows your enemies. In your unfailing love, you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength, you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

Alexandra: Man. The reference of the stars fighting in Judges 5:20. It announces both to the Israelites and to the Canaanites, the arrival of Yahweh.

Janet: Yes.

Alexandra: So Barak had no logical hope of defeating Sisera until Yahweh flooded the river.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: The Hebrew people had no hope of defeating Pharaoh until Yahweh covered them.

Janet: Yes.



Alexandra: The enemy with the Red Sea. We have no hope of defeating our sin until Jesus defeats the enemy himself. So just like Jael, we said she, the Hebrew word there is to devastate and violently destroy Sisera. That is our hope. Jesus will devastate and violently destroy our enemy. Matthew 24, which that is, Matthew 24 is like the book of Revelation condensed down to one chapter and it says in verses 29 through 31, the sun will be darkened. The moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven. And the powers of the heavens will be shaken then will appear in heaven, the sign of the Son of Man. So again, we have these references of something is happening in the sky and then God delivers.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: Then will appear in heaven, the sign of the Son of Man then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his people from the four winds from one end of the heaven to the other. So Janet, what we're getting at here is that I'm trying to take the story of Deborah and Jael and I'm trying to help us to see the gospel implications in this story.

Janet: Which I love because I've not done that before with this passage. So I love that.

Alexandra: The point isn't, hey ladies, go, prepare yourselves with weapons of war, right? The point.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: There is a greater point here and that is applicable today. Janet, will you read for us Genesis 3:15, which is the first gospel message.

Janet: I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

Alexandra: So the offspring of the woman is Christ. The offspring of the serpent is the enemies of God.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: The serpent, which is Satan, will bruise Christ heel, which is the cross.

Janet: Yep.

Alexandra: That's what happened at the cross. Then Christ will crush the serpent's head, which is our permanent victory. So how this compares to Judges 4 and 5, Jabin oppressed the Israelites. This is the, so symbolism, we're talking about symbolism here.



Janet: Right.

Alexandra: That's the bruising of the heel. It's a temporary wound. The serpent's offspring, which is the Canaanites, they rise up against God's people. The warrior Jael literally crushes Sisera's head, literally crushes.

Janet: Right.

Alexandra: So what I'm trying to get here is I want to create this timeline from Genesis 3:15 to the cross to Jesus coming back and where does this story with Jael fit in that timeline? Judges 5, the song of Deborah and Barak is the piece.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And it makes me think of Revelation 5:3. They sing the Song of Moses. So all of this, the true, the gospel story, the first message that we received is at Genesis 3:15. And it is truly our only hope. And Christ at the cross accomplished this in His first coming and He's coming back again to complete the promises in 3:15.

Janet: Yeah.

Alexandra: And Deborah and Jael point to, they connect Genesis 3:15 to the cross to Revelation, and they give us hope that where we cannot overcome our sin, someone is coming to do it permanently.

Janet: Yeah. And so when I read that story to the degree that you're like, yes, Jael got him and so the evil was thwarted to know that is a good impulse. And Christ has done it and is coming back to finish. Love it. Alright, thank you, Alexandra, for sharing that so we can live with hope today, whatever's going on, because this little story, vignette, in the scripture is just one of many patterns that show us God mercifully bringing to pass the redemption story and it's a sure thing so we can be women of hope.

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