

# The Lord's battle is our victory.



# Deborah

The fourth of the judges who ruled over the Jewish people after the death of Joshua, was not a man, but a woman, one of the most famous of all times, the Prophetess **Deborah**.

Deborah means “a bee Science confirms the ancient belief that, of all the animal kingdom, the bee ranks among the highest in intelligence” says Mary Hallet. “So Deborah stands out as among the wisest of all the Old Testament women.”



- She was leading Israel at that time. She would sit (i.e., give legal counsel) under the Palm Tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country Ephraim, the Israelites would come up to her to have their disputes settled.”
- She was a prophetess and probably a wife. She was a “**mother in Israel**” A title indicating that the nation looked to Deborah for leadership as **the nation’s mother**. What a woman.

- **Judges 4:1-24 (HCSB)**

<sup>1</sup> The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud had died.

<sup>2</sup> So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his forces was Sisera who lived in Harosheth of the Nations.

<sup>3</sup> Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, because Jabin had 900 iron chariots, and he harshly oppressed them 20 years.

<sup>4</sup> Deborah, a woman who was a prophetess and the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

<sup>5</sup> It was her custom to sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her for judgment.



**Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.**

- <sup>6</sup> She summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “Hasn’t the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded [you]: ‘Go, deploy [the troops] on Mount Tabor, and take with you 10,000 men from the Naphtalites and Zebulunites?  
<sup>7</sup> Then I will lure Sisera commander of Jabin’s forces, his chariots, and his army at the Wadi Kishon [to fight] against you, and I will hand him over to you.’”  
<sup>8</sup> Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, I will go. But if you will not go with me, I will not go.”  
<sup>9</sup> “I will go with you,” she said, “but you will receive no honor on the road you are about to take, because the LORD will sell Sisera into a woman’s hand.”



- So Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh.  
<sup>10</sup> Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; 10,000 men followed him, and Deborah also went with him.  
<sup>11</sup> Now Heber the Kenite had moved away from the Kenites, the sons of Hobab, Moses' father-in-law, and pitched his tent beside the oak tree of Zaananim, which was near Kedesh.  
<sup>12</sup> It was reported to Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up Mount Tabor.  
<sup>13</sup> Sisera summoned all his 900 iron chariots and all the people who were with him from Harosheth of the Nations to the Wadi Kishon.  
<sup>14</sup> Then Deborah said to Barak, "Move on, for this is the day the LORD has handed Sisera over to you. Hasn't the LORD gone before you?" So Barak came down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.



- <sup>15</sup> The LORD threw Sisera, all his charioteers, and all his army into confusion with the sword before Barak. Sisera left his chariot and fled on foot.  
<sup>16</sup> Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth of the Nations, and the whole army of Sisera fell by the sword; not a single man was left.  
<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite.



- <sup>18</sup> Jael went out to greet Sisera and said to him, “Come in, my lord. Come in with me. Don’t be afraid.” So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a rug.

<sup>19</sup> He said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink for I am thirsty.” She opened a container of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him [again].

<sup>20</sup> Then he said to her, “Stand at the entrance to the tent. If a man comes and asks you, ‘Is there a man here?’ say, ‘No.’”

<sup>21</sup> While he was sleeping from exhaustion, Heber’s wife Jael took a tent peg, grabbed a hammer, and went silently to Sisera. She hammered the peg into his temple and drove it into the ground, and he died.

<sup>22</sup> When Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to greet him and said to him, “Come and I will show you the man you are looking for.” So he went in with her, and there was Sisera lying dead with a tent peg through his temple!





- As a prophetess “Deborah sent for Barak whose name means “lightning bolt” (4:6–7): son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’”

Here's **Barak's** response to the Lord's command: Barak said to her, "If you go with me my sister I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go" am scared (v. 8).

**Barak** had faith, but with hesitancy. In response to God's command, he said, "I'll obey if. . ." Yet Deborah didn't abandon Barak for his lack of faith.

Rather, she accompanied him and gave him strength in accomplishing God's purpose. Here is a great example of a man and woman partnering as they obey the commands of God.

Think of someone in your life whose faith you can bolster by your presence. And what can you do to encourage such individuals?

# Barak

This man Barak was the most influential man in Israel then, He was probably the strongest man in Israel at that time. Would you listen to him the strongest man in Israel. “Deborah my sister if you go with me , I will go but if you don’t go with me am not going am scared to go alone.”

Barak refused to undertake this task by himself, knowing well that only the help of God and the inspiration of the prophetess Deborah could succeed in the hopeless odds against the iron chariots and cavalry of Sisera.

Deborah agreed to accompany him, but she warned him that although he would gain victory, the glory would not be his, but a woman's.

# This is a women's story

- The changes of appearance which the prophetess Deborah undergoes, from immobile judge sitting under a palm tree to active leader, rising up and inspiring her people to victory in a typically masculine way. The epithet *mother in Israel*, this is a women's story),



Deborah has the unique distinction of being not only the one female judge in the book, nor the only judge referred to as a prophet(ess) (4:4), but also the only leader in the entire Book of Judges whom we actually see judging the people.

The text paints a picturesque scene of the children of Israel coming up to her for judgment as she *used to sit under the Palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim* (4:5).

When we first meet her Deborah is described as sitting , gives the impression of being static, unmoving, and passive, while the Israelites come up to her to receive judgment.

# The lessons

- Many lessons can be learned from the life of Deborah. She acknowledged that her strength came from the Lord. Rather than taking pride in her own abilities, she relied on God for wisdom and leadership ability.

Deborah used her abilities to serve. She showed no selfishness in the use of her God-given abilities to judge Israel or to prophecy. Rather, she focused on helping the people of Israel improve their lives, honor God, and find freedom from their oppressors.

Deborah offers a bold and powerful role model for women today. Deborah had courage to face the enemy, even after 20 years of oppression. Her courage was contagious, and Barak was able to fulfill his God-given duty with Deborah's support. Her courage became encouragement.

Though the Bible's record of Deborah's life is brief, her impact was great. Her leadership and obedience to God's Word resulted in a changed nation for an entire generation. Those who study her life will find a role model of godly faith, boldness, wisdom, and worship.



When you know what God wants you to do, but you tell Him, “I’ll obey, if. . .” you’ve put conditions on your obedience. And when you put conditions on your obedience, God doesn’t lose—you do.

when Deborah warned Barak that his conditional obedience would mean that the glory for defeating Sisera would go to a woman (4:9), we might assume she’s referring to herself getting the glory for going with Barak. But Deborah was not speaking of herself at all.

# Jael

She was actually prophesying Sisera's death at the hands of tent-peg-wielding Jael, another heroine in the story. At the time, pitching tents was "women's work," and Jael used what she had to serve God. She didn't act in a traditionally womanly way by nailing the skull of God's enemy to the floor,

God is more concerned with our conforming to His will and being zealous for His purposes than in our conformity to some socially constructed gender custom.



- When Sisera realized his defeat, he quickly descended from his chariot and fled on foot. Seeking a place to hide, he chanced upon the tent of Heber the Kenite, who was a descendant of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Heber had been on good terms with Jabin, the king of Hazor, the ruler of the Canaanites, and Sisera was only too happy to accept the invitation of Jael, Heber's wife, to bide him in the house until the Jewish army would have passed.

- When Sisera asks Jael for some water and she pours him milk instead, we cannot help but think of a mother comforting her child, giving him milk, silencing him to sleep.<sup>8</sup> What happens next She Cautiously approached the sleeping warrior drove a long nail, a tent-pin, through his temple, thus putting an end to the hated oppressor.

In the meantime Barak had arrived at the house of Heber, in hot pursuit of Sisera.

Jael came out to meet him and greeted him with these words: Come and I will show you the man you are looking for." So he went in with her, and there was Sisera cruel general lying dead with a tent peg through his temple!

Thus Deborah's predictions came true: the highest glory of the victory belonged to a woman, not to Barak, and Deborah herself glorified the brave Jael in the immortal "Song of Deborah."



Life is filled with giants that are bigger than we. But when faced with challenges it's comforting to know that the outcome doesn't depend on us. Of course, we must be obedient and do our part. Whatever skills or gifts that God has given us must be used. But having put forth our best efforts, we can be assured that God will be the One who ultimately determines the battle's outcome.

Rest in the knowledge that the battle is the Lord's. He is the One who gives the victory and  
The Lord's battle is our victory.

- **Joshua 5:13-14 (HCSB)**

<sup>13</sup> When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua approached Him and asked, “Are You for us or for our enemies?”

<sup>14</sup> “Neither,” He replied. “I have now come as commander of the LORD’s army.” Then Joshua bowed with his face to the ground in worship and asked Him, “What does my Lord want to say to His servant?”

- Deborah knew that the commander of the LORD’s army is already there. **THE BATTLE IS THE LORD’S**

- **Revelation 12:10-11 (HCSB)**

<sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: The salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of **His Messiah** have now come, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown out: the one who accuses them before our God day and night.

<sup>11</sup> **They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony, for they did not love their lives in the face of death.

# Women's story Deborah & Jael



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