

# Deborah and Barak

**Key Verse:** “*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.*”  
—Judges 4:9

**Selected Scripture:**  
**Judges 4:1-24**

wisdom, integrity, and courage. Having taken stock of Israel's deplorable state under the oppression of the Canaanites, Deborah sought out the warrior Barak. She said to 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? And I will draw unto thee . . . Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.”—vss. 6,7

**AFTER ENJOYING AN** eighty-year period of peace and blessing due to the efforts of Ehud, Israel faltered and turned again to idolatry. Persecution by the Canaanites at the hands of King Jabin and his captain Sisera came upon Israel due to their unfaithfulness. In God's providence, however, a godly woman was raised to a position of leadership. She was Deborah, a prophetess and judge of Israel.

Deborah's counsel was sought as she sat “under the palm tree . . . in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.” (Judg. 4:5) She was a woman of tremendous

Barak had heard this message before, but had failed to do anything about it. Now, at the encouragement of Deborah, it was time to act. Barak still hesitated, though the Word of the Lord should have been sufficient to stimulate his faith and embolden his leadership. He said to Deborah, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go." (vs. 8) Barak's hesitation demonstrated a weakness in his faith. As a result, in the challenge facing him, he suffered the loss of the full glory of victory, and the blessing and honor that God desired to bestow on him. Deborah declared, as stated in our Key Verse, that she would go with Barak, but that the resulting victory and honor would not be fully his.

The battle against Sisera, his army and nine hundred chariots was a complete rout. God gave them into the hands of Barak just as he had promised. Sisera abandoned his chariot and tried to escape on foot. The Lord arranged for another courageous woman of Israel to be waiting for him. Jael, the wife of Heber, invited Sisera, now a fugitive, to take shelter in her tent. She gave him milk to drink, a sleep aid, and covered him up.—vss. 13-19

Weary from the battle, Sisera fell into a deep sleep. Jael resolutely grabbed a tent stake in one hand and a hammer in the other. She went into the tent where Israel's enemy and oppressor slept, and drove the stake through his temple and into the ground. (vss. 21,22) Israel's victory was now complete, and as Deborah had prophesied, Sisera fell at "the hand of a woman."

Deborah and Barak teach us great lessons from two different perspectives. When God commands us, we should be swift to render obedience. Deborah was faithful and firmly resolved to do God's will. She received a great blessing, being made an example of faith in God's Word. Barak's experience teaches us that God can give us the victory, even when we are weak in faith. ■