

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”  
May 3, 2016**

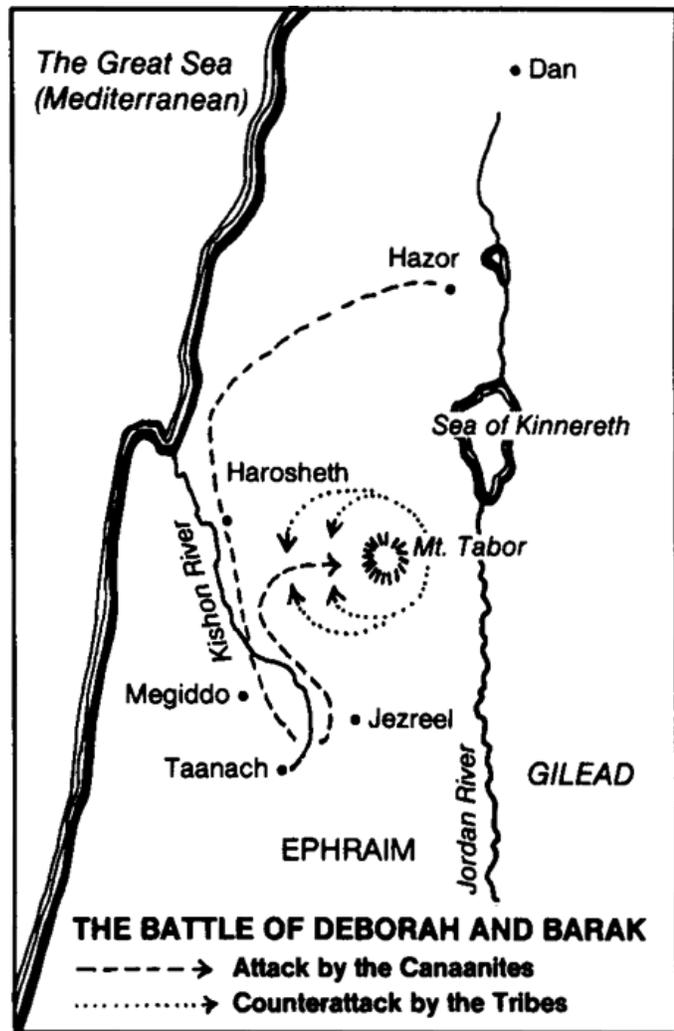
- ✓ **Judges 4:1-6:10.** Apostasy, distress, and deliverance—repeated.
- ✓ **Philippians. 1:19-30.** Paul’s conflicting desires: to go be with the Lord or stay on Earth.
- ✓ **Psalms 65:1-13.** Thanksgiving to God for forgiveness and creation.

**COMMENTS:**

**Judges 4:1-6:10.** That the Israelites once again did evil indicated their continuing apostasy and resultant tailspin into the idolatrous

practices of the Canaanites (cf., 2:19; 3:7, 12). About 200 years earlier the Lord had freed Israel from slavery in Egypt. Now, in contrast, He sold them into the hands of the Canaanites as punishment for their sins. Note in chapter 4-5: the oppression under the Canaanites for 20 years followed by the Israelites crying out to the Lord for help, followed by the deliverance by Deborah and Barak, followed by the defeat of the Canaanites, followed by the song of praise written by Deborah herself. Note the same cycle in chapter 6, but this time it is at the hands of the Midianites and God raises up the prophet Gideon. It is noteworthy that this cry out to the Lord was not an indication of repentance for sin for they had to be reminded by the prophet in 6:7-10. They seemed to be totally unaware that this trouble was due to the fact that they were not ‘obeying’ the Lord (6:10). Note all that God had done for them in grace in 6:7-10: (1) brought them up from Egypt; (2) brought them out of the slavery; (3) rescued them from all their oppressors; (4) dispossessed the inhabitants of their land; (5) delivered it into Israel’s hands;

and (6) committed himself to being Israel’s God. To prick the memory of the Israelites the last demonstration of grace is expressed by explicitly quoting Yahweh’s stereotypical self-introductory formula: “I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God.’” This statement highlights God’s actions as expressive of a special relationship that He had by his sovereign grace established with Israel. Since He had demonstrated such grace in delivering them from all their enemies and providing them with their own land, and since He had committed Himself to be their covenant Lord, surely His demand for exclusive and undivided allegiance to Him was not too much to ask.



As Israel's divine covenant partner, He would not tolerate rivals; He would brook no interference from other gods, particularly the gods of the Amorites, who had occupied this land. Yahweh's disappointment with the response of his people is summarized in a few words: "You have not listened to "my voice."

**Philippians. 1:19-30.** Paul was confident of his deliverance one way or the other. The bases on which the apostle's assurance rested were the "prayers" of the saints and the "help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ." He knew he could count on the Philippians' prayers, and also on the Holy Spirit's ministry. Note that Paul was not sure whether he would experience release or martyrdom for his faith. He was certain of one thing though, that he wanted Christ to be exalted in his body either way. This was Paul's expectation and hope. The apostle also knew full well that it would take courage to face death with the proper attitude. "Eagerly expect" is the translation of a unique word (*ἀποκαραδοκίαν*). It describes straining one's neck to catch a glimpse of something that is ahead. Paul's concern was not what would happen to him but what testimony would be left for his Lord. Release would allow him to continue preaching Christ. But martyrdom would also advance the cause of Christ. In verse 21 we see that Paul's main purpose in living was to glorify Christ. Christ was the essence of his life. Yet Paul knew that if he were martyred, Christ would be glorified through the promotion of the gospel which would result from his testimony in death. And Paul himself would benefit, for death would result in his being with Christ (23). The words "to die" suggest the act of dying, not the state of death. In verses 22-24 Paul seems a bit perplexed: He knew if he could go on living there would certainly be fruit from his labor (22). God would bless his work and continue to use him as He had in the past. Yet if Paul had a choice between going on living or dying for Christ, he was at a loss as to how to decide. He simply did not know which to choose. Of course the choice was really not up to him anyway. I think the point is that he was hard-pressed to know which would bring the most glory to God. His personal desire was to depart and be with Christ (v. 23). This he knew would be better by far for him since it would mean his release from the persecutions and other hardships that he suffered. But he also knew that the Philippians needed him. For them it was more necessary that he remain in the body, or stay alive (24). Paul's selfless attitude is revealed here by his placing his friends' needs above his own desires.

**Psalms 65:1-13.** Note how the psalmist speaks about the blessings of God upon confession of transgressions. Observe the emphasis on prayer during times of sinfulness. He informs us that when one is brought near to the presence of the Lord, he will experience happiness/blessedness. It was this forgiveness of sin that made possible the praise of the people and their entrance on festival days into the courts of the tabernacle. In verses 5-8 he connects prayer to God's awesome deeds and power, which have been demonstrated by forming the mountains and calming the seas and their waves. Note how God cares for and controls the land and the water that produces the grain and produce. The psalmist concludes with the metaphor of all of nature shouting for joy (13) as illustrated by the thriving fruitfulness—all dependent upon God's existential causation.

**Romans 11:36** For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don