



The Book of Judges - Riding the Handbasket to Hell

Part 2: Deborah and Barak Come to Terms; Sisera gets Nailed

A Reminder

In these Bible studies we could be asking "Why would a loving God command the deaths of all these people, even though they are pagans and oppressing the Israelites?"

Instead, we are asking "What does it mean for us to surrender to the will of God, even though His will seems not only incomprehensible but completely contradictory at times?"

Judges 4

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, now that Ehud was dead. ² So the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³ Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the Lord for help.

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophet, the

¹ So whose fault was it that the Israelites were oppressed by Jabin king of Canaan?

Why do we tend to criticize God when we suffer the predicted consequences of our own actions? Just asking.

wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. ⁵ She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and **the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided.**

⁶ She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, **“The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you:** ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. ⁷ I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’”

⁸ Barak said to her, **“If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.”**

⁹ “Certainly I will go with you,” said Deborah. **“But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours,** for the Lord will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.”

⁴⁻⁵ The Israelites widely acknowledged Deborah to be a prophet after the style of Moses, so much so that they went to her to have their disputes settled (see Exodus 18:13ff.)

⁶ This is a command *from the Lord* through the mouth of His prophet, not a recommendation or even a command from the prophet only.

⁸ Barak sets a condition on his obedience.

⁹ God (and Deborah) will accept Barak’s condition, but there will be a price to pay.

Here’s what we’ll be considering today:

Recall the phrase “Thy will be done” in the Lord’s Prayer.

Luther said that *God’s will is done when* “God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow God’s Name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and preserves us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.” (Small Catechism, Lord’s Prayer)

So what do we *intend* when we pray “Thy will be done”? –

1. Thy will be done, *as long as I have approval power.*
2. Thy will be done to others, *but not to me.*
3. Thy will be done to me *as long as I see how it benefits me.*
4. Thy will be done *as long as I can understand how it fits in to my worldview.*
5. Thy will be done *as long as Your actions make sense to me.*
6. Thy will be done – *but I have one or two conditions.*
7. Thy will be done – *but leave me out of it.*
8. Thy will be done, *and I surrender to it completely.*

How do each of these reflect our relationship to God?

Do these pictures in any way reflect your relationship to God?



How about this one? This might have been Barak:



Has this ever been you?

My dissertation advisor once said to me, "Come on, Chris – that 'Aw, shucks' attitude doesn't suit you."

What is our Lutheran “awareness of our sin” (or our residual “Catholic guilt”) all about?

- ☞ A feeble attempt to deflect attention away from ourselves? or
- ☞ A feeble attempt to gather *more* attention and flattery?

If God calls you (or me, or Barak) to a certain task, does He want us the way we are, sins and forgiveness and weakness and all; or does He want us the way we think we should be?

If God calls you (or me or Barak), and you (or I or Barak) put conditions on the call before accepting it, is it you (or I or Barak) who has accepted His call - or is it somebody else entirely?

The rest of Judges 4 is the story of the defeat of Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite.

If there's time, also read Judges 5, the song of Deborah and Barak.

Next Time:
Judges Part 3: Gideon, or
What Goes Around Comes Back to Bite You
When You Least Expect It!

