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Deborah's Song and Ours

728-A

Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Deborah's Song and Ours

Here come the judges! They are coming to deliver Israel from the throes of bondage. They are coming to teach us, in the process, the miracles of God's principles concerning our relationship with the enemy and our relationship with the Living God.

In the last lesson we sat in the grandstands of the eternal coliseum as the ultimate champions and the pre-season favorites, the Israeli Super Saints, did battle with the Mesopotamian Monarchs. We saw Othniel come off the bench and rally the Super Saints to an unbelievable "come-from-behind triumph". His foe was quarterback Chusan-rishathaim. We determined that one reason he lost was that the cheerleaders never could fit his name into one cheer. Then the Israelis, who are by now famous for their inconsistency, fell into a horrible slump. They were dominated for years by the Moab Marauders. They were dominated, that is, until God hired a new quarterback. He was a relative unknown named Ehud. Ehud had played his college ball for the Benjamite Bruisers. He was best known for being one of the very few southpaw passers in the league. At any rate, Ehud was a little too "sharp" for his opponents who were led by a somewhat heavy linebacker named Eglon, who, it turned out, could not "stomach" Ehud's two-throged attack. So the Israelis were champions again and went on to rout the Moabites and were carried off the field in the arms of their ardent admirers.

So judges number one and two have come and gone. Please forgive the seemingly sacrilegious analogy which turns the likes of the most intense battle in history, the battle between God and Satan, into a game. A game it is not. But I did want to be sure the we fully understood the highs and lows of our eternally inconsistent Israelis. They and their roller coaster approach to obedience do paint on the canvas of Scripture a likeness of our own walk with God, one that rivals the hand-painted portrait of our lives. "Ehud, Eglon and a Two-Edged Sword" showed us in vivid reality the power of the Word, the deceitfulness of the enemy, and the desire of our God that we defeat the enemy until

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not a trace of his authority remains.

Now this lesson comes to look at three more Hebrew Heroes. These are men and women who accepted the task of delivering Israel from the enemies they were in bondage to. The bondage was the result of fellowshipping with them for so long that they forgot they were enemies. The title of our lesson is "Deborah's Song and Ours". Our lesson is found in Judges 3:31-5:31.

As we left God's children in the last lesson, they had just made mincemeat of the Moabites, and we read this exciting postscript,

And the land had rest for fourscore [eighty] years.

(Judges 3:30b)

THE COURAGE OF SHAMGAR

This is only a brief phrase in the Scripture, only seven words in all, but what a blessed parenthesis in between the years of disobedience and conflict for the children of Israel. It was the longest period of peace in Israel's 299-year history under the judges. We do not know anything about the circumstances that brought about the deliverance of their next judge; we have, in fact, only a brief word about his life. But that brief word tells us a great deal. It gives us a lot on which to build our own lives. So this lesson will look at a few basic things about Shamgar. Our first look is at his courage. He was a man of whom little was said, but he is a Living Legend. Let's look at 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.

Let's see what we can learn from Shamgar in passing in this lesson.

The first thing we learn is that he lived in difficult times as we read in Judges 5. Now this is a part of Deborah's song of triumph which we will look at later in this lesson, but we will just piece out these two verses:

Now in the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travelers walked through byways.

The inhabitants of the villages ceased to be. They ceased in Israel until Deborah arose as Israel's mother.

(Judges 5:6,7)

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Now if your excuse for failing to be counted in the battle of life is that you live in such perilous times, then you have missed the mark. Perilous times call for men and women of stature to stand up and be counted. The greater the decadence in our society, the greater the opportunity for God's deliverers, the greater the difference between mankind and real men. It is not hard to see at a time like that who real men are. Shamgar lived in such a time. Anarchy was the by-word of his age. God's people were homeless, jobless and destitute. So unsafe were the highways that bandits lying in wait forced people to travel back roads in search of safety. The looting and the violence forced the Jews to abandon their villages in search of fortified cities where they could eat and sleep behind massive walls in relative safety. But in reality, no one was safe and no place was safe. Such was the time in history into which Shamgar was born. It certainly was not an era into which a man would ask to be born, but Shamgar had come into the kingdom for such a time as this. So have you.

The second thing we learn about Shamgar is that he knew how to stand alone. Other great judges in Israel's history came and went. Often God used them to rally His people into battle, to send His people into battle, to follow His people into battle, and even occasionally to lead His people into battle. But we read nothing of Shamgar's troops. We read only of Shamgar's enemies and of Shamgar standing alone. Perhaps no truth today is more needed, particularly among our young people, than the truth that it is a privilege to stand alone, provided you are standing on the Rock. Today, seemingly more than ever, we are raising a generation of young men and women so squeezed into the molds of our era, so sensitive to the styles and stages of their peers, that an atmosphere not unlike the one that Shamgar lived in presses in on us. It is the same atmosphere that brought into being great prophets and crusaders in history past. Yet, for the most part, we tend to go through this era unnoticed. We live in a time like Shamgar. We need men like Shamgar. We need men who are not afraid to stand alone.

The third thing we see about Shamgar is that he was not afraid of either the enemy or the odds. He met them where they were and stood his ground. You can just see them come, five at a time, four at a time, ten at a time. We don't know how many at a time. But we do know that there were 600 in all. On and on they came. They may have come in waves. But so what? Shamgar was

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the soldier, but God was the resource. God was the ammunition. Shamgar was a man of courage. He had no fear of the enemy for he had a God who had said, "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed." That was good enough for him.

The fourth thing we notice about Shamgar is that he used what he had, and so should we. How often we lament that we, too, would be giant slayers if only we were giants. We, too, would make our mark on the kingdom if only we had the kind of talent that Joe has or that a certain woman has or a certain man has. This little poem answers to that problem.

In envy often we look up
At those with talents three,
And fret, "If only God would give
So many skills to me.

"I'd be the greatest preacher
This world has ever known,
And with my voice I'd captivate
The world in lilting song.

"I'd pen the words of victory
The hearts of men to sway,
If only God would give to me
Three talents such as they."

Yet, God with very sorrowed heart
Looks down and cries aloud,
"But what about the talent one,
You have squandered with the crowd?"

God does not judge by what you have
Three talents, two, or one.

But how you've used the one you have
To glorify His Son.

Shamgar was a portrait of a one-talent believer. He had no tanks, no submachine guns, no helicopters. He didn't even have one chariot of steel. All Shamgar had was an ox goad. Now an ox goad was a strong pole about eight feet long, and two inches in diameter. On one end was a sharp point for pricking the oxen when their movements became too slow. On the other end was a chisel-like blade which is used to clear the plowshare of the roots and thorns which impeded it and the stiff clay which stuck to it. It was hardly the kind of weapon which wars are fought and won with. But it was all that he had. Like David, he took what he had,

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crawled up into his God and said, "Come on and meet the God of Israel, those of you who stand as His enemies." Shamgar was God's kind of man. He lived in difficult times, but he knew how to stand alone. He was not afraid of the enemy or the odds. He simply used what he had.

The last thing we know about him is that he didn't do it for his own glory. Those last four words tell us that he also delivered Israel. He wasn't defending himself. That was God's job. He was delivering Israel. His goal was to give his life, if need be, for God's other children, even God's rebellious, ungrateful other children. Such was the legend of Shamgar.

You would certainly hope that his imprint on Israel would bring about lasting obedience. But we know otherwise by now, don't we? So let's continue to read the inevitable in chapter 4:

And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD when Ehud was dead.

And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. (Judges 4:1-3)

THE CHALLENGE OF DEBORAH

So for Ehud's and Shamgar's reign, there was victory. We don't know for sure how long Shamgar reigned. We don't know how long there was peace in the land. But we do know that it was the same song, third verse that echoed through the annals of eternity. The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. Once again, the result was the same. It says that God sold or released them by allowing their enemies to gain control of their fortunes. This time the enemy was Jabin, the king of Canaan who ruled from Hazor. Jabin had a field general of great note named Sisera. He was a man from a Gentile stronghold in Harosheth. He took great delight in oppressing Israelites. Oppress them he did, for 20 years. Verse three tells us that he *mightily oppressed them*. The Hebrew word used here means to exercise prevailing power or to keep under total control or subjection those under your authority. Whatever it took to keep them in line, Sisera would do it. He mightily oppressed God's people. He totally dominated them for 20 years. That is two-hundred and

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forty months of seemingly endless, ruthless domination. But, as always, as God's clock strikes twelve from His vineyard, there grows a deliverer. This case was no exception. Let's continue,

And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?

And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand. (Judges 4:4-7)

So Sandra O'Connor was not the first woman judge to sit on a Supreme Court. God, as usual, had the idea thousands of years before. Her name was Deborah. She was one of 14 prophetesses listed in Scripture. She was the first woman judge of a nation. She held court under a palm tree named in her honor. It was near Ramah about five miles north of Jerusalem. The children of Israel would come to Deborah to have their disputes settled. But one of the judges' roles in Israel at that time was that of a deliverer. When God felt that His people had had enough, He would send a judge to come to their defense and bring about the defeat of their enemies or oppressors. So Deborah was no exception. At God's direction, she sent for Barak, the son of Abinoam. She said, "You, my friend, are God's choice and my choice to lead us into battle. Here is what we are going to do. We need to take ten thousand men, no more and no less. They must come from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun. We are going to take on Sisera with his nine hundred chariots of iron and all of his multitude of military mighty men. God has promised to draw them to the Kishon River and God has promised to defeat them. Go get them, Barak. Let's go get them."

And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.

And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

(Judges 4:8,9)

THE CAUTION OF BARAK

God does have among His Living Legends, reluctant heroes. Moses, you remember, was a reluctant hero. First he didn't want to go at all; then he finally relented when he didn't have to go alone. Barak, to say the least, was a reluctant hero. Now Deborah was a woman of great wisdom and great humility. She was willing to step aside and give the honor to Barak, knowing God had assured their victory. But Barak hid behind her and peered out at the ominous task of challenging 900 chariots of iron and came up with criteria only a coward could concoct. "Debbie, if you go, I go. If you don't go, I don't go," Barak whined. He was willing to risk the life of God's anointed judge because he wasn't sure he had a hot line to Jehovah without her.

Now I don't know if Lapidoth was a soldier or not, but he may well have been one of the ten thousand men who accompanied Barak into battle. We don't know. Ten thousand men, that is, and Deborah. Here was God's woman in obedience to God's challenge, accompanying God's people into battle because God's man was afraid to go without her.

And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.

And they showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor.

And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.

And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

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But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.

Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet 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.

(Judges 4:10-17)

At last Barak was obedient. He gathered exactly the number of men Deborah told him to from exactly the tribes she had told him to gather them. Turning around at every turn in the road to be sure that her honor was still honoring him with her presence, he falteringly leads his troops to the river. Meanwhile, we have what appears to be a turncoat. But time will tell otherwise. Heber was an offspring of Moses' father-in-law. He had left his family and their relatives and taken his wife, Jael, and their children and pitched his tent all alone by Zaanaim near Kedesh. They interrupt a coded message on their CB radio and they find out that Barak, the lady justice, and ten thousand infantry troops were headed for the river Kishon. They forward the message to Sisera. So Sisera, always ripe for a battle, takes all nine hundred of his chariots of iron and every last one of his mighty men and heads for high noon down by the riverside.

THE CHARIOTS OF SISERA

Once again, what Hollywood could do with this. First the scene opens with Sisera with his mighty army and iron chariots clanging over the rock-laden hillside, heading for what they considered a nice afternoon skirmish with a group of untrained Israelis led by a reluctant general, hiding behind a lady judge, with only ten thousand weak-kneed privates at that. Isn't it strange how to this very day the enemies of God underestimate the ability of tiny, little Israel when it comes to winning wars. They forget who tiny, little Israel belongs to. They have been thrown off their guard because Israel has been sold to their oppressors, sold and dispersed for a season. They forget that when God takes up the armor of Israel again, no army on earth can touch that little nation. Today, as then, the Jews themselves are largely blinded to the real source of their power, but their power is still there. One day soon, perhaps very soon, as the armies of the godless nations of the earth converge on tiny Israel once more, their God will fight for them. At last the scales will fall from their eyes and

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Israel will see that Messiah has come. Sisera underestimated Israel and Israel's God. Don't they all.

Now the camera shifts to the other side of the Kishon River. Here we see a courageous Deborah still trying to encourage her reluctant leader. First she becomes his alarm clock. "Get up!" Debbie cries in verse 14, "This is our day of victory. Has not the Lord gone before us?" We can almost see her struggling with him, dragging Big Bad Barak and shoving him in front of his soldiers saying, "It's okay, Big Boy, God is going to take care of you." So Barak goes trotting down the hillside with his troops trailing after him. Verse 15 says, "*The LORD discomfited Sisera*". The word means "to confuse or create a commotion or disturbance". God simply sent a spirit of confusion upon them so that Barak's Bombers only had to go through the motions of finishing them off. They didn't even know what hit them.

Sisera, meanwhile, brave comrade that he was, saw the writing on the wall, hopped off his priceless pony and went galloping off on foot for a place of refuge, while Deborah's Daring Destroyers made mincemeat of these Canaanite Conquerors. Where else would Comrade Sisera run but to nearby Heber's house, the Canaanite Collaborator, whose timely tip had sent him charging into this Hebrew meat grinder in the first place? Hero that he was, he seeks refuge in Jael's tent, thinking that there would not be too many questions to answer, and besides, no one would look for him there. Bless her heart, ole' Jael welcomes our wounded warrior like an overeager doorman at the Hilton. Then we read,

And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.

And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.

Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.

Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out

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to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.

So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. (Judges 4:18-23)

So Jael greets Sissy like a long-lost cousin, slips him into her tent and covers him with her mantle. Our banged-up general asks for some water and his accommodating hostess gives him a glass of warm milk instead. Before long, he lies down like a kitten, licks his wounds and drifts off into dreamland after instructing his gracious hostess to lie if any one asks about him. No sooner is Sissy snoring, than Jael pulls up one of the spikes that holds up her tent, slips back to Sleeping Beauty and wham, bang, crunch. The nail is in the head and the general is very dead.

Enter Barak. By now he was so encouraged at seeing what God had done to the nine hundred chariots of steel that the yellow streak in his back had faded into oblivion and he was chasing down the fearless Sisera all by his lonesome. "You are looking for Sissy, aren't you?" our courteous Jael greets him, "I'll show him to you." And there he is, deader than a tent nail. So once again, God used Israel's enemies to oppress them until they were desperate enough to cry out for help. As soon as they cried, He raised up a deliverer and placed all the right people in all the right places at just the right times until every trace of the enemy was gone.

THE CHORUS OF TRIUMPH

But this story has an interesting postscript that sets it apart from the rest of the others. No sooner has the dust settled from the horses' hooves and the joyful soldiers are safely back to camp than Judge Deborah has a praise gathering back at her place. She composes a song of victory with which to praise the Lord. We see recorded one of only two duets listed in Scripture. The other one is in Acts 16:25. The dynamic duo in that duet is none other than Paul and Silas. Anyway, Debbie and Barak harmonize for the host of Hebrews. The text of their testimony serves as a precious pattern of praise for us. Listen to it. Deborah's Song begins like this in chapter 5:

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Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.
(Judges 5:1-3)

We might divide her anthem into three parts.

1- The cast of characters covers verses 1-10. Here comes God. Here comes the enemy. Here we stand.

2- The conflict covers verses 13-18. Here is God's kind of odds, God's kind of battle and God's kind of victory.

3- The conquest covers verses 19-31. We see the real warrior, the real heroes and the real life.

Now you might outline this differently. It really doesn't matter, but what does matter is that one more time God was saying, "You really haven't finished the battle until you have stopped to praise the Lord." Read this chapter of Judges sometime this week when you get a chance. If you have a Living Bible, read it there paraphrased as well. You will get so excited that you will turn the duet into a trio and you will be singing right along. Here is an example:

The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, and the sky poured down its rain.

The mountains melted before the LORD, even Mount Sinai quaked at the presence of the God of Israel.

(Judges 5:4,5)

Then look at verse 8 as the enemy comes.

When Israel chose new gods, then was war in the gates.

Our masters would not let us have a shield or spear. Among forty thousand men of Israel not a weapon could be found.

In other words, God's people were defenseless. They were the victims of their own idolatry. But those are God's kinds of odds, and God's kind of battle.

Let all of Israel, rich and poor, join in His praises.

The village musicians gather at the village well to sing of the triumphs of the LORD. Again and again they sing the ballad of how the LORD saved Israel with an army of peasants.

(Judges 5:10,11)

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The chorus of triumph resounds as we read,

Oh, LORD, may all your enemies perish the way Sisera did,
but may those who love the LORD shine like the sun.

(Judges 5:31)

I believe that as long as Deborah lived they sang that song of triumph again and again and again. I believe that as long as they sang that song they could not forget what their mighty God had done for them. This was one of eight songs of praise recorded in Scripture, not to mention the hundreds of them recorded in the Psalms. Down through the ages, God has placed in the hearts of redeemed men and women, choruses of praise to the God of victory.

Now you may not be the world's next Bill Gaither. But has it ever dawned on you that every time God wins a special victory in your life, every time He answers a prayer, every time He keeps a promise, every time He manifests His power, every time He comforts your aching heart, that you have the raw material of which songs of praise are made? If you had started the day Jesus Christ came into your life, by now some of you would have volumes of anthems of praise. They might be chronologically or topically arranged to remind you of the miracles of God in such a way that you could never, ever forget who He is, what He has done, and what He has promised to you. You may say, "I can't make things rhyme." Big deal, neither could Deborah, apparently. But it doesn't have to rhyme. Then you say, "But I can't write music." Join the club, I can't even sing it. Don't put it to music, just write it down in prose or read it to God like one of the Psalms. Better yet, take the music of a hymn or chorus you already know and love and set your words to that melody. God doesn't care who wrote the music.

You may say, "I'm not creative." Then take the Psalms and use them as your backdrop and change the names and circumstances until they tell your story. You can do that. Or take a sermon or Sunday school lesson or a message you have heard that has moved you to praise, and express it your way in a song or hymn or poem or a letter to God. Do this until it becomes a natural part of your family and personal worship, and you and your family need but a glimpse of the grace of God to cause your heart to sing. Praise Him. The Scripture teaches us that praising God is a privilege given to all of His creation. Psalm 103 tells us

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that praise is what the angels are all about.

Praise the LORD, you His angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

Praise the LORD, all his works, everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the LORD, O my soul. (Psalm 103:20-22 NIV)

Psalm 148 tells us that His whole creation was designed to praise Him.

Praise the LORD.

Praise Him, sun and moon, praise him, all of you shining stars.

Praise Him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. (Psalm 48:1a,3,4 NIV)

you mountains and all the hills, fruit trees and all cedars, kings of the earth and all the nations,...

young men and maidens, old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the LORD, (Psalm 48:9,11-14 NIV)

That is why we are here, to praise Him. Psalm 146 reminds us:

Praise the LORD, O my soul.

I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. (Psalm 146:1b,2 NIV)

Beloved, this is just choir practice down here. The day is coming when the greatest chorale in history will gather together to praise Him. If you are accustomed to praising Him, how much more beautiful will that anthem be. Revelation 19 gives us a glimpse of the real performance

Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants and those who fear him, both small and great!"

Then I heard, what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like loud peals of thunder shouting: Hallelujah! For the Lord God Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him the glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. (Revelation 19:5-7 NIV)

We were created to praise Him. Through eternity's endless

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ages we will praise Him. Here on this earth, as we journey through the spiritual battlefields of this life, is He not giving us cause to learn to praise Him? Are we not given the opportunity to get our hearts in tune for the anthems of eternity? It isn't important whether or not you can sing. You may not express your praise in exactly the same way as someone else, but that's okay. That is why corporate praise, the hymns we sing on Sunday are only a part of it all. There are some things that you have to say to God that none of the rest of us have to say. There are some things that you have to thank Him for that I don't. There are some things that I have to praise Him for that are not reality to you at all. That is why it is so important that each one of us personally, in our own times with Him, learn to just praise Him by ourselves. We need to praise Him for who He is. We need to praise Him for His worth. Psalm 138 says

I will praise you, O LORD with all my heart; ...for You have exalted above all things your name, and your word.

(Psalm 138:1a,1e NIV)

It is also important to praise Him for your loved ones. It is important to praise Him for your trials and the grace He has given you. It is important to praise Him for heaven, the mansions and the joy that await us. It is important to praise Him, as Deborah did, for a specific battle He has just won in your life, a battle you don't ever want to forget or fight again.

I'm going to challenge every one of you to take one day this week and write an anthem or a song or a letter of praise to God. Tell Him you love Him. Tell Him *why* you love Him. On that day, agree not to ask for anything or complain about anything or even talk about anything to God except to praise Him. Write out your praise just for yourself or for your family and ask God to write a new song in your heart, a song of praise to our God. Then, like Deborah's song, our song will become music in the ears of our precious God. In closing, I'd like to share this poem with you.

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YOU LIVE TO PRAISE THE LORD

Oh precious, heavenly Father
What can I give to Thee?
For Thou, my great Creator
Has given all to me.

My life, my soul, my very breath
Come from thy throne above,
And oh, dear God, what can I give?
Thou hast so given Thy love.

And oh, dear God how my heart cries
As I view Calvary's hill,
And know that though a sinner lost,
That Thou didst love me still.

What can I give to love Thee
Through all of life's long days?
Then, suddenly, the answer comes,
"Son, you can give Me praise.

"Your heart can issue forth a song
A chorus of My grace.
Your lips can praise My power and love
Until you see My face.

"And then, My child, with all My saints
As loud Hosannas ring,
You, too, can spend eternity
With naught but praise to sing.

"And, until then, dear child of Mine,
You can reflect My Word
As in your life and in your song,
You live to Praise the Lord."

Deborah's Song & Ours

For Focus and Application

1- Try to imagine the miracle of eighty years of “rest” in the land. What do you think that word “rest” means? How can you liken that rest to the rest that the Christian has in Christ? What do you think caused that “rest” to exist?

2- Try to picture what you think Shamgar looked like. Why do you think God included “capsule” portraits of men like him in Scripture? What qualities did he possess that you would most like to have in your own life?

3- Why do we try to limit our usability by our ability? Why is a “negative” self-image not necessarily a bad thing?

4- Barak was not interested in going into battle unless Deborah went along. What do you think he thought her presence would provide? What quality did she possess that he did not?

5- The key to this lesson was Deborah's song. What was so vital about what she did when the battle was over? How often do you remember when God has won a battle in your life to stop and have a time of praise and worship? What keeps us from it? Is musical talent necessary to praise God?

6- Read Deborah's song and sing it in your heart with her. Close your eyes and visualize the awesome power of God. Verses 4 and 5 capture God's might as He but breathes and the mountains quake. If God is *that powerful*, is there any problem in your life He cannot handle?

7- Worship this week through Psalm 103 and Psalm 148 and others which simply describe the process of all of nature praising God. How do the mountains praise Him? How do fruit trees praise Him? Think about it.

8- Take at least one day this week as suggested on pages 13 and 14 and write an anthem or song or letter of praise to God. If possible, use the whole week for praise. Be creative. Write a song, a poem, or just a series of notes to God, and as you do, read them to Him as a personal worship experience. Praise Him for who He is. Praise Him for what He does. Praise Him for His Word. Praise Him for each of the attributes that make Him God. As you do, ask Him to make melody in your heart. If you are not musically inclined, He will receive yet more glory when He does. And make notes of what God does in your life as you worship. It will set a pattern for worship times to come.

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(04.14.20)