

Texts: Judges 4:1-7; Psalm 123 or Psalm 76; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; and Matthew 25:14-30

Judges 4:1-7

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died. ²So the Lord sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. ³Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.

⁴At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. ⁵She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. ⁶She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. ⁷I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'"

Psalm 123

¹To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!

²As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, until he has mercy upon us.

³Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.

⁴Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.

Psalm 76

¹In Judah God is known, his name is great in Israel.

²His abode has been established in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion.

³There he broke the flashing arrows, the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war. Selah

⁴Glorious are you, more majestic than the everlasting mountains.

⁵The stouthearted were stripped of their spoil; they sank into sleep; none of the troops was able to lift a hand.

⁶At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both rider and horse lay stunned.

⁷But you indeed are awesome! Who can stand before you when once your anger is roused?

⁸From the heavens you uttered judgment; the earth feared and was still

⁹when God rose up to establish judgment, to save all the oppressed of the earth. Selah

¹⁰Human wrath serves only to praise you, when you bind the last bit of your wrath around you.

¹¹Make vows to the Lord your God, and perform them; let all who are around him bring gifts to the one who is awesome,

¹²who cuts off the spirit of princes, who inspires fear in the kings of the earth.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.

¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.

²⁰"Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.'

²¹"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

²²"And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.'

²³"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

²⁴"Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

²⁶"But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter?' ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"