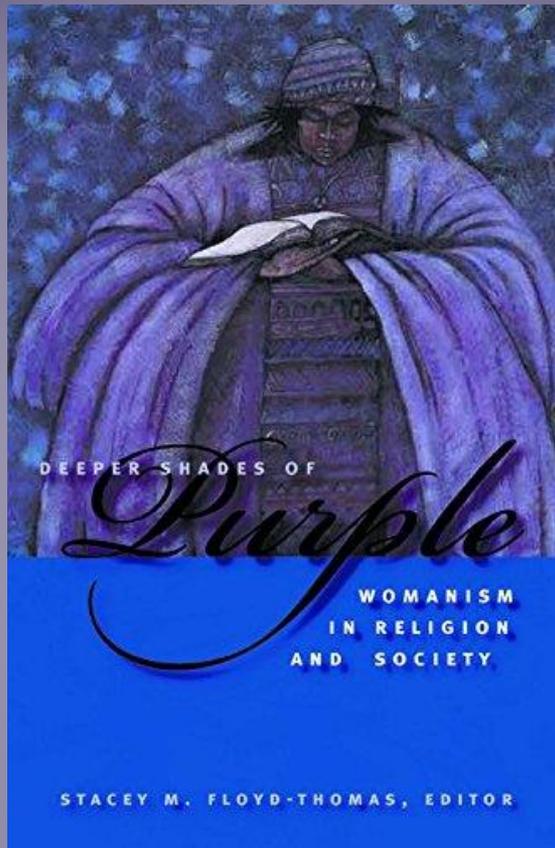




A FORCE BY OURSELVES BUT A  
MOVEMENT WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER:  
COMPLEMENT NOT COMPETITION

Wednesday Word and Wonders  
Wednesday, March 11, 2020



Floyd-Thomas, Stacey M. *Deeper shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society* (New York, NY: New York University Press), 2006.

# Womanist Tenets

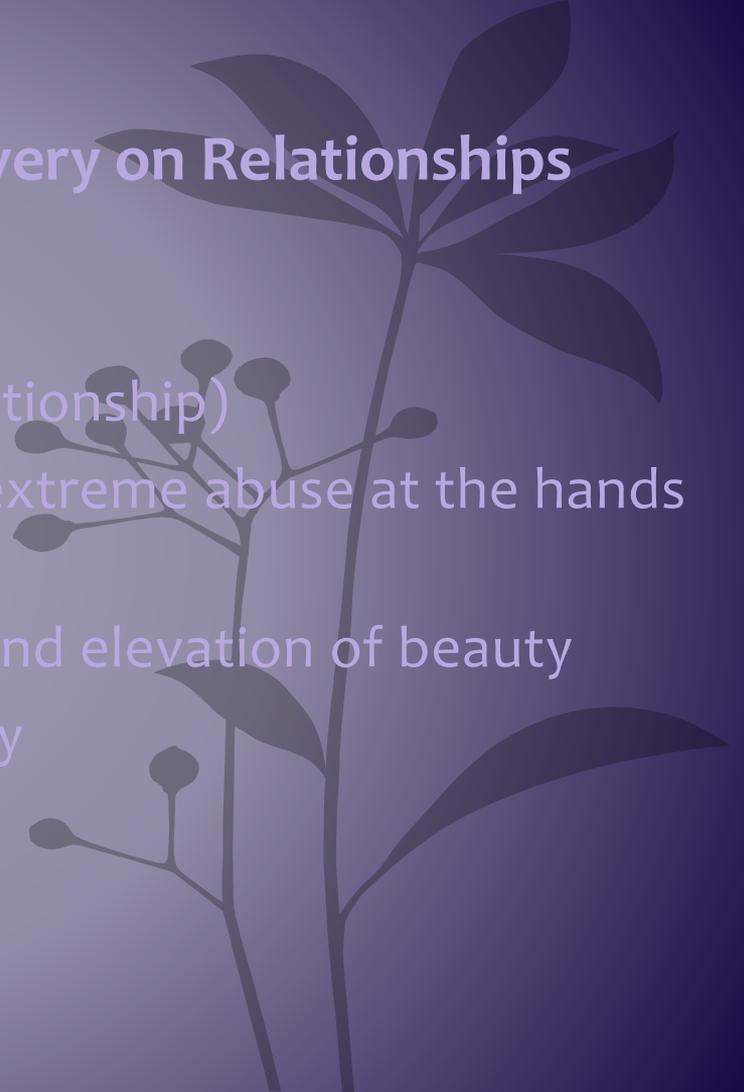
## Dr. Stacey Floyd-Thomas sets forth four womanist tenets:

- Radical Subjectivity
  - It challenges women to take seriously both their personal and communal agency. In light of her self-identity, self-perception, and values, she decides on and implements the best course of action for herself.
- Traditional Communalism
  - A woman committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female, separated only for health reasons.
- Redemptive Self-Love
  - It describes black women who love themselves. Regardless. Redemptive self-love emphasizes that irrespective of what others say, do, or how they are treated, black women will commit to love themselves. Redemptive self-love is cultivated in many ways
- Critical Engagement
  - critical engagement concerns itself with systemic issues that undergird the perpetuation of the tripartite intersection of race, sex, and class oppression.



## The Disruption: The Impact of Slavery on Relationships

- Separation of tribes
- The denial of familial ties (marriages/relationship)
- Living under the fear of separation and extreme abuse at the hands of slave owners
- The centering of white women's purity and elevation of beauty
- The loss of agency over the physical body
- The Art of Mimicry



# Theological Iconography and the Power of Cultural Reinforcement

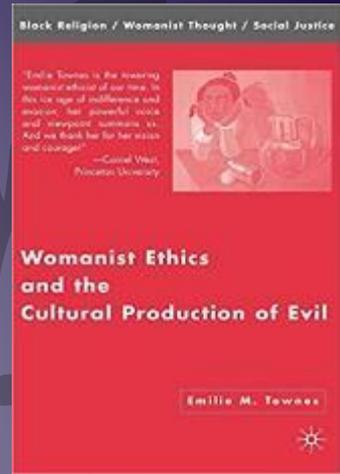
-Images of women in the bible being white continue to uphold whiteness as the standard of beauty and being viewed as more valuable and seen as divine and chosen.

- Cultural productions of Black Women as ( underscored by Dr. Emilie M. Townes) Mammy, Jezebel, Pickaninny, Tragic Mulatta and Welfare Queen.

- These public images and certain public productions continue to promote a one-dimensional and toxic view of Black women.



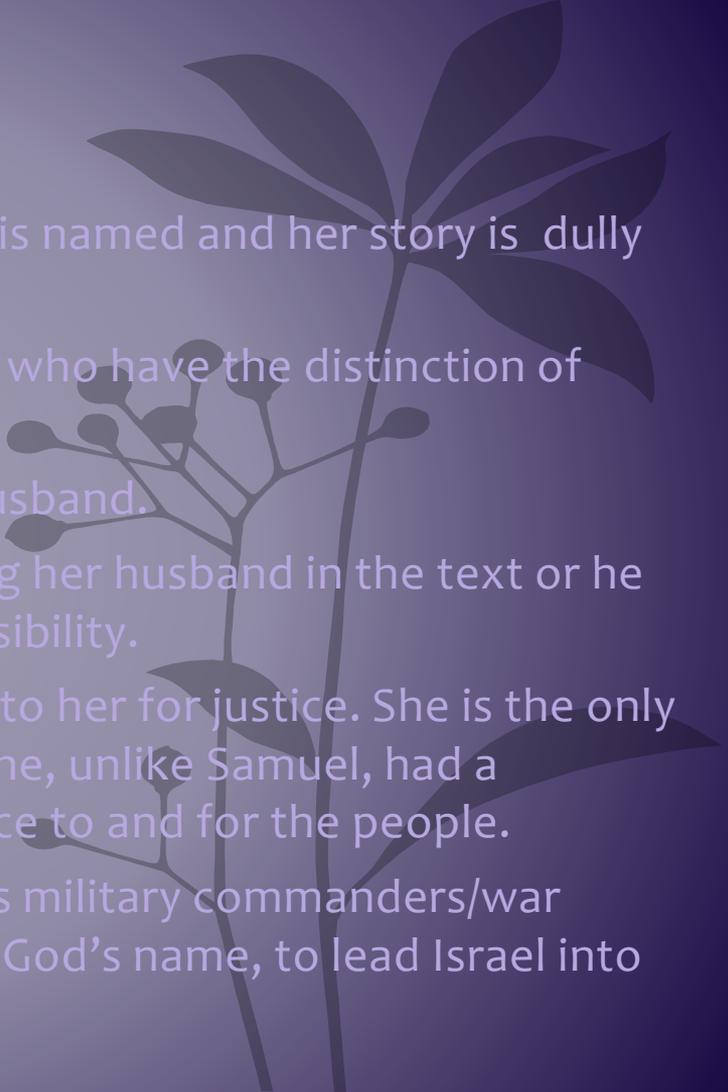
Skin-lightening cream called Whitenicious

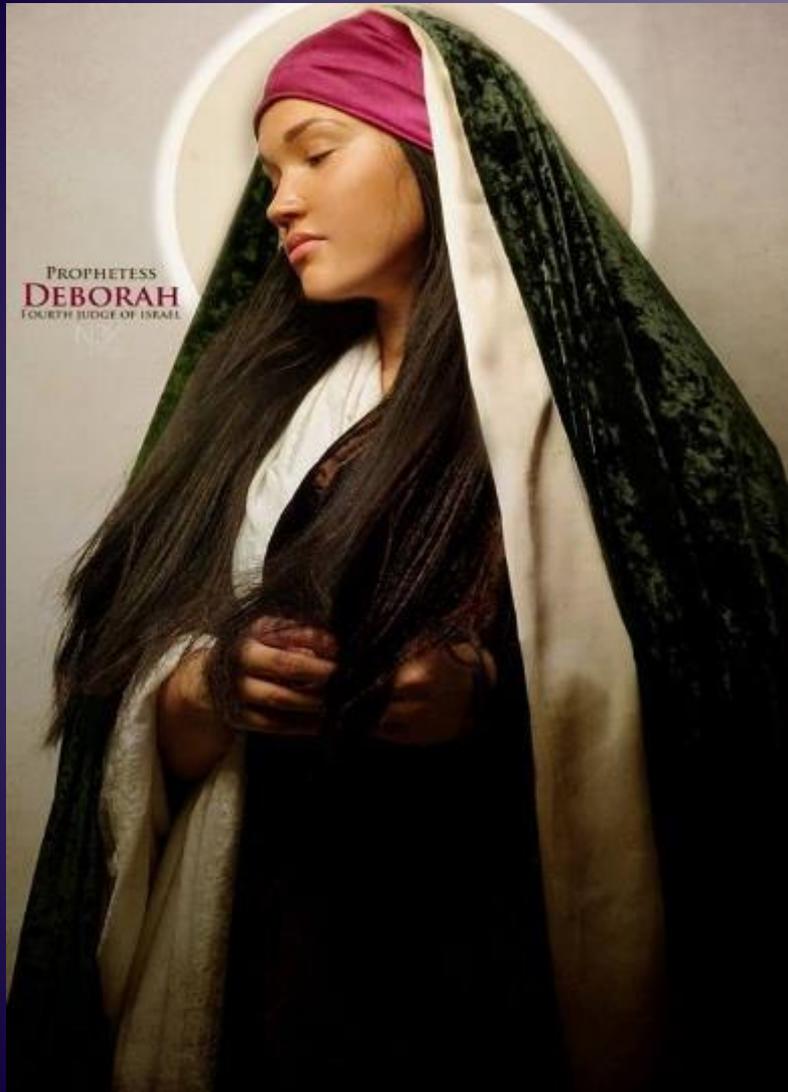


# Judges 4: 1 – 10, 14

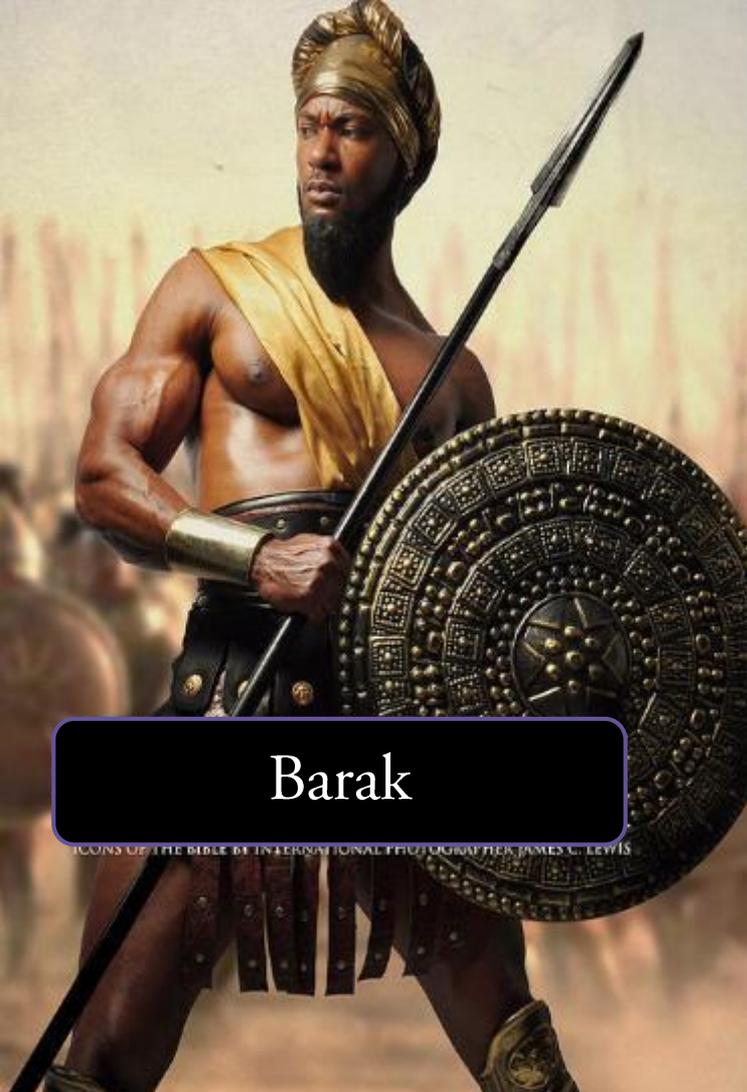
- After Ehud had died, the Israelites again did things that the LORD saw as evil. <sup>2</sup> So the LORD gave them over to King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, and he was stationed in Harosheth-ha-goiim. <sup>3</sup> The Israelites cried out to the LORD because Sisera<sup>[a]</sup> had nine hundred iron chariots and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly for twenty years.
- <sup>4</sup> Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth,<sup>[b]</sup> was a leader of Israel at that time. <sup>5</sup> She would sit under Deborah's palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the Ephraim highlands, and the Israelites would come to her to settle disputes. <sup>6</sup> She sent word to Barak, Abinoam's son, from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "Hasn't the LORD, Israel's God, issued you a command? 'Go and assemble at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand men from the people of Naphtali and Zebulun with you. <sup>7</sup> I'll lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, to assemble with his chariots and troops against you at the Kishon River, and then I'll help you overpower him.'" "
- <sup>8</sup> Barak replied to her, "If you'll go with me, I'll go; but if not, I won't go."
- <sup>9</sup> Deborah answered, "I'll definitely go with you. However, the path you're taking won't bring honor to you, because the LORD will hand over Sisera to a woman." Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh. <sup>10</sup> He summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and ten thousand men marched out behind him. Deborah marched out with him too.

## V4-7

- Deborah is important to the people of Israel. She is named and her story is fully preserved - Judges 4 and 5.
  - Deborah joins other women in the Old Testament who have the distinction of being a female prophet.
  - Deborah is known separate and apart from her husband.
  - There is no indication that she was overshadowing her husband in the text or he had issue(s) with his wife's leadership and high visibility.
  - Deborah is a leader among the people. They come to her for justice. She is the only person to participate in legal mediation (v4-5). She, unlike Samuel, had a designated location where she administered justice to and for the people.
  - Deborah has the ability and authority to summons military commanders/war chiefs. And the ability to appoint commanders, in God's name, to lead Israel into battle using her prophetic office.
- 



- A Trusted Voice for the Voiceless
- A Justice Seeker and Fighter
- A Bold, Brave, and Brilliant Woman
- A Military Strategist/Commander
- A Master Networker
- A Prophet
- A Judge
- A Wife
- A Woman of Faith
- A Warrior Woman and Warrior Healer



Barak

ICONS OF THE BIBLE BY INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES C. LEWIS

Names meanings “ Lighting” in Hebrew.

Commended for his faith in Hebrews 11:32.

A soldier for the Lord!

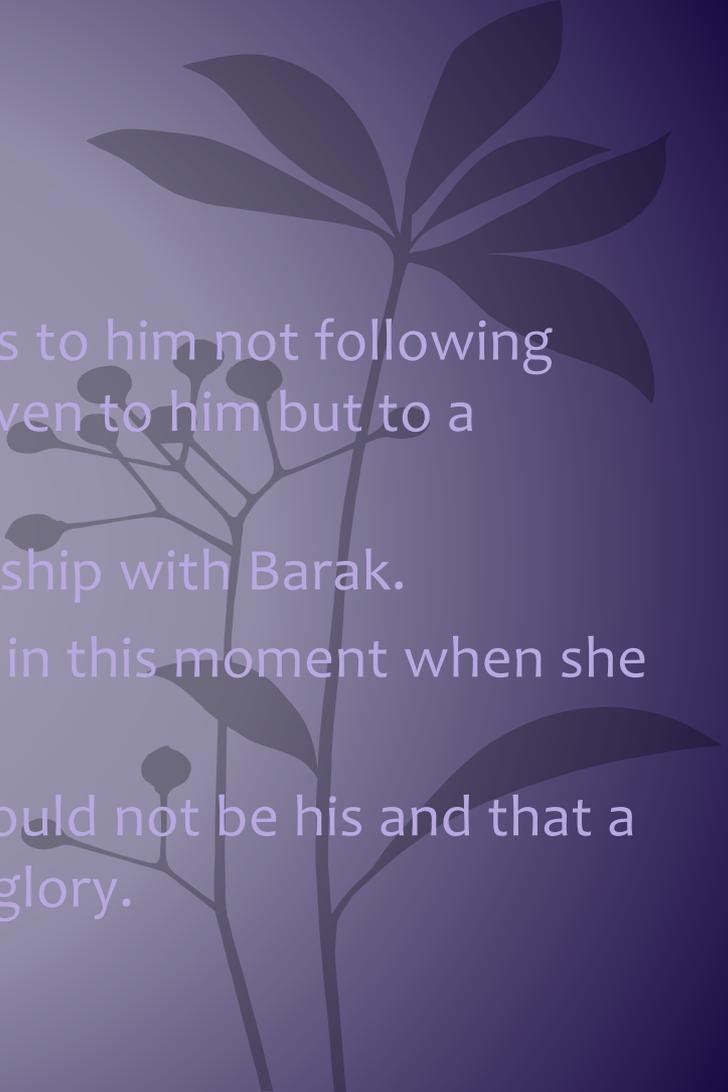
## V8

Barak replied to her, “If you’ll go with me, I’ll go; but if not, I won’t go.”

- Respected and honored Deborah’s leadership.
- Understood the power of Deborah’s divine presence and power.
- Understood the value of having her accompany him to represent a united front.

“African women traditionally were considered to have a special relationship with nature. For example, the queen of the Luvedu people of Africa not only served as the political head of state but was also the chief representative of the divine, she was considered to have the power to make rain, and even her changes in mood might induce alterations in the weather.” L.H. Whelchel- *A Way Out of No Way: The History and Heritage of African- American Churches*. Pg. 116.

## V 9 - 10

- Deborah is not judgmental for Barak.
  - Deborah speaks truth to Barak in regards to him not following God's directive. The victory will not be given to him but to a woman.
  - Deborah enters it a collaborative partnership with Barak.
  - Deborah becomes a military commander in this moment when she leaves her post under the palm tree.
  - Barak was not phased that the victory would not be his and that a woman would be the one to receive the glory.
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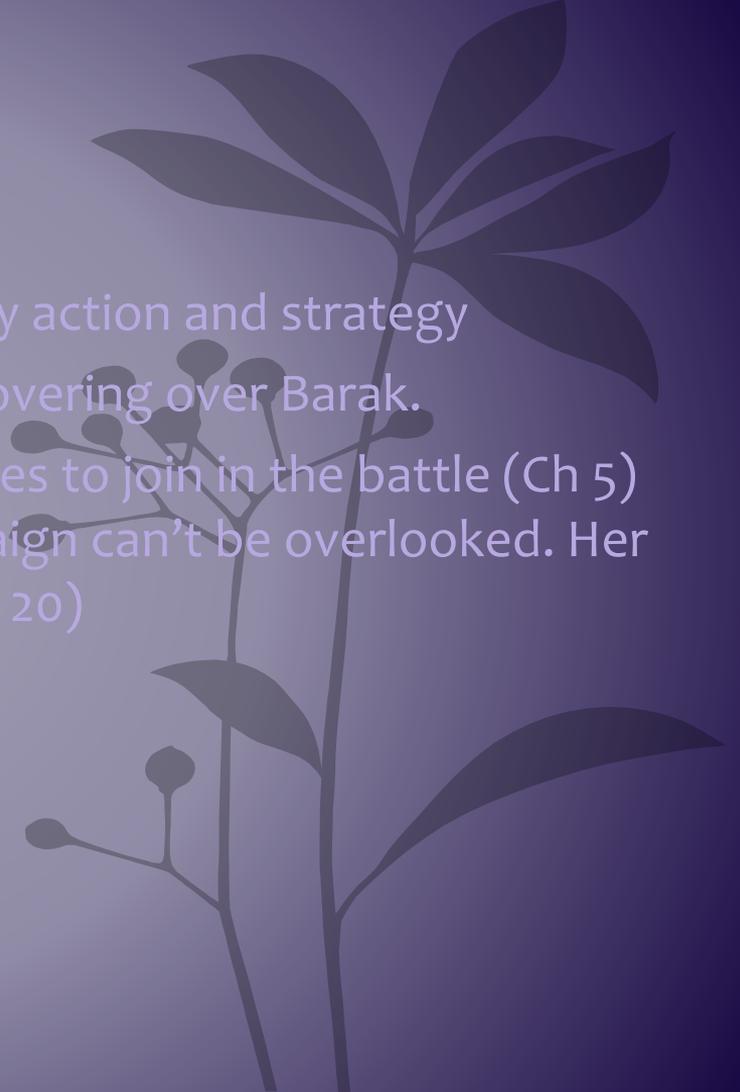
## v10

<sup>10</sup> He summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh, and ten thousand men marched out behind him. Deborah marched out with him too.

- Barak understood he would not get the credit ( something bigger at stake)
  - Accepted Deborah's honesty.
- Followed Deborah's instructions specifically.
  - Was prepared to sacrifice with her.

## V14 (a)

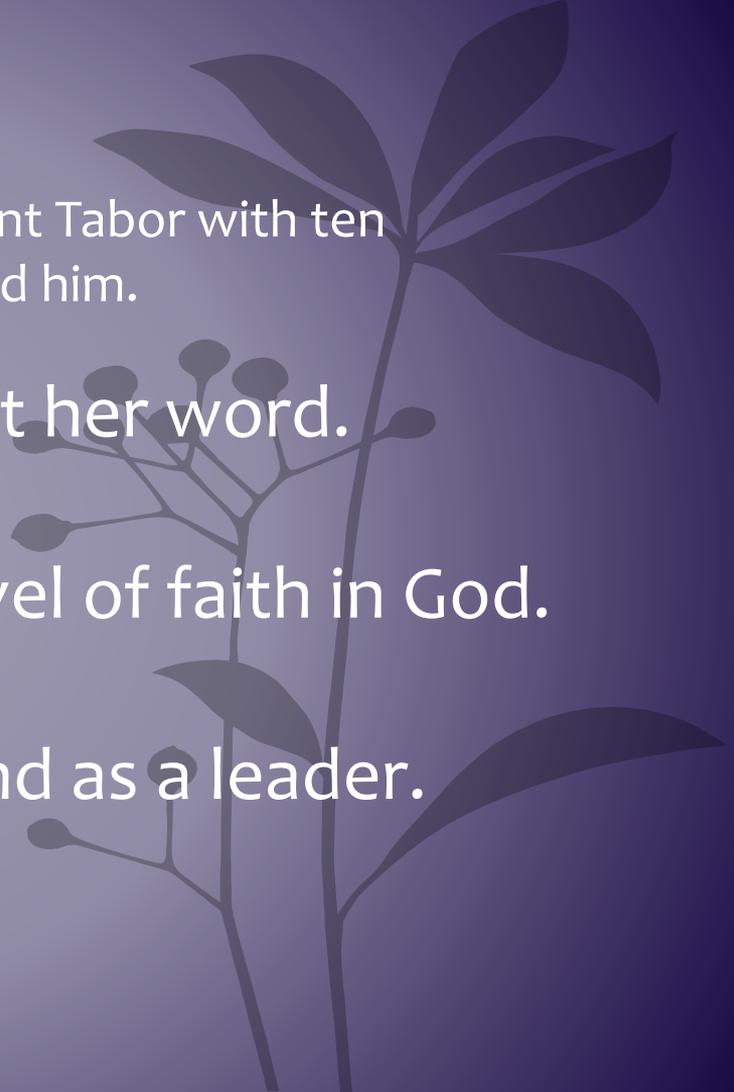
- Deborah is clearly in command of the military action and strategy
- Deborah is invoking God's presence and covering over Barak.
- Deborah had the ability to bring in other tribes to join in the battle (Ch 5)  
Deborah's involvement in the military campaign can't be overlooked. Her presence brought Divine intervention (5:4-5; 20)



## V14 (b)

So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men behind him.

- Barak took Deborah at her word.
- Barak experienced a new level of faith in God.
- Barak grows as a man and as a leader.



# Deborah's Song: Judges 5:31 (c)

At that time, Deborah and Barak, Abinoam's son,  
sang: Jud 5:1

And the land had rest for forty years.

