

# ISRAEL Teaching Letter

Vol. # 770423 • April 2023 • [www.bridgesforpeace.com](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com)

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue dress, is captured in a graceful dance pose in a field of tall grass. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a setting or rising sun, creating a silhouette effect and a soft glow around her. The background shows rolling hills under a clear sky.

## Deborah—

One of God's Prophetesses

[JacksonDavid@jizabay.com](http://JacksonDavid@jizabay.com)

By: Rev. Rebecca J. Brimmer, *International President and CEO*  
Bridges for Peace...Your Israel Connection®

**THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE** and Christian history, God has raised up leaders, pastors, apostles and prophets. They are individuals who are called and anointed by God for their specific time and place. I am thankful for the many godly spiritual leaders who God has placed in my life. The majority have been men. There are also times when women are called by God to service, even to leadership. One of the outstanding instances in the Bible is Deborah, who was both a judge and a prophetess. She is one of eleven female prophetesses in the Bible. Let's dive into the Scripture and learn more about Deborah and the other prophetesses.

## The Situation

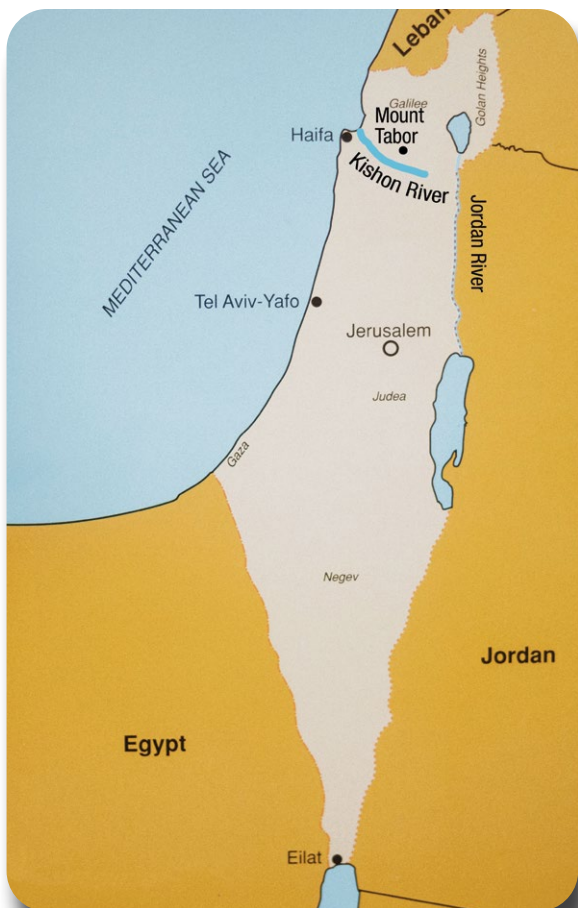
After the death of Joshua, changes occurred in Israel. In Judges 2:10–11, we read: *“When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals.”*

Even though the Lord was hot with anger and delivered the Israelites to their enemies, for the sake of the fathers He did not forget His people. *“Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them... And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them”* (Judg. 2:16, 18 emphasis added).

Please note that the Bible says God was moved to pity because of the suffering of the people. It was also God who raised up the judges who delivered the Israelites from their trouble. Furthermore, God was with the judge.

The story of Deborah is found in Judges 4:4 to 5:31. This passage describes the fall of the Canaanite general Sisera and his armies, who were swept away by the Kishon River. It concludes with Deborah's ensuing song of thanks.

Deborah the prophetess was the leader and judge of the Israelites at a difficult time. She summoned Barak, son of Abinoam, and transmitted God's instruction to him: *“Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the*



*sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand" (Judg. 4:6b-7).*

At Barak's request, Deborah accompanied him, and together they led the offensive. Sisera was informed of the Israelites' mobilization. He gathered his forces and proceeded toward the Kishon River. Barak's army below on earth and the heavenly forces above waged battle against the Canaanites, utterly destroying them. The Kishon River washed them all away.

The defeated general fled on foot and arrived at the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite. She invited him in and offered to hide him. When he fell asleep, Jael took a tent peg and drove it through Sisera's temple, killing him.

What an interesting biblical account! There is not just one heroine but two working along with General Barak in this story of deliverance from Israel's enemies.

In Judges 5, we find the Song of Deborah, which describes the miraculous victory and gives thanks to the Almighty for His assistance.

The account of Deborah is read as the *Haftarah* portion for the *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.) portion Beshalach (Exod. 13–17). The Jewish world reads several chapters from the *Torah* each

week. This portion also has Scripture chosen from the remainder of the *Tanakh* (OT) to complement it called the *Haftarah*. Beshalach describes the drowning of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea and the subsequent songs led by Moses and Miriam. The parallels between the *Torah* and its accompanying *Haftarah* portions are interesting: a conflict; divine providence; a miraculous deliverance featuring water; female prophetesses; and songs of praise and victory.

## Interesting Thoughts about Deborah

Deborah was raised up by the Lord. She was clearly respected, because the Word says that the children of Israel came up to her for judgment (Judg. 4:5). This is evident by the fact that military men sought her advice and followed her lead—and did not want to go into battle without her.

Our English Bibles describe Deborah as the wife of Lapidot. The words in Hebrew are *Eshet Lapidot*. Many Jewish sources suggest that these words mean “woman of flames.” The Hebrew word *lapid* means torch, and *lapidot* is the plural form. The word *eshet* is also used in Proverbs 31, where it describes a Woman of Virtue. *Eshet* simply means “woman of.” It is therefore possible that Deborah was the wife of a man named Lapidot, but it is equally possible that she was a woman of torches or flames. Because of this phrase, one theory is that Deborah was the keeper of the wicks for the *menorah* (seven branched candlestick) in the Tabernacle. This would have been a position of great honor.

Why did Deborah judge sitting under a tree? It seems likely that she wanted to protect the reputations of herself and those with whom she consulted. The consultations thus took place in the open where all could see.



Deborah's name means bee. It is pronounced Devorah in Hebrew. She was a strong leader and Israel's enemies discovered that she had a sting! However, the bee also provides sweet honey, which could be symbolic of the sweet relief that came to the people of Israel after her actions against their enemies. The Bible says that following this war, there were 40 years of peace.

## Prophetesses in the Bible

The Bible specifically calls only 11 women prophetesses. Nine of them were prophetesses of God, namely Miriam (Exod. 15:20); Deborah (Judg. 4:4); Huldah (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22); the wife of Isaiah (Isa. 8:3); Anna (Luke 2:36–38); and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8–9). Two of the 11 were false prophetesses, namely Noadiah (Neh. 6:14) and Jezebel (Rev. 2:20).

More than half of these prophetesses (six) appear in the Writings of the Apostles (NT). Four of the prophetesses were virgin daughters. Three were wives (Deborah, Huldah and the wife of Isaiah). One was a widow (Anna). The marital status of the other prophetesses is unknown. Let's briefly look at a couple of them.

### Huldah

Huldah was important because she provided guidance to King Josiah after "*the Book of the Law*" (2 Kings 22:8) was found. The king asked Hilkiah, the high priest, to give him advice. Hilkiah then found Huldah and asked for her help. Huldah must have had a great reputation for her knowledge of Scripture and spiritual relationship with God. Otherwise, why would the high priest seek her godly advice for the king? Her moment in Scripture, although very brief, reveals that she had a good reputation. Scripture indicates that she was an example of a godly woman, an example for every woman and man.

### Wife of Isaiah

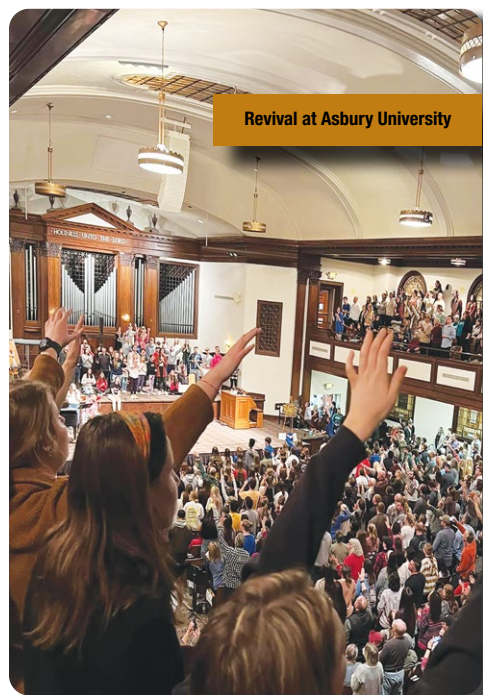
The wife of Isaiah was identified as a prophetess in Isaiah 8:3. It is a bit disappointing that we don't know her name. An important lesson can be learned from this. The opportunity to serve the Lord in any capacity should not be viewed as an opportunity for advancement or fame. While this runs counter

to the modern idea of creating our own brand and making our name known, God honored this woman without the hype.

## Anna

The prophetess Anna appears only in Luke 2:36–38. The events described in these verses occurred after Mary and Joseph arrived in the Temple for the dedication of Jesus (Yeshua). *“And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She did not leave the temple grounds, serving night and day with fasts and prayers. And at that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak about Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem”* (NASB).

Anna was a true prophetess. Her life reveals that God may use an older, godly woman if she is willing to serve the Lord. It is also obvious that God answered her prayer to see the Messiah. God allowed her to remain alive until she saw Him.



## Who Does God Use?

God uses donkeys and big fish! He uses young people and old people. He uses men and women. At times, God shocks us with His choices and His unexpected ways of doing things. He uses trumpets and marching seven times around a wall to vanquish an enemy. He does not fit in any box we can make.

In the apostle Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost (*Shavuot*), he said, *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I*

*will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My manservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17–18).*

Deborah, Miriam and the other prophetesses in the Bible may have seemed to be out-of-the-box choices. God, however, chose them to be His prophetesses, just as He also chose their male counterparts.

As a woman, I struggled when the board asked me to lead Bridges for Peace. Even after I was convinced that God was calling me, I tried to talk Him out of it, saying “People might not follow a woman.” I learned that when God calls, He equips. It hasn’t always been easy to be a woman in ministry, but I have always known that God is with me. I am also blessed to have a husband who supports the call of God on my life, just as countless faithful wives have supported their minister husbands.

God will use us all if we are willing to listen to Him and faithfully obey Him. I want to encourage you to answer His call, regardless of whether you are young, old, male or female, single, married or widowed. He uses unusual people—and sometimes donkeys—to accomplish His purposes.

## Always Praise

Both Miriam and Deborah sang songs of praise and victory, giving honor to God for His great acts. After the victory over Pharaoh and the successful crossing of the Red Sea, Moses led the people in a song of praise and victory. Then Miriam led the women in a victory dance, playing tambourines, saying, *“I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! (Exod. 15:1).*



Today, as in the times of Miriam and Deborah, we face many challenges, and often tremendous forces come against our faith and even our stability. Wars rage and difficulties abound. Just as in their times, God will raise up leaders when His people cry out to Him. He is looking for those who will fully dedicate their lives to Him in prayer and righteous action. When He calls, He will equip. He will be with you. Most of all, He is looking for those who will give Him the glory and praise.

---

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Raver, Miki. *Listen to Her Voice: Women of the Hebrew Bible*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998.

Richards, Larry and Richards, Sue. *Every Woman in the Bible*. Nashville: Nelson Publishing, 1999.

Spangler, Ann and Syswerda, Jean E. *Women of the Bible: A One-year Devotional Study of Women in the Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

Tamari, Meir. *Truths Desired by God: An Excursion into the Weekly Haftarah*. Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing, 2011.

Scripture is taken from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

---

#### TERMINOLOGY:

Many of our readers are seasoned supporters of Israel while others are just beginning to understand the importance of standing with God's chosen nation; some prefer the use of Hebrew names and terms, while others are comfortable with more traditional Christian terminology. Because we want to show respect to all of our readers while providing an enjoyable educational experience, we are making every effort to use both terms whenever possible. The following are some of the most common examples:

- Jesus (Yeshua)
- *Tanakh* (Old Testament or OT)—*Tanakh* is an acronym used in Judaism which stands for *Torah*, *Neviim* or Prophets and *Ketuvim* or Writings.
- Writings of the Apostles (New Testament or NT)
- *Torah* (Gen.—Deut.)

## Bridges for Peace—Offices

**Australia:** Tel: 07-5479-4229, [bfp.au@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:bfp.au@bridgesforpeace.com)

**Canada:** Tel: 204-489-3697, Toll free: 855-489-3697, [info@bfpcan.org](mailto:info@bfpcan.org)

**Japan:** Tel: (81) 3-5969-9656, [bfp@bfpj.org](mailto:bfp@bfpj.org)

**New Zealand:** Tel: (64) 7-855-5262, [emather.nz@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:emather.nz@bridgesforpeace.com)

**South Africa:** Tel: 021-975-1941, [info@bridgesforpeace.co.za](mailto:info@bridgesforpeace.co.za)

**South Korea:** Tel: 070-8772-2014, [bfp@bfpkorea.com](mailto:bfp@bfpkorea.com)

**Spanish:** Tel: (52) 646-238-7206, [intl.spanish@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:intl.spanish@bridgesforpeace.com)

**Russia:** Tel: (7) 903-309-1849, [info.ru@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:info.ru@bridgesforpeace.com)

**United Kingdom:** Tel: 165-673-9494, [ukoffice@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:ukoffice@bridgesforpeace.com)

**United States:** Tel: 800-566-1998, [postmaster@bfpusa.org](mailto:postmaster@bfpusa.org)



*A higher standard.  
A higher purpose.*

#### © COPYRIGHT POLICY:

Bridges for Peace holds the copyright on this material. We encourage pastors, Bible teachers, and lay people to use these articles for preaching and teaching, and we hereby grant permission for a limited number of copies for such educational purposes. However, any other reproduction or transmittal of this material in any form—including reprinting, republishing, recording or use with any information storage and retrieval system—requires written permission from BFP International.

**Bridges for Peace:** Christians supporting Israel and building relationships between Christians and Jews in Israel and around the world.

#### International Headquarters

PO Box 1093, Jerusalem, Israel

Tel: (972) 2-624-5004

[intl.office@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:intl.office@bridgesforpeace.com)

[www.bridgesforpeace.com](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com)

