

## Canaanite Oppression (c. 1279 – c. 1259 BC)

Judges 4:1–3

1 And again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of Yahweh, and Ehud died.

2 So Yahweh sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army *was* Sisera, and he *was* living in Harosheth Haggoyim.

3 And the Israelites cried to Yahweh, as he *had* nine hundred iron chariots, and he oppressed the Israelites cruelly for twenty years.

## Rest Under Deborah and Barak (c. 1259 – c. 1219 BC)

Judges 4:4–5:31

### Deborah as Judge

4:4 Now at that time Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, *was* judging Israel.

5 And she used 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.

6 She sent and called for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh Naphtali and said to him, “Has not Yahweh the God of Israel commanded you? ‘Go, march to Mount Tabor, and take ten thousand men from the descendants of Naphtali and Zebulun.

7 I will draw out Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and troops, to the wadi of Kishon, and I will give him into your hand.’”

8 Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you do not go with me, I will not go.”

9 She said, “Surely I will go with you; however, there will be no glory for you in the path you are taking, for Yahweh will sell Sisera into *the* hand of a woman.” And Deborah stood up and went with Barak to Kedesh.

### The Battle Between Barak and Sisera

10 Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and they went up behind him, ten thousand men, and Deborah went up with him.

11 And Heber the Kenite *was* separated from *the other* Kenites, *that is*, from the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses. And he was encamped at Elon-bezaananim, which *is* near Kedesh.

12 When they reported to Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor,

13 Sisera summoned all his chariots—all nine hundred chariots of iron—and the entire army that *was* with him from Harosheth Haggoyim to the wadi of Kishon.

14 And Deborah said to Barak, “Get up! This *is* the day that Yahweh has given Sisera into your hand. Has Yahweh not gone out before you?” So Barak went out from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

15 And Yahweh threw Sisera and all his chariots and army into confusion before the edge of Barak’s sword; and Sisera dismounted from *his* chariot and fled on foot.

16 But Barak pursued after the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim, and all of Sisera’s army fell to the edge of the sword; no one was left.

### Jael Kills Sisera

17 Sisera 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 house of Heber the Kenite.

18 And Jael came out to meet Sisera, and she said to him, “Turn aside, my lord; turn aside to me and do not be afraid.” So he turned aside into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

19 And he said to her, “Please, give me a drink of water, because I am thirsty.” So she opened a skin vessel of milk and gave him a drink and covered him.

20 And he said to her, “Stand *at* the doorway of the tent, and if anyone comes and asks you, and says, ‘Is there anyone here?’ You must answer, ‘No.’”

21 But Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, took in her hand a tent peg and a hammer, and she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went through into the ground; he *was* fast asleep since he was exhausted, and he died.

22 And behold, Barak *was* pursuing Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him, and she said to him, “Come, and I will show you the man whom you *are* seeking.” And he came with her and saw that Sisera was lying dead with the peg in his temple.

23 On that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites.

24 And the hand of the Israelites pressed harder and harder on Jabin king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

### Deborah and Barak’s Song

5:1 And Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang on that day:

2 “When long hair hangs loosely in Israel,  
when the people willingly offer themselves,

- bless Yahweh!
- 3 Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!  
I will sing to Yahweh;  
I will sing praise to Yahweh,  
the God of Israel.
- 4 Yahweh, when you went down from Seir,  
when you marched from the region of Edom,  
the earth trembled, the heavens poured down,  
the clouds poured down water.
- 5 The mountains trembled before Yahweh,  
this Sinai, at the presence of Yahweh, the God of Israel.
- 6 “In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,  
in the days of Jael, the caravans had ceased,  
the travelers, they kept to the byways.
- 7 The warriors ceased;  
they failed to appear in Israel,  
until I, Deborah, arose;  
I arose *as* a mother in Israel.
- 8 God chose new *leaders*,  
then war *was at the gates*;  
a small shield or a spear was not seen  
among forty thousand in Israel.
- 9 My heart *goes out* to the commanders of Israel,  
those offering themselves willingly among the people;  
bless Yahweh!
- 10 The riders of white female donkeys,  
*those* sitting on saddle blankets,  
and *those* going on *the way*, talk about it!
- 11 At the sound of *those* dividing *the sheep*  
among the watering places,  
there they will recount the righteous deeds of Yahweh,  
the righteous deeds for his warriors in Israel.  
Then the people of Yahweh went down to the gates.
- 12 “Wake up, wake up, Deborah!  
Wake up, wake up, sing a song!  
Get up, Barak!  
Take captive your captives, O son of Abinoam.
- 13 Then *the* remnant went down to *the* nobles;  
the people of Yahweh went down for him against *the* mighty.
- 14 From Ephraim *is* their root into Amalek,  
after you, Benjamin, with your family;  
from Makir *the* commanders went down,  
and from Zebulun *those* carrying *the* scepter  
of *the* military commander.
- 15 And the chiefs in Issachar *were* with Deborah;  
and Issachar likewise *was with* Barak;  
into the valley he was sent to get him from behind.  
Among the clans of Reuben  
*were* great decisions of the heart.
- 16 Why do you sit among the sheepfolds,  
to hear *the* calling sounds of the herds?  
For the clans of Reuben,  
*there were* great searchings of the heart.
- 17 Gilead has remained beyond the Jordan.  
Why did Dan dwell as a foreigner *with* ships?  
Asher sat at *the* coast of *the* waters,  
and by his coves he has been settling down.
- 18 Zebulun *is* a people who scorned death,

- and Naphtali, on the heights of *the* field.
- 19 “The kings came, they fought;  
then the kings of Canaan fought;  
at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo,  
they got no plunder in silver.
- 20 The stars fought from heaven;  
from their courses they fought against Sisera.
- 21 The wadi torrent of Kishon swept them away,  
the raging wadi torrent,  
the wadi torrent of Kishon.  
March on, my soul, *with* strength!
- 22 “Then the hooves of the horse beat loudly,  
because of galloping, galloping of his stallions.
- 23 ‘Curse Meroz,’ says the angel of Yahweh;  
‘curse bitterly its inhabitants,  
because they did not come to the help of Yahweh,  
to the help of Yahweh against the mighty.’
- 24 “Most blessed of women is Jael,  
the wife of Heber the Kenite;  
most blessed is she of women among tent dwellers.
- 25 He asked for water, *and* she gave milk;  
in a drinking bowl for nobles, she brought curds.
- 26 She reached out her hand to the peg,  
and her right hand for the workman’s hammer;  
and she struck Sisera, crushed his head,  
and she shattered and pierced his temple.
- 27 Between her feet he sank, he fell, he lay.  
Between her feet he sank down, he fell;  
Where he sank down, there he fell—dead.
- 28 “Through the window she looked down;  
the mother of Sisera cried out through the lattice,  
‘Why is his chariot delayed in coming?  
Why do the hoof beats of his chariot tarry?’
- 29 The wisest of her ladies answer her;  
she also answers the question herself:
- 30 ‘Are they not finding and dividing the plunder?  
A bedmate or two bedmates for every man;  
colorful garments for Sisera,  
plunder of colorful garments,  
beautifully finished colorful garments,  
on the neck of the plunderer?’
- 31 So may all your enemies perish, O Yahweh,  
but those who love him are like the rising sun at its brightest.”

And the land had rest for forty years.

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