

Deborah and Barak

“God will not give His Spirit to those who make no use of the heavenly gift. But those who are drawn out of and away from themselves, seeking to enlighten, encourage, and bless others, will have increased ability and energy to expend. The more light they give, the more they receive.” —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 319.

SUNDAY

1. After Ehud passed away, what did the Israelites do? How long did this deplorable situation continue?

JUDGES 4:1-3 *And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead. ²And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. ³And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.*

“The Israelites, having again separated themselves from God by idolatry, were grievously oppressed by [their] enemies. The property and even the lives of the people were in constant danger. Hence the villages and lonely dwellings were deserted, and the people congregated in the walled cities. The highroads were unoccupied, and the people went from place to place by unfrequented byways. At the places for drawing water, many were robbed and even murdered, and to add to their distress, the Israelites were unarmed. Among forty thousand men, not a sword or a spear could be found.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 37.

MONDAY

DEBORAH, A COURAGEOUS WOMAN

2. While the people suffered under such horrible conditions, whom did Deborah, the prophetess and judge, call to help? What great task did she ask him to carry out?

JUDGES 4:4-7 *And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. ⁵And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. ⁶And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? ⁷And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.*

"For twenty years, the Israelites groaned under the yoke of the oppressor; then they turned from their idolatry, and with humiliation and repentance cried unto the Lord for deliverance. They did not cry in vain. There was dwelling in Israel a woman illustrious for her piety, and through her the Lord chose to deliver His people. Her name was Deborah. She was known as a prophetess, and in the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had sought to her for counsel and justice." –*Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

TUESDAY

3. On what condition did Barak agree to assume the task? Whom did he call to help him against the oppressor?

JUDGES 4:8-10 *And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. ⁹And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. ¹⁰And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.*

"Barak knew the scattered, disheartened, and unarmed condition of the Hebrews, and the strength and skill of their enemies. Although he had been designated by the Lord Himself as the one chosen to deliver Israel, and had received the assurance that God would go with him and subdue their enemies, yet he was timid and distrustful. He accepted the message from Deborah as the word of God, but he had little confidence in Israel, and feared that they would not obey his call. He refused to engage in such a doubtful undertaking unless Deborah would accompany him, and thus support his efforts by her influence and counsel....

"The Lord communicated to Deborah His purpose to destroy the enemies of Israel, and bade her send for a man named Barak ... and make known to him the instructions which she had received. She accordingly sent for Barak, and directed him to assemble ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and make war upon the armies of King Jabin." –*Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

WEDNESDAY

GENERAL SISERA DEPLOYED HIS CHARIOTS

4. Aware of the challenge, whom did Sisera bring together, believing that he would be victorious over the subjugated Israelites?

JUDGES 4:11-13 *Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh. ¹²And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. ¹³And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.*

"Barak now marshaled an army of ten thousand men, and marched to Mount Tabor, as the Lord had directed. Sisera immediately assembled an immense and well-equipped force, expecting to surround the Hebrews

and make them an easy prey. The Israelites were but poorly prepared for an encounter, and looked with terror upon the vast armies spread out in the plain beneath them, equipped with all the implements of warfare, and provided with the dreaded chariots of iron. These were so constructed as to be terribly destructive. Large, scythe-like knives were fastened to the axles, so that the chariots, being driven through the ranks of the enemy, would cut them down like wheat before the sickle." –*Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

THURSDAY

5. Through the prophetess Deborah, what command did the Lord give to Barak? Who actually defeated the general Sisera and his armies?

JUDGES 4:14-16 *And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. ¹⁵And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. ¹⁶But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.*

"The Israelites had established themselves in a strong position in the mountains to await a favorable opportunity for an attack. Encouraged by Deborah's assurance that the very day had come for signal victory, Barak led his army down into the open plain, and boldly made a charge upon the enemy. The God of battle fought for Israel and neither skill in warfare, nor superiority of numbers and equipment, could withstand them. The hosts of Sisera were panic-stricken.... God alone could have discomfited the enemy, and the victory could be ascribed to Him alone." –*Reflecting Christ*, p. 329.

FRIDAY

6. Completely defeated, where did Sisera seek refuge and relief? Who was Jael?

JUDGES 4:11, 17-20 *Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.... ¹⁷Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. ¹⁹And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. ²⁰Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.*

"When Sisera saw that his army was defeated, he left his chariot, and endeavored to make his escape on foot, as a common soldier. Approaching the tent of Heber, one of the descendants of Jethro, the fugitive was

invited to find shelter there. In the absence of Heber, Jael, his wife, courteously offered Sisera a refreshing draught and opportunity for repose, and the weary general soon fell asleep." —*Daughters of God*, p. 38.

SABBATH

SISERA LOST THE BATTLE AND LIFE

7. What was the ignoble end of this warrior who fought against God and His people?

JUDGES 4:21-24 *Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. ²²And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples. ²³So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. ²⁴And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.*

"Jael was at first ignorant of the character of her guest, and she resolved to conceal him; but when she afterward learned that he was Sisera, the enemy of God and of His people, her purpose changed. As he lay before her asleep, she overcame her natural reluctance to such an act, and slew him by driving a nail through his temples, pinning him to the earth. As Barak, in pursuit of his enemy, passed that way, he was called in by Jael to behold the vain-glorious captain dead at his feet—slain by the hand of a woman." —*Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1881.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"A soul united with Christ, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, in accepting and living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God will war against all transgression and every approach of sin. He becomes every day more like a bright and shining light, and more victorious. He goes on from strength to strength, not from weakness to weakness." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 441.