

# Judges 5

**Introduction** – What a praise chorus! This song praises the God of armies for His victorious strength, exalts those who kept their word and served the Lord in battle while chastising those who fell back in their compromising and comfortable religious and cultural ghettos. This song subtly contrasts God and Baal, the true and living God versus the false god of ‘natural law’, and heaps mockery and ridicule upon false religion and its followers. This ‘praise tune’ also minces no words in describing the violent victory of the righteous and the violent debauchery of the fallen.

**Praise To the Lord** (vv 2-9) – God is blessed when men choose to follow Him (and so we see the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man fully reconciled). All kings who would seek to stand against God (and specifically the God of Israel) and not consider Him Lord of all are to heed this warning (v3). Deborah recalls the battle from Mt. Tabor in terms reminiscing the coming of the Lord to Mt. Sinai (vv4-5). The song then shifts to the scenes of ‘normal life’ in Israel before Deborah arose (vv 6-9); it wasn’t safe to travel on the roads, the people turned to new gods, and ‘spear control’ was instituted to keep the peace. Deborah, the ‘mother of Israel’ arises at this time, and with a ‘mother’ motif, one expects a new birth.

**Speak! Awake! Sing!** (vv10-12) – Verses 10-11 are somewhat obscure, but appear to be summoning all of the people, the rich and the poor, men in arms and the common people at the watering places. All are to recount the righteous acts of God, and through this preaching to one another, they are to stir one another up again to serve God by coming down to the gates of the city. Deborah is to awaken the people with her song of deliverance (her prophecy of the Lord’s promises) and Barak is to then call upon and lead a remnant, those who would believe the promises and obey the commands, to come and fight Sisera (v12). Another picture of Christ is here, as Barak will lead his captives away (Eph 4:8).

**The Work of Men and Their God** (vv13-23) – Deborah praises those who responded in faith and joined the battle (13-15, 18), and she mocks those who were too comfortable or too busy or too frightened to fight (16-17, 23). The Lord certainly does not need ‘help’ in order to win the battle – that is not the point. The point is that in this time of ‘crisis-judgment’, the Lord is testing to see who will stand on His side. It is not a well-oiled army that comes out to fight Sisera, warrior of Baal, but common-folk. Baalism conceived of the stars fighting in heaven and controlling the weather. But Baal is impotent to the true Lord of the stars and clouds (vv20-21) and the strongest chariots are stuck in the mud while the horses break their legs in the ensuing panic (v22). Meroz is cursed bitterly, and so we are left with no record of where this village was (v23).

**Deborah Sings of Two Women** (vv24-30) – Though a Kenite and a woman, Jael shows more zeal, courage and faith than the people of Meroz. Meroz and others were compromised by their own decisions. Jael refuses to compromise with her husband, and when the Lord grants her the opportunity, she serves Him honorably. The final blow to Sisera comes at the hands of a faithful homemaker. Conversely, Deborah mocks Sisera’s mother, sitting and wondering why her son has not returned home. Her attendants are pleased to remind her that Sisera is raping the women (even now he is lying in a tent with a woman) and pillaging the beautiful dyed embroideries of the Jewish women (one is covering him even now, dyed in the blood of his temple).

**What Shall We Sing?** – Luther once said that he did not care so much who wrote the theologies, as long as he could write the hymns. Which leads us to consider what we should sing in light of what God sings.

**Singing of the Antithesis** – We should sing in such a way that faithfulness, bravery, and obedience is applauded, while apathy, individualism, schisms, and hypocrisy are openly chastised. How long would these songs be sung in the face of Reuben, Gilead and Dan? See God’s covenant people cursed at Meroz who put their safety ahead of His honor – and fear the Lord.

**Songs of Mockery** – We should learn to sing in such a way that mocks the false gods of modern-Baalism. “Mother-nature” did not bring the latest snowstorm and ‘natural laws’ do not keep the world spinning. God does not check to see what the weather is tomorrow and plan accordingly. He ordains, preserves, and moves each storm cloud according to His will. Godly mockery is a faithful and kind act, for it sings the truth of God’s judgment.

**Singing of the Victory** – But our mockery does not come with haughtiness. We acknowledge the Lord of the battle, the Victor, the One who has led forth His captives, and who crushes His enemies. This leads us to bless His name for His great mercy, for we were children of wrath in the midst of this storm. *But for the grace of God....*

**Singing Through the Storms** – The storm at Sinai continues. This Sinai was at the battle of Meggido, and the battle of Armageddon (literally, Mount or City of Meggido in Rev 16:16). Thus “Megiddo” signified defeat and desolation, the place where those who set themselves against God and His Word are destroyed. And we are told that the storm is even fiercer here at the mountain where we have gathered (Heb 12:18-29). This is a fearful place, a terrible place of judgment. But we are safe as can be if we are on the Lord’s side.

**Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done** (v31) – “...on earth as it is in heaven...” Let us learn to pray. Let us learn to sing.