

## **DEBORAH, MOTHER OF ISRAEL**

**Request:** “I understand Deborah was called the mother of Israel. Could you do a study on Deborah?”

Deborah was the fourth theocracy Judge of Israel – “And after these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.” (Acts 13:20)

Biblical historians refer to Deborah as 1 of 6 major judges of Israel.

Documentation of her achievements is recorded in Judges 4-5. “Critics laud it as one of the first songs in Hebrew literature.” (Unger, pg.255)

She judged during the Canaanite oppression of Israel. It was 1 of 7 oppressions covering a period of 300 years of Israel’s history.

In her national tribute song (Judges 5), she was called the mother of Israel – “The peasantry ceased, they ceased in Israel, until I Deborah, arose, until I arose, a mother of Israel.” (Judges 5:7)

Deborah’s name in Hebrew means “Queen Bee.” She lived up to her name. She was the only female judge and prophetess of the period of the Judges – “Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at this time.” (Judges 4:4)

<b>We will study six aspects of how Deborah became known as the “mother of Israel.”</b>
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### **1. Deborah was 1 of 7 prophetess of God mentioned in the Bible.**

I will list them as they are found in the English Bible.

- Miriam ( Ex.15:20-21)
- Deborah (Judges 4:4) **“And she used to sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment.” (4:5)**
- Huldah (2 Kings 22:14)
- Noadiah (Neh.6:14)
- Isaiah’s wife (Isa.8:3)
- Anna (Luke 2:36)
- Philip’s daughters (Acts 21:9)

### **2. Many Bible scholars believe that Deborah was chosen as a judge because of her spiritual leadership amidst a time of weak male spiritual leadership.**

This makes sense to me since she was the only female believer chosen as a Judge during the entire period of Judges. When she tried to give leadership to Barak he refused it and she responded, “The honor shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.” (Judges 4:9b)

Deborah’s statement seemed to be ok with Barak – “Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them.” (Judges 2:16)

God the Judge appointed the theocracy judges of Israel – “I therefore have not sinned against you, but you are doing me wrong by making war against me; may the Lord, the Judge, judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon.” (Judges 11:27)

These are not the same as the civil judges of the tribes of Israel of Deut.16:18-20.

### 3. The judgeship of Deborah was the first major threat against the nation of Israel.

“It was the first major threat of the period of the Judges.” (Tyndale of OT, pg.80)

The Canaanite King Jabin oppressed Israel 20 years before Deborah arose to put an end to it – “And the sons of Israel cried to the Lord; for he had 900 iron chariots, and he oppressed the sons of Israel severely for twenty years.” (Judges 4:3, 6; 5:12)

Apparently Israel was unable to unite a national army against the Canaanite threat – “New gods were chosen; then war was in the gates. Not a shield or a spear was seen among the forty thousand in Israel. My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel, the volunteers among the people; bless the Lord!”(Judges 5:8-9)

“Behold, the Lord, the God of Israel, has commanded, ‘Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtai and from the sons of Zebulun.’” (Judges 4:6b, 10)

These two tribes were under the influence of General Barak.

### 4. A famous battle took place at the River Kishon in the plain of Megiddo (Judges 4:13-16; 5:19) (MAP).

The Lord supported these out-gunned warriors with miracles that resulted in a great victory (Judges 5:20-23).

The Lord sent a storm and flood that took out the Canaanite’s major weapon of warfare the 900 iron chariots. “And Deborah said to Barak, ‘Arise! For this is the day in which **the Lord** has given Sisera into your hands; behold, **the Lord** has gone out before you.’ So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousands men following him.” (Judges 4:14)

### 5. Three women are mentioned in Deborah’s victory song (Judges 4:23-24).

<b>Deborah</b> , prophetess and judge	(Judges 5:7, 12)	Mother of Israel
<b>Jael</b> , the wife of Heber, the Kenite	(Judges 5:24-27; 1:16; 4:11)	Moses’ brother-in-law
<b>Mother</b> of General Sisera	(Judges 5:28-30)	Mother in mourning

### 6. Deborah was able to restore confidence and national pride by her spiritual leadership as both a prophetess and Judge of God.

She restored national pride where 10,000 young soldiers were willing to give their lives for a cause of national freedom – “That the leaders led in Israel, that the people volunteered, bless the Lord!” (Judges 5:2, 18)

“Thus let all Thine 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.” (Judges 5:31)

**Four Concluding Points:** Judges 4:6-10, 14; 5:2; 5: 4-6; 5: 16-17, 23