

Judges 5

Verses 1 - 5

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

**²“For the leaders leading in Israel,
For the people volunteering,
Bless the Lord!**

**³Hear, you kings; listen, you dignitaries!
I myself—to the Lord, I myself will sing,
I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel!**

**⁴Lord, when You went out from Seir,
When You marched from the field of Edom,
The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped,
The clouds also dripped water.**

**⁵The mountains flowed *with water* at the presence of the Lord,
This Sinai, at the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel.**

Then Deborah and Barak sang on that day

The account given in this chapter is poetic, but its meaning is clear because the previous chapter was written in prose.

**²“For the leaders leading in Israel,
For the people volunteering,**

The song starts by praising God for the leaders leading and the people following.

This is how God intended Israel to function in their new land.

³Hear, you kings; listen, you dignitaries!

Israel had no kings or princes; so Deborah is speaking to the leaders of the pagan nations.

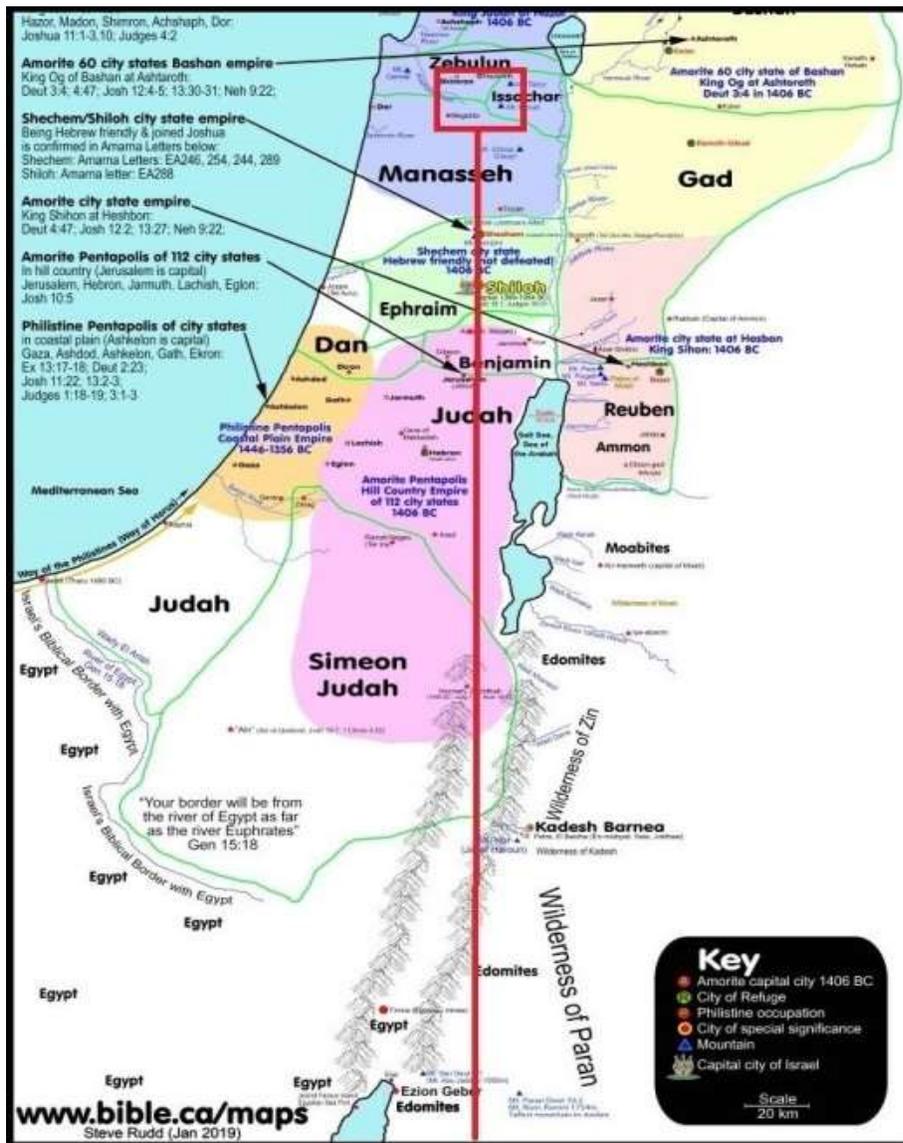
She wants them to know about the Glory of God.

⁴ Lord, when You went out from Seir,
 When You marched from the field of Edom,
 The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped,
 The clouds also dripped water.

⁵ The mountains flowed *with water* at the presence of the Lord,
This Sinai, at the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel.

Deborah is looking to the south from Israel and she first sees the land of Edom and the Seir Mountains. She then looks further south to Mount Sinai.

See map 505



This map only goes down to the Gulf of Aquabah but if the red line was extended a little farther down it would reach Mount Sinai. This was where Israel saw Gods glory.

Verses 6 – 11

**“In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the roads were deserted,
And travelers went by roundabout ways.**

**⁷ The peasantry came to an end, they came to an end in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Until I arose, a mother in Israel.**

**⁸ New gods were chosen;
Then war *was in* the gates.
Not a shield or a spear was seen
Among forty thousand in Israel.**

**⁹ My heart goes *out* to the commanders of Israel,
The volunteers among the people;
Bless the Lord!**

**¹⁰ You who ride on white donkeys,
You who sit on *rich* carpets,
And you who travel on the road—shout in praise!**

**¹¹ At the sound of those who distribute *water* among the watering places,
There they will recount the righteous deeds of the Lord,
The righteous deeds for His peasantry in Israel.
Then the people of the Lord went down to the gates.**

**“In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the roads were deserted,
And travelers went by roundabout ways.**

This is a description of a country occupied by an enemy.

The same problem existed in the days of Shamgar.

**⁷ The peasantry came to an end, they came to an end in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Until I arose, a mother in Israel.**

The poor suffer the most in difficult times.

Deborah’s leadership put an end to the enemy’s occupation of Israel and the devastating effect it had on the lower class.

**⁸ New gods were chosen;
Then war *was in* the gates.
Not a shield or a spear was seen
Among forty thousand in Israel.**

Because Israel turned to idolatry the Canaanites were able to overcome them.

Their grip on Israel was so strong that no one in Israel dared to display a weapon.

However, when Barak's ten thousand men were called to fight they were armed.

**⁹ My heart goes *out* to the commanders of Israel,
The volunteers among the people;
Bless the Lord!**

The leaders of the various tribes (several of them) responded to Deborah's urgent appeal.

Deborah thought about their patriotic devotion, and she broke out in praise to God.

**¹⁰ You who ride on white donkeys,
You who sit on *rich* carpets,
And you who travel on the road—shout in praise!**

Only rulers, magistrates and the wealthy rode on white donkeys.

The "rich carpets" were blankets that acted as a saddle.

**¹¹ At the sound of those who distribute *water* among the watering places,
There they will recount the righteous deeds of the Lord,
The righteous deeds for His peasantry in Israel.
Then the people of the Lord went down to the gates.**

The common people had to haul water for the upper class and for their own families. While the poor were getting the water they spoke of God's deeds.

The gates of their cities were the chief places for public business and matters of justice.

They had been barred from this by their oppressors but now the people had free access to the gates once again.

Verses 12 – 18

**“Awake, awake, Deborah;
Awake, awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak, and lead away your captives, son of Abinoam.
¹³ Then survivors came down to the nobles;
The people of the Lord came down to me as warriors.
¹⁴ From Ephraim those whose root is in Amalek *came down*,
Following you, Benjamin, with your peoples;
From Machir commanders came down,
And from Zebulun those who wield the staff of office.
¹⁵ And the princes of Issachar *were with Deborah*;
As *was* Issachar, so *was* Barak;
Into the valley they rushed at his heels;
Among the divisions of Reuben
There were great determinations of heart.
¹⁶ Why did you sit among the sheepfolds,
To hear the piping for the flocks?
Among the divisions of Reuben
There were great searchings of heart.
¹⁷ Gilead remained across the Jordan;
And why did Dan stay on ships?
Asher sat at the seashore,
And remained by its landings.
¹⁸ Zebulun *was* a people who risked their lives,
And Naphtali *too*, on the high places of the field.**

Arise, Barak, and lead away your captives, son of Abinoam.

10,000 Canaanite men were killed in this war but they had families that would now become subject to the people of Israel.

**¹³ Then survivors came down to the nobles;
The people of the Lord came down to me as warriors.**

Not all of Israel responded to the call of Deborah.

But people of faith responded to Deborah and joined the army.

God's people won in spite of those who did not respond.

¹⁴ From Ephraim those whose root is in Amalek came down,
Following you, Benjamin, with your peoples;
From Machir commanders came down,
And from Zebulun those who wield the staff of office.

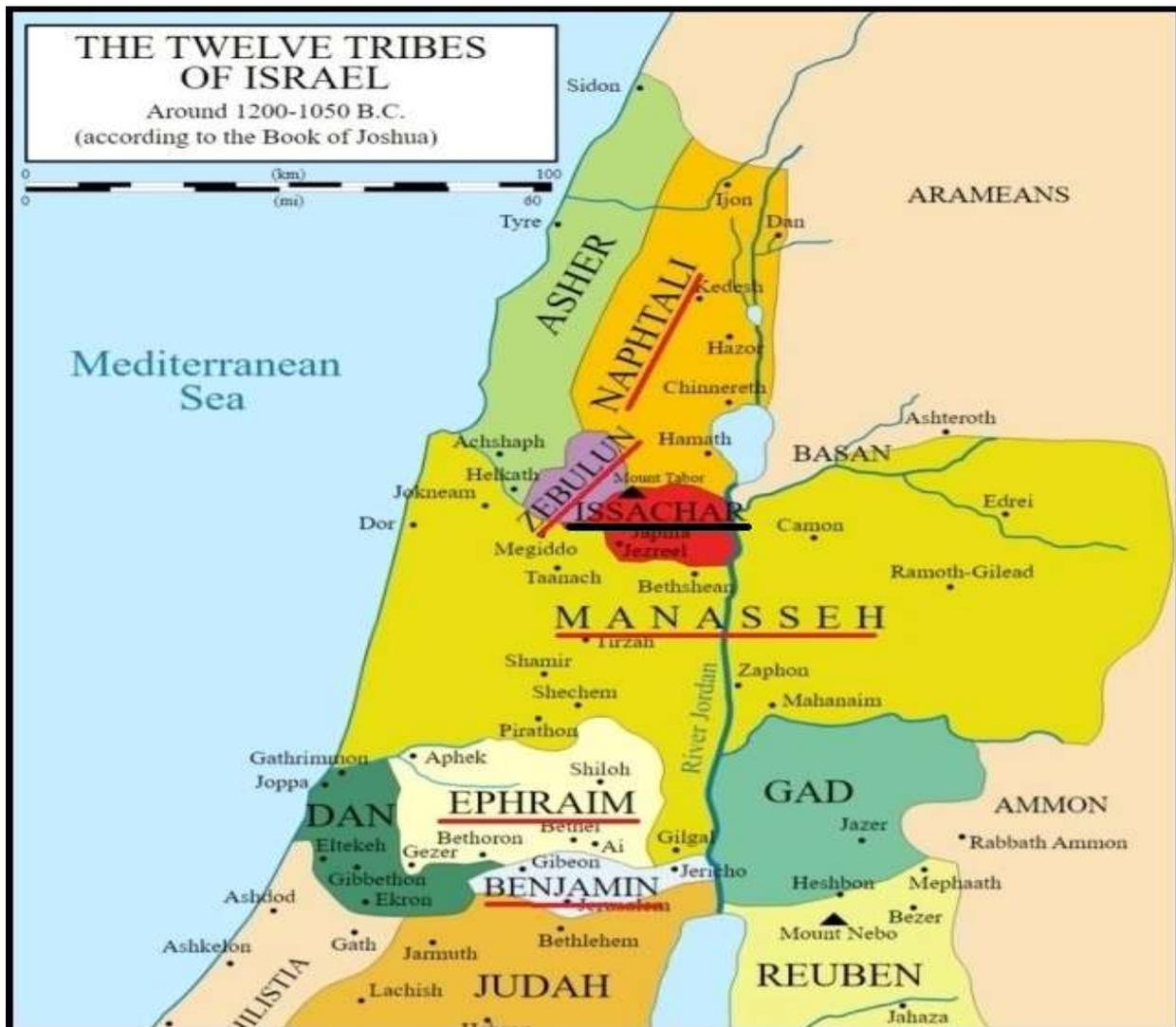
¹⁵ And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
As was Issachar, so was Barak;
Into the valley they rushed at his heels;

Only Zebulun and Naphtali were mentioned in Chapter 4

But we see here that 3 ½ other tribes helped.

"Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir (the ½ tribe of Manasseh) and Issachar

See map 510



**Among the divisions of Reuben there were great determinations of heart.
Among the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.**

At first, the Reubenites made a resolution to help but in the end they stayed at home.

¹⁷ Gilead remained across the Jordan;

Gilead stands for the tribes east of the Jordan River - Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh.

**And why did Dan stay on ships?
Asher sat at the seashore, and remained by its landings.**

This is a reference to their fishing business.

**¹⁸ Zebulun was a people who risked their lives,
And Naphtali too, on the high places of the field.**

Zebulun and Naphtali were singled out for special praise since they led the attack.

Judah and Simeon are not mentioned in the song.

Verses 19 - 21

**¹⁹ "The kings came *and* fought;
Then the kings of Canaan fought
At Taanach near the waters of Megiddo;
They took no plunder in silver.**

**²⁰ The stars fought from heaven,
From their paths they fought against Sisera.**

**²¹ The torrent of Kishon swept them away,
The ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon.**

My soul, march on with strength!

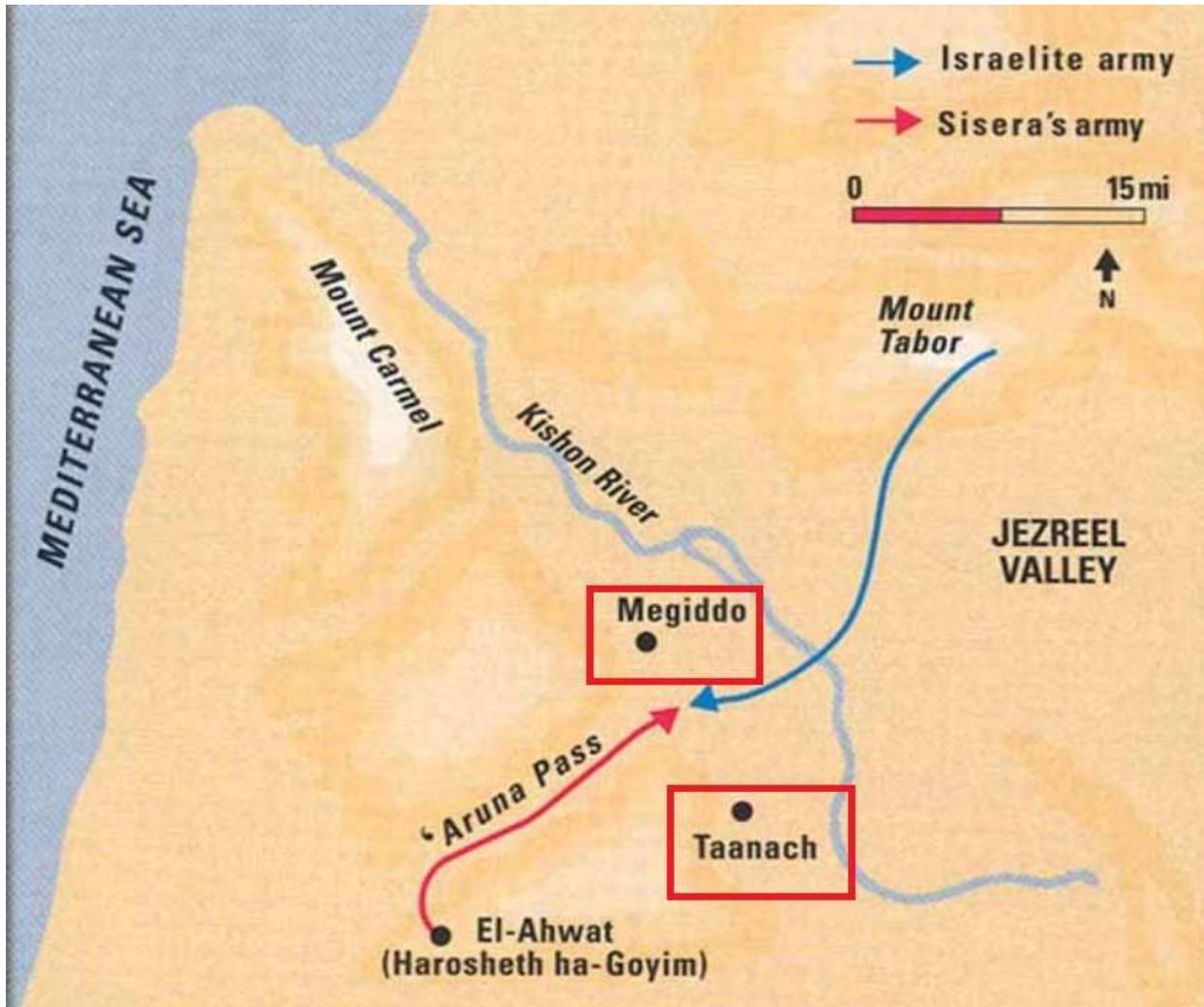
**²² Then the horses' hoofs beat
From the galloping, the galloping of his mighty stallions.**

**²³ 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the Lord,
'Utterly curse its inhabitants,
Because they did not come to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord against the warriors.'**

¹⁹ “The kings came *and* fought;
Then the kings of Canaan fought
At Taanach near the waters of Megiddo;
They took no plunder in silver.

A number of kings had joined forces with Jabin to fight Israel. The battle took place at Taanach.

See map 515



Josephus (a 1st century historian) gives an account of this battle in his writings. However, his account is not inspired and believers should take that into account.

Armageddon comes from Har Megiddo—Hebrew for the “mound” or “mountain” (har) of Megiddo.

See pic 520



**²⁰ The stars fought from heaven,
From their paths they fought against Sisera.**

It is interesting that the text says the stars follow a path. Science didn't discover that the sun orbits the center of the Milky Way until the early 1900's.

**²¹ The torrent of Kishon swept them away,
The ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon.
My soul, march on with strength!**

God used a storm to win the battle for Israel.

**²² Then the horses' hoofs beat
From the galloping, the galloping of his mighty stallions.**

The Canaanite army fled on the horses that were meant to pull their chariots.

**²³ ‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the Lord,
‘Utterly curse its inhabitants,
Because they did not come to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord against the warriors.’**

This village is located in the general area of the battle that took place. Being close to the fight they should have helped God’s people.

See map 525



The tribe of Issachar helped in the battle but this village did not send anyone. God was not pleased and the village received a curse for their lack of action.

Verses 24 - 27

**²⁴ “Most blessed of women is Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite;
Most blessed is she of women in the tent.
²⁵ “He asked for water *and* she gave him milk;
In a magnificent bowl she brought him curds.
²⁶ “She reached out her hand for the tent peg,
And her right hand for the workmen’s hammer.
Then she struck Sisera, she smashed his head;
And she shattered and pierced his temple.
²⁷ “Between her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
Between her feet he bowed, he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell dead.**

24 “Most blessed of women is Jael,

If God gave some of the Judges super human strength to defeat the enemies of Israel should be surprised when this woman is praised for helping Israel.

In times of war people have to decide which side they are on. Jael was not afraid to be on the side of Israel and Deborah praised Jael for her actions.

Jael was also going against the wishes of her husband who had made a treaty with the king. But Jael received a blessing and her husband Heber received no praise.

**25 “He asked for water *and* she gave him milk;
In a magnificent bowl she brought him curds.**

Serving him milk in a stylish bowl instead of water in a glass was clever.

Revenge is a dish best served cold.

**Then she struck Sisera, she smashed his head;
And she shattered and pierced his temple.**

There is no doubt that this is a violent act that would normally bring condemnation, and rightfully so, but this is what takes place during times of war.

Verses 28 - 30

28 “Out of the window she looked and lamented,

The mother of Sisera through the lattice,

‘Why does his chariot delay in coming?

Why do the hoof beats of his chariots tarry?’

29 “Her wise princesses would answer her,

Indeed she repeats her words to herself,

30 ‘Are they not finding, are they not dividing the spoil?

A maiden, two maidens for every warrior;

To Sisera a spoil of dyed work,

A spoil of dyed work embroidered,

31 “Thus let all Your enemies perish, O Lord;

But let those who love Him be like the rising of the sun in its might.”

And the land was undisturbed for forty years.

**28 “Out of the window she looked and lamented,
The mother of Sisera through the lattice,
‘Why does his chariot delay in coming?
Why do the hoof beats of his chariots tarry?’**

This has been experienced by countless wives and mothers throughout history. Any delay in their husband or sons returning from battle was a cause of worry.

**29 “Her wise princesses would answer her,
Indeed she repeats her words to herself,
30 ‘Are they not finding, are they not dividing the spoil?
A maiden, two maidens for every warrior;
To Sisera a spoil of dyed work,
A spoil of dyed work embroidered,**

Despite any comforting words that some wise advisors spoke to her, she still tried to comfort herself by thinking of some reasons why the army might be delayed.

1. They were dividing the spoils of war
2. The female captives were being divided amongst the men of war.
3. The mother of Sisera wished for colorful garments and decorations that would commemorate the great victory.

Concerning number 2 above it should be mentioned that Israelite men were allowed to take a captive woman as a wife but with some important restrictions.

See Deuteronomy 21:10-14

10 “When you go out to battle against your enemies, and the Lord your God hands them over to you and you take them away captive, ¹¹ and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and are strongly attracted to her and would take her as a wife for yourself, ¹² then you shall bring her into your home, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. ¹³ She shall also remove the clothes of her captivity and shall remain in your house, and weep for her father and mother a full month; and after that you may have relations with her and become her husband and she shall be your wife. ¹⁴ But it shall be, if you are not pleased with her, then you shall let her go wherever she wishes; and you certainly shall not sell her for money, you shall not treat her as merchandise, since you have humiliated her.

³¹ **“Thus let all Your enemies perish, O Lord;
But let those who love Him be like the rising of the sun in its might.”
And the land was undisturbed for forty years.**

The enemies of the Lord will perish like the army of Sisera.

But all those that love the Lord will shine like the sun.