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## Deborah’s Victory Song

### 5: 1-31



When **the Jewish people** wanted to celebrate special occasions, **they** often expressed themselves in **song**, so the author shifts from narrative prose to jubilant poetry. Future generations might forget what the history **book** said, but they were not likely to forget a festive **song** (cf. **Exodus 15; Deuteronomy 32; Second Samuel 1:17-27, and Psalm 18**). The personal pronouns in **5;7, 9, and 13** indicate that this was **Deborah’s** victory **song**, but just as **Barak** joined **her** in battle, so **he** also joined **her** in the victory celebration.<sup>97</sup> **The** victory **song** of **Deborah** is universally acclaimed as a literary masterpiece. For forcefulness of expression and brilliance of imagery and style it has few rivals. Even in translation, the Hebrew still retains a vividness, an almost staccato effect of action and a spirit of sheer exultation that indicates a participant, or at least an eye witness. **Her** victory **song** is presumably included in **the Book of the Wars of the LORD** (see the commentary on **Numbers Dj - The Book of the Wars of the LORD**).<sup>98</sup> **The** **song** progressively unfolds a poetic account of the battle between **Isra’el** and **Sisera** already encountered (see **As - The Fourth Cycle: Deborah**). This poetic version includes several details that were not revealed in the earlier prose account. At regular intervals this account is creatively intertwined with a series of

exhortations, spoken by both singer and congregation, that praise **ADONAI**, call for the defeated foe to listen and reflect, and declare curses or blessings on various people in **the song**.<sup>99</sup>