

LENT I - Wednesday, February 21, 2024

*A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church Year B*  
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### **Judges 5**

<sup>24</sup> [Deborah sang:] “Most blessed of women be Jael,  
the wife of Heber the Kenite,  
of tent-dwelling women most blessed.

<sup>25</sup> He asked water and she gave him milk,  
in a princely bowl she brought him curds.

<sup>26</sup> She put her hand to the tent peg  
and her right hand to the laborer’s hammer;  
she struck Sisera a blow,  
she destroyed his head,  
she shattered and pierced his temple.

<sup>27</sup> Between her legs he collapsed,  
he fell, he lay still;  
between her legs he collapsed;  
where he collapsed, there he fell utterly destroyed.

<sup>28</sup> “Out of the window she peered,  
the mother of Sisera cried through the lattice:  
‘Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
Why so late the hoofbeats of his chariots?’

<sup>29</sup> The wisest of her royal women her answer,  
indeed, she turns and speaks to herself:

<sup>30</sup> ‘Are they not finding and dividing the spoil?

—

Woman-flesh, one or two for each soldier;  
spoil of dyed cloth for Sisera,  
spoil of dyed cloth embroidered,  
two pieces of dyed work embroidered for my neck as spoil.’

<sup>31</sup> “Thus may they be eradicated, all your enemies, DREAD GOD!  
But may those who love you be like the sun as it rises in its might.  
And the land was quieted for forty years.

### **Psalms 25**

<sup>1</sup> To you, RIGHTEOUS ONE, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup> My God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame, let not my enemies exult over me.

<sup>3</sup> Even more, let not those who hope in you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are treacherous [and] empty.

<sup>4</sup> Make known to me your ways, AGELESS GOD; teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup> Guide me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

<sup>6</sup> Remember your maternal love, O WOMB OF LIFE, and your faithful love, for they have been from of old.

<sup>7</sup> The sins of my youth and my transgressions remember not; according to your faithful love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, GRACIOUS ONE.

## Romans 12

<sup>14</sup> Bless the ones who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with the ones who rejoice, weep with the ones who weep. <sup>16</sup> With one another, be harmonious; be not arrogant, but associate with the humble. Do not make yourselves [out] to be wiser than you are. <sup>17</sup> Evil for evil you shall not repay anyone; consider before time what is good in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If possible from your ability, with every human person, live in peace. <sup>19</sup> Do not avenge yourselves beloved; rather leave space for the wrath [of God]; for it is written, *“To me belongs vengeance; I will repay, says the Holy One.”* <sup>20</sup> No, *“If your enemy hungers, feed them; if they thirst, give them something to drink; for by so doing, burning coals shall you heap on their head.”* <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil rather, overcome evil with good.

## Mark 6

<sup>14</sup> Now King Herod heard of [the teaching of Jesus], for Jesus’s name had become known and some were saying, “John the baptizer has been raised from the dead and that is why these powers work through him.” <sup>15</sup> Yet others said, “It is Elijah” while others said, “It is a prophet, like one of the prophets [of old].” <sup>16</sup> But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”

<sup>17</sup> For Herod himself had sent men who seized John and bound him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, for Herod had married her. <sup>18</sup> For John had told Herod, “It is not right for you to have your brother’s wife.” <sup>19</sup> Now Herodias had a grudge against him and she wanted to kill him. But she could not. <sup>20</sup> This was because Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous man and a holy man and he protected him and listened to him, though greatly perplexed; yet it pleased him to listen to him.

<sup>21</sup> Now an opportune time came on Herod’s birthday when he gave a banquet for his courtiers and commanders and for the leaders of Galilee. <sup>22</sup> And Herod’s daughter Herodias came in and danced, pleasing Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you.” <sup>23</sup> And he swore to her repeatedly, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.” <sup>24</sup> And she went out and said to her mother, “What should I ask?” She replied, “The head of John the baptizer.” <sup>25</sup> Immediately she returned to the king with haste and asked, saying, “I want immediately for you to give me on a platter the head of John the baptizer.” <sup>26</sup> The king was deeply sorry, yet because of his oaths and the guests, he did not want to refuse her. <sup>27</sup> Immediately the king sent a soldier under orders to bring John’s head. And he went and beheaded him in the prison. <sup>28</sup> And he brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl and the girl gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup> When John’s disciples heard, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

### Text Notes

In Judges 5:30 the noun rendered as *woman-flesh* is the term for a female reproductive organ and should be understood as a profane term or a slur in that context though it is the normative term for womb.

To “wait” in Psalm 25:5 also includes hoping; the psalmist waits with expectation. God’s maternal love in verse 6 emanates from her womb, which provides the grammatical root for this love.

Romans 12:19 quotes Deuteronomy 32:35 in part by corresponding to the first phrase in Hebrew then loosely following a combination of the LXX and MT. Verse 20 quotes Proverbs 25:21–22, following LXX nearly exactly; the sole divergence is the word used for “hunger.”