

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

Judges 4:1–3

- 1 Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died.
 2 And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; and the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim.
 3 The sons of Israel cried to the LORD; for he had nine hundred iron chariots, and he oppressed the sons of Israel severely for twenty years.

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

Judges 4:4–5:31

Deborah as Judge

- 4:4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.
 5 She used to sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment.
 6 Now she sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, “Behold, the LORD, the God of Israel, has commanded, ‘Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun.
 7 I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his many *troops* to the river Kishon, and I will give him into your hand.’”
 8 Then Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.”
 9 She said, “I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the honor shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.” Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.

The Battle Between Barak and Sisera

- 10 Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh, and ten thousand men went up with him; Deborah also went up with him.
 11 Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, from the sons of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaananim, which is near Kedesh.
 12 Then they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor.
 13 Sisera called together all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all the people who *were* with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon.
 14 Deborah said to Barak, “Arise! For this is the day in which the LORD has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the LORD has gone out before you.” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.
 15 The LORD routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot.
 16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not even one was left.

Jael Kills Sisera

- 17 Now Sisera fled away on foot 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.
 18 Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my master, turn aside to me! Do not be afraid.” And he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug.
 19 He said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a bottle of milk and gave him a drink; then she covered him.
 20 He said to her, “Stand in the doorway of the tent, and it shall be if anyone comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there anyone here?’ that you shall say, ‘No.’”
 21 But Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and seized a hammer in her hand, and went secretly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went through into the ground; for he was sound asleep and exhausted. So he died.
 22 And behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said to him, “Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking.” And he entered with her, and behold Sisera was lying dead with the tent peg in his temple.
 23 So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the sons of Israel.
 24 The hand of the sons of Israel pressed heavier and heavier upon Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin the king of Canaan.

Deborah and Barak’s Song

- 5:1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying,

- 2 “That the leaders led in Israel,
That the people volunteered,
Bless the LORD!
- 3 “Hear, O kings;
give ear, O rulers!
I—to the LORD, I will sing,
I will sing praise to the LORD, the God of Israel.
- 4 “LORD, when You went out from Seir,
When You marched from the field of Edom,
The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped,
Even the clouds dripped water.
- 5 “The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD,
This Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel.
- 6 “In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the highways were deserted,
And travelers went by roundabout ways.
- 7 “The peasantry ceased, they ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Until I arose, a mother in Israel.
- 8 “New gods were chosen;
Then war *was* in the gates.
Not a shield or a spear was seen
Among forty thousand in Israel.
- 9 “My heart *goes out* to the commanders of Israel,
The volunteers among the people;
Bless the LORD!
- 10 “You who ride on white donkeys,
You who sit on *rich* carpets,
And you who travel on the road—sing!
- 11 “At the sound of those who divide *flocks* among the watering places,
There they shall recount the righteous deeds of the LORD,
The righteous deeds for His peasantry in Israel.
Then the people of the LORD went down to the gates.
- 12 “Awake, awake, Deborah;
Awake, awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak, and take away your captives, O son of Abinoam.
- 13 “Then survivors came down to the nobles;
The people of the LORD came down to me as warriors.
- 14 “From Ephraim those whose root is in Amalek *came down*,
Following you, Benjamin, with your peoples;
From Machir commanders came down,
And from Zebulun those who wield the staff of office.
- 15 “And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah;
As *was* Issachar, so *was* Barak;
Into the valley they rushed at his heels;
Among the divisions of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.
- 16 “Why did you sit among the sheepfolds,
To hear the piping for the flocks?
Among the divisions of Reuben
There were great searchings of heart.
- 17 “Gilead remained across the Jordan;
And why did Dan stay in ships?
Asher sat at the seashore,
And remained by its landings.
- 18 “Zebulun *was* a people who despised their lives *even* to death,
And Naphtali also, on the high places of the field.
- 19 “The kings came *and* fought;

- Then fought the kings of Canaan
At Taanach near the waters of Megiddo;
They took no plunder in silver.
- 20 “The stars fought from heaven,
From their courses they fought against Sisera.
- 21 “The torrent of Kishon swept them away,
The ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength.
- 22 “Then the horses’ hoofs beat
From the dashing, the dashing of his valiant steeds.
- 23 ‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the LORD,
‘Utterly curse its inhabitants;
Because they did not come to the help of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the warriors.’
- 24 “Most blessed of women is Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite;
Most blessed is she of women in the tent.
- 25 “He asked for water *and* she gave him milk;
In a magnificent bowl she brought him curds.
- 26 “She reached out her hand for the tent peg,
And her right hand for the workmen’s hammer.
Then she struck Sisera, she smashed his head;
And she shattered and pierced his temple.
- 27 “Between her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
Between her feet he bowed, he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell dead.
- 28 “Out of the window she looked and lamented,
The mother of Sisera through the lattice,
‘Why does his chariot delay in coming?
Why do the hoofbeats of his chariots tarry?’
- 29 “Her wise princesses would answer her,
Indeed she repeats her words to herself,
- 30 ‘Are they not finding, are they not dividing the spoil?
A maiden, two maidens for every warrior;
To Sisera a spoil of dyed work,
A spoil of dyed work embroidered,
Dyed work of double embroidery on the neck of the spoiler?’
- 31 “Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD;
But let those who love Him be like the rising of the sun in its might.”

And the land was undisturbed for forty years.

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