

**“Why Did Dan Remain in Ships?”**  
**Judges 5:17**

Introduction: Let us notice the background to our text.

1. The judges’ stage records the saddest and most sordid period in the entire history of Israel. The book spans a period of some 300 years. It is the dark ages of that nation. (The summation of the Judges Stage: Judges 17:6 and 21:25)
2. Warren Wiersbe divided the book into three parts:
  - a. Apathy chapters 1-2
  - b. Apostasy chapters 3-16
  - c. Anarchy chapters 17-21
3. The root of Israel’s problem was that when Joshua died, God could find no man to take his place as he did when Moses died. (Judges 18:1, 19:1)
  - a. Moses had his Joshua
  - b. Elijah had his Elisha
  - c. Paul had his Timothy
4. In brief, it records seven apostasies on Israel’s part (Judges 2:11), seven servitudes to seven heathen nations (Judges 2:14), and seven deliverances (Judges 2:16).
5. God chose to use judges to deliver Israel. The twelve judges were:
  - a. Othniel—Mesopotamia oppressed them for eight years
  - b. Ehud—Moab oppressed them for eighteen years
  - c. Shamgar—Philistia oppressed them for an unknown length of time
  - d. Barak (Helped by Deborah)—Canaanites oppressed them for twenty years
  - e. Gideon—Midian oppressed them for seven years
  - f. Tola—Nation and time not recorded
  - g. Jair—Nation and time not recorded
  - h. Jephthah—Ammon oppressed them eighteen years
  - i. Ibzan—Nation and time not recorded
  - j. Elon—Nation and time not recorded
  - k. Abdon—Nation and time not recorded
  - l. Samson—Philistia oppressed them forty years
6. The fruit of Israel’s problems could be seen in:
  - a. Apostasy—doing what God told Israel not to do (that is, to worship the gods of her enemies)
  - b. Compromise—not doing what God told Israel to do (that is, to drive out the enemy)
7. It is this area of compromise, not doing what God said to do, that we will look at.

Body: The nation of Israel had fallen so low that it was now judged by a woman, which would humiliate the men in this male-dominant society (Isaiah 3:12). For twenty years, the Canaanites had oppressed Israel, so God rose up this prophetess to lead the way to victory. First, she called Barak to deliver the nation, and she even gave him the battle plan from the Lord. Usually the Kishon River was dry, but God was going to send a great storm that would flood the riverbed and trap the chariots of iron. Barak led 10,000 men

from Mt. Tabor to the waters of Megiddo where the Kishon River flowed down from Mt. Tabor. Sisera and his army thought their chariots of iron would give them victory, but it was the chariots that led to their defeat. God sent a great storm that turned the plain into a swamp, and the enemy could not attack (Judges 5:21-22).

Chapter five of Judges records Deborah's song of victory (5:1) in which she praises the Lord for the willingness of the people to fight in the battle (Judges 5:2, 9). However, she also names some of the tribes that were too cowardly to fight (Judges 5:16-17). Now, we will look at the sin of not getting involved in the Lord's work as seen in Dan remaining in ships.

➤ Why do not people get involved in the Lord's work?

I. Some Have Intentions

- A. Reuben Had Great Thoughts of Heart Judges 5:15- "...For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart."
- B. Reuben Had Great Searchings of Heart Judges 5:16- "Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart."
- C. Reuben ought to have followed these noble patriots to battle; however, they were absent when the warfare began.
- D. The Reubenites had resolutions to help their brethren against Jabin, but they stayed at home, and let the opportunity slip.
- E. He who means well is useless unless he does well.
- F. One of these days is none of these days.
- G. What may be done at anytime will be done at no time.
- H. Tomorrow, tomorrow, not today, Hear the lazy people say.
- I. There are three kinds of people; those who watch things happen, those who make things happen, and those who have no idea what happens.

II. Some Have Inconviences Judges 5:17- "Gilead abode beyond Jordan..."

- A. The land of Gilead, on the east of Jordan, was divided between Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, who are both comprehended here.
- B. In order for the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh to involve themselves in the battle, they would have to cross the Jordan River, which was inconvenient.
- C. Notice the people that will not get involved in the Lords' work because it robs them of their playtime and it might bring oppositions in their life.
- D. Matthew 20:1-6, John 4:35
- E. To be blind is bad, but worse is it to have eyes and not to see.
- F. The will is the strong blind man who carries on his shoulders the lame man who can see.
- G. The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man's determination.
- H. Deeds are fruits, words are but leaves.
- I. If you don't invest much, defeat doesn't hurt and winning is not exciting.

- III. Some Have Insecurities Judges 5:17- “...*Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.*”
- A. Asher abode in the breaches, or in other words creeks and bays that provided a haven from enemies.
  - B. Asher did not want to get involved because it might affect their own securities of life.
  - C. Notice people that will not give to the Lord’s work because it robs them of their security of finances.
  - D. Our-Father-who-art-in-heaven-gimme-gimme-gimme.
  - E. Luke 10:30-37
  - F. Can a man love God while ignoring the need of his brother?
  - G. He is a slave of the greatest slave who serves nothing but himself.
- IV. Some Have Indifference Judges 5:17- “...*and why did Dan remain in ships?*”
- A. Joppa was in the territory of Dan, and was in later times the seaport for Jerusalem.
  - B. Could it be that Dan had greater plans for their lives (a future seaport) and did not care about the Lord’s work or battles?
  - C. Luke 14:16-21
  - D. It takes little effort to watch a man carry a load.
  - E. There is nothing harder than the softness of indifference.

Conclusion: Notice the curse placed on Meroz (Judges 5:23). The inhabitants of Meroz (a village 12 miles from Samaria) hung back, and gave no help in the day of battle, although it was Jehovah who called them. Hence, a curse was pronounced by the angel of the Lord on Meroz because of their intentions, inconveniences, insecurities, and indifference.