

## **Deborah** **October 16, 2011**

### **1. Background**

Deborah was the fourth Judge of Israel and the only female judge. She was a prophetess who predicted a victory by Israel, convinced Barak to lead the people into battle. Together, they led the people of Israel to victory over the forces of King Jabin of Canaan and his commander Sisera. Beyond the story of the battle, not much is known about Deborah except that she was the wife of Lapidoth and that she rendered her judgements under the palm tree between Ramah in Benjamin and Bethel. Her story appears in Judges Chapters 4 and 5

### **2. Exploring the Text**

Judges 4:1-10

- Once again we see that the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and faced the consequences of their sinfulness. Why do you think the Israelites had so much trouble remaining faithful to God?
- What resources does God provide us to help us build a life of faith? How can we use those resources in our daily lives?
- Biblical Judges were chosen by God to deliver the people. They served as military leaders and people who decided legal hearings, but were not seen as kings. Do you find it unusual that Deborah was selected as a Judge? What can we learn about God and the people of Israel based on Deborah's selection?

Judges 4:12-16

- Deborah and Barak are successful in leading the people to victory. In what ways do you see God lift up ordinary people and use them to accomplish God's mission in the world?

Judges 5:6-9

- The Song of Deborah is a poem celebrating the Lord's victory over the Canaanites that essentially tells the same story that appears in Judges 4. Why do you think the story is told a second time? Is there value to having it in poetic form?
- Deborah is referred to as "a mother in Israel"(v.7) Why do you think the author of the poem saw her as a mother figure?

Judges 5:24-27

- The story of Jael is an example of an ordinary person led to extraordinary action. Why do you think Jael kills Sisera? What if anything does it mean that a non-Israelite is the one who completes the victory?