

The Book of Judges
THE OX GOAD JUDGE AND THE GREAT DEBORAH

January 18, 2017

Lesson #3

SHAMGAR

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Imagine - being a “liberator” in your nation armed only with what we would call a cattle prod! That’s the story of our next judge. Our total information concerning Shamgar is found in one verse alone:

Judges 3:31

And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

The ox goad (or just simply “goad”) was a traditional farming implement used to spur or guide life stock, usually oxen which are pulling a plow or cart. Goads were also used to round up cattle.

A goad was a type of long stick with a pointed end (we would call them “cattle prods” today).

When we read of the life of the Apostle Paul we read of his own telling of his conversion to King Agrippa and he, too, used the term “goad:” Acts 26:14 (New King James) **And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'**

About all we know concerning Shamgar is that he killed many Philistines with the simplest of weapons. The Israelites didn’t have iron weapons so they just used what they had.

An ox goad can be dedicated to God if it is in the right hands. Remember that God used the rod of Moses. He used a stone from the sling of David. All Dorcas had was a needle and thread. There was a boy who had only five loaves and a few fish. All of these things were given to God. Whatever you have, friend, if you will put it in His hand, He will use it. The judges we have studied so far were just three little men – plus God!

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Shamgar is a good illustration of serving God with whatever we have, as long as it is our very best effort.

The Magnificent Deborah

Judges 4:1-24

When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. [2] So the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. *Hazor was a community north of the Sea of Galilee near the Lebanon border.* The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. *Harosheth was a small settlement near the Mediterranean Sea, southwest of the Sea of Galilee.* [3] And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

[4] Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. [5] And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. [6] Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali (*Kedesh, one of the original cities of refuge, was located six miles south of Hazor near the Sea of Galilee*), and said to him, "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor (*Mount Tabor is the round high mountain in mid Israel*); take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; [7] and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?'" [8] And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!" [9] So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. [10] And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.

[11] Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which is beside Kedesh. [12] And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. [13] So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon. [14] Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. [15] And the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. [16] But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the

1 edge of the sword; not a man was left.

2 [17] However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber
3 the Kenite; for there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber
4 the Kenite. [18] And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my
5 lord, turn aside to me; do not fear." And when he had turned aside with her into the
6 tent, she covered him with a blanket. [19] Then he said to her, "Please give me a
7 little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a
8 drink, and covered him. [20] And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and
9 if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall
10 say, 'No.' " [21] Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her
11 hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down
12 into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. [22] And then, as
13 Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will
14 show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into her tent, there lay
15 Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

16 [23] So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the
17 children of Israel. [24] And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and
18 stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of
19 Canaan.

20
21 Here we go again – the tyranny of the cycle! When Ehud died, Israel once again turned
22 to IDOLATRY and, sure enough! here came another oppressor. This time it was the
23 Canaanites.

24
25 The Canaanites were descendants of Noah (through his son Ham). They were the
26 occupiers of the land and took their name from the identity of the country - Canaan.
27 Their king at this time was a man named Jabin, who had built up a rather formidable
28 military, boasting 900 chariots of iron. A chariot in that day was not dissimilar to what
29 we would think of as a tank. These chariots were of particular fear to the Israelites who
30 not yet learned to utilize iron.

31 DEBORAH

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33
34 She was an amazing woman of God. She was a prophetess - which would be a female
35 proclaimer of God's truths. Her husband was Lapidoth. When she saw the array of the
36 Canaanites coming against Israel, she wanted to know why the Israeli general Barak was
37 not doing something about it.

38
39 Judges 4:6-8

40 One day she summoned Barak (son of Abinoam), who lived in Kedesh, in the land

1 of Naphtali, and said to him, "The Lord God of Israel has commanded you to
2 mobilize ten thousand men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun. Lead them to
3 Mount Tabor [7] to fight King Jabin's mighty army with all his chariots, under
4 General Sisera's command. The Lord says, 'I will draw them to the Kishon River,
5 and you will defeat them there.' "

6 [8] "I'll go, but only if you go with me!" Barak told her.
7

8 It was Deborah, not Barak, who triggered the fight against the enemy. Dr. Herman
9 Lockyer asked this pertinent question in his book *All The Men Of The Bible*: **Do we**
10 **have a hint here beforehand of how the seed of the woman should bruise the**
11 **serpent's head?** (P. 67 - Zondervan Publ) Lockyer is referring to God's punishment of
12 Satan in the Garden of Eden: Genesis 3:14-15 **And the Lord God said unto the**
13 **serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above**
14 **every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the**
15 **days of thy life: [15] And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and**
16 **between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his**
17 **heel.**

18
19 Dr. J. Vernon McGee was very outspoken about the hesitancy of General Barak: *If there*
20 *was ever a general who was a sissy, it was Barak. He should have been out in the thick*
21 *of the battle, but here he is hiding behind a woman's skirt. Barak will not go into battle*
22 *unless Deborah goes along. If this prophetess went with him, he felt he would be*
23 *successful in battle. No wonder God had to use a woman in that day!*
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25
26 I have some friends whom I respect highly who believe that woman should not have a
27 place in "front and center" ministry. This despite scripture: Joel 2:28-29 **And it shall**
28 **come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons**
29 **and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young**
30 **men shall see visions: [29] And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in**
31 **those days will I pour out my spirit.**

32
33 The history and practice of the Assemblies of God give demonstration that God can and
34 does bless the public ministry of women. What happens to cause some to question this.
35 In the early days of most revivals, when spiritual fervor is high and the Lord's return is
36 anticipated at any moment, there is often given place to anointed ministry of women.
37 Over time, however, concerns about organization and lines of authority begin to emerge
38 and the group moves toward more structured ministry. As institutional concerns come to
39 the forefront, the spiritual leadership of women is accepted less readily and church
40 leadership becomes predominately male. But the Bible gives us counter-information to
41 this practice that gives a much different insight.

1 In the Old Testament we read accounts of strong female leadership. Miriam, Moses'
2 sister, was greatly used of God, one of the triumvirate of leaders God sent to Israel during
3 the Exodus period. Exodus 15:20 **And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron,**
4 **took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and**
5 **with dances.**

6
7 We read also of Huldah, another prophet of God, whom our Lord used to spark the great
8 religious reform in the days of King Josiah. (See 2 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 34)

9
10 The New Testament also records ministering women in the Church Age. Tabitha
11 (Dorcas) is called a disciple and had a ministry of helps. Acts 9:36 **Now there was at**
12 **Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas:**
13 **this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.** Philip had four
14 virgin daughters who prophesied. Acts 21:8-9 **And the next day we that were of**
15 **Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house**
16 **of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. [9] And the**
17 **same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.**

18
19 Euodia and Syntyche were Paul's co-workers who shared in his struggle to spread the
20 Gospel. Philip. 4:2-3 **I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the**
21 **same mind in the Lord. [3] And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those**
22 **women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my**
23 **fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.**

24
25 Priscilla was another of Paul's exemplary "fellow workers in Christ Jesus." Romans
26 16:3-4 **Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: [4] Who have for my**
27 **life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the**
28 **churches of the Gentiles.** In Romans 16 Paul greeted a multitude of ministering
29 persons, a large number of whom were women. He also extolled the ministry of Phoebe,
30 a church leader in the work at Cenchrea, calling her by the Greek word "diakonos" - or
31 deacon/minister.

32
33 And there are others as well, mentioned throughout Scripture. These instances of women
34 filling leadership roles in the Bible should be taken as a divinely approved pattern, not as
35 exceptions to divine doctrines. Even a limited number of women with scripturally
36 commended leadership roles should affirm that God does indeed call women to spiritual
37 leadership.

38
39 Critics of this will turn to I Timothy in which Paul writes: 1 Tim. 2:12 **But I suffer not**
40 **a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. But**

1 let's think this through! Is the prohibition of women teaching and exercising authority a
2 UNIVERSAL truth or was Paul reporting his application of divine truth for the society
3 and Christian community to which he and Timothy ministered? My response is, "Yes to
4 the latter."

5
6 There were some real problems concerning some of the women in the church there.

- 7 • They were evidently given to immodest apparel and adornment. 1 Tim. 2:9 **In**
8 **like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with**
9 **shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or**
10 **costly array;**
- 11 • Some of the younger women were apparently busy-bodies. 1 Tim. 5:13 **And**
12 **withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not**
13 **only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought**
14 **not.**
- 15 • Some, including women, were given to depravity who were terrible role models
16 for younger women: 2 Tim. 3:6 **For of this sort are they which creep into**
17 **houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers**
18 **lusts,**

19 •
20 This being the case, small wonder Paul did not want those women taking authority in the
21 house of God. But Paul did not use such EXCLUSIONARY admonitions in all of his
22 other writings.

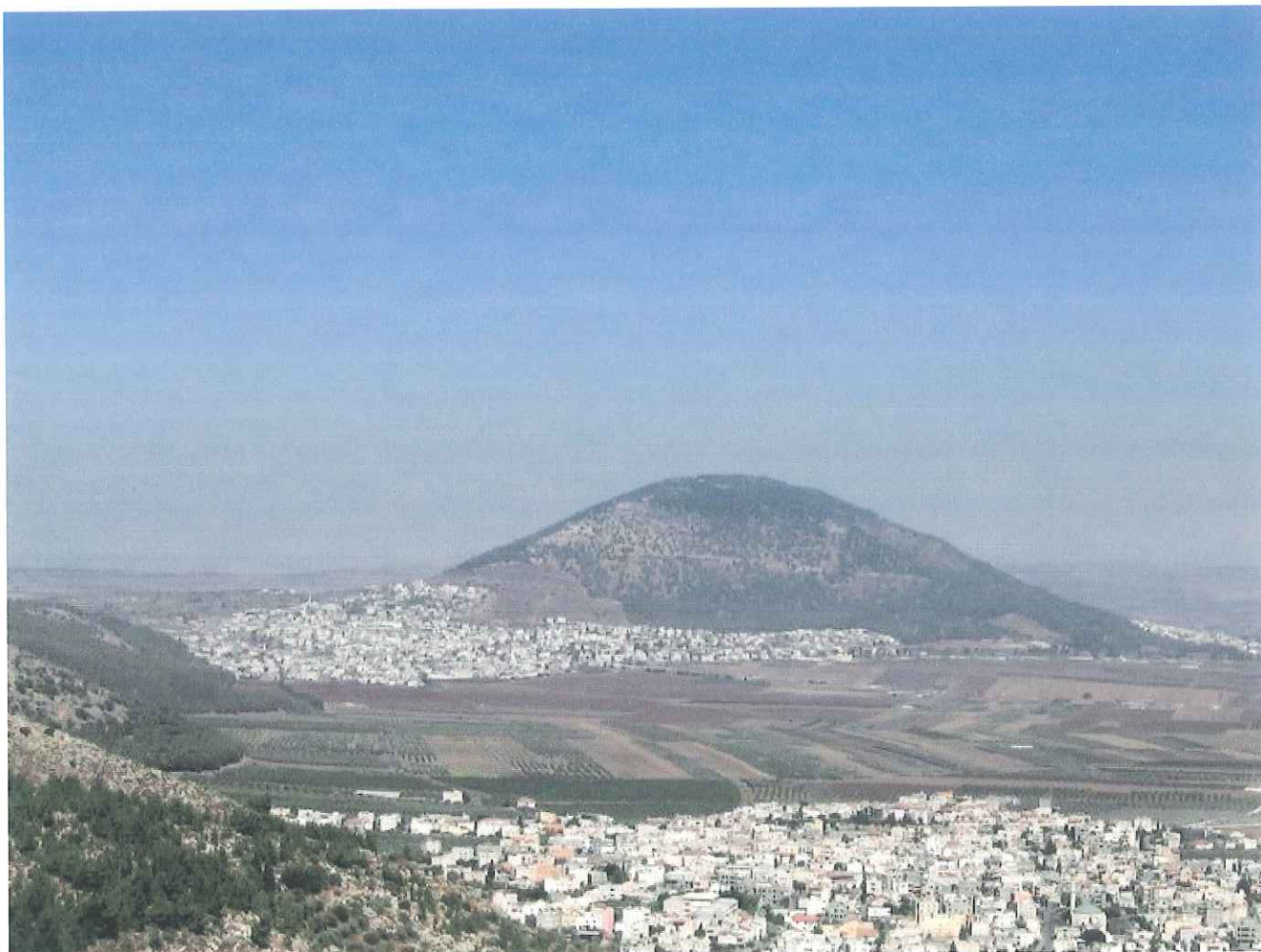
23
24 Those who oppose allowing women to hold positions of spiritual leadership must place
25 contextual limitations on Galatians 3:28: **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is**
26 **neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ**
27 **Jesus.** These are basic realities to which faithful followers of Christ must give high
28 priority. The God of the Bible has "**no respect of persons,**" according to Romans 2:11.
29 He calls whom He will and gives gifts and ministries as He chooses.

30
31 We in the Assemblies of God cannot find convincing evidence that the ministry of
32 women is restricted. In this fellowship we have been blessed by the ministry of God's
33 gifted and commissioned women.

34 35 BACK TO THE BATTLE

36
37 With Deborah at his back, Barak led the Israelites to a most convincing battle over the
38 Canaanites. So much so that the Canaanite general Sisera fled for his life and came to a
39 most unfortunate end. Again....a woman was involved in the victory.
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THIS IS MOUNT TABOR, THE AREA WHERE DEBORAH AND BARAK DEFEATED THE CANAANITES. IT IS LOCATED JUST A FEW MILES FROM NAZARETH. YOU CAN SEE FROM THE FLAT LAND AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN HOW SISERA SHOULD HAVE HAD THE ADVANTAGE WITH HIS MANY IRON CHARIOTS. BUT THE ISRAELITES HAD GOD!

The Lord raised up Deborah in response to the peoples' prayer after 10 years of oppression at the hands of the Canaanites. As far as we know, this is the first recorded occasion in all history when a woman became the leader of a nation. She enlisted the assistance of Barak to be her military captain, but wither through timidity or deference he would not proceed without her personal presence. So both Deborah and Barak proceeded to Mount Tabor and there they gathered a military force numbering 10,000.

When news of the massing Israelite army reached Sisera, the captain of the Canaanites, he speedily attacked. In the ensuing battle, God gave Israel a huge victory for the Canaanites were utterly routed and destroyed.

THE BRUTAL DEATH OF SISERA

1 This captain of the enemy forces escaped somehow and fled north. Apparently he was
2 trying to save his own neck. He came to an area of Israel where he felt he might be safe.
3 A woman named Jael had other plans.

4
5 Jael was the wife of a Bedouin (Heber). The Bedouins are famous for hospitality, as I
6 have found on several occasions. Jael's name means "wild or mountain goat" or
7 "gazelle." Her family originally had come from the rocks of the Engedi game preserve,
8 known for its rocks and deer (goats).

9
10 To this day, Bedouin women are responsible for most of the physical work needed to
11 sustain the family, including pitching and striking tents. This was why Jael was able to
12 turn her abilities into a lethal act by taking a tent peg - or pin - and, with a maul, driving it
13 through the temple of the sleeping Sisera.

14
15 Many commentaries are condemning of Jael's act. However, it probably saved many
16 Israelite lives.

17
18 How long would this victory last? Not long for we read in Judges 6:1-2: **And the**
19 **children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into**
20 **the hand of Midian seven years. [2] And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel:**
21 **and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are**
22 **in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.**

23
24 Once again the dreaded cycle. This was a colossal situation for the Jews. Who could
25 deliver them? The man we study next week:

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27 GIDEON
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