

Judges Chapter 4

Judges 4:1 "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead."

The removal of the zealous judge Ehud again left his infatuated countrymen without the restraint of religion. King Jabin oppresses Israel. His captain-general was Sisera (Judges 4:1-3). The prophetess Deborah from the Lord commands Barak to go out against him and promises victory. She herself marches with him (Judges 4:4 - 4:14). Sisera's army is beaten and he flees. Jael hides him in her tent, and while he sleeps she kills him (Judges 4:15-23). King Jabin is destroyed (Judges 4:24).

This is the very same pattern. The minute the Judge dies, Israel falls back into idolatry. Shamgar is not mentioned here. His act was just the one particular thing he did.

Verses 2-3: Israel's most formidable king was "Jabin". He and his general, "Sisera", had "nine hundred chariots of iron", the latest in military technology (1 Sam. 12:9; Psalms 83:9). Israel had neither chariots nor the ability to work with iron (1 Sam. 13:20-21).

Judges 4:2 "And 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."

Jabin king of Canaan; "Jabin," is a royal title.

This third oppression of "Israel" took place toward the end of the thirteenth century B.C. (ca. 1221-1201).

"Hazor" had recovered from its earlier defeat at the hands of Joshua and was again an important center of Canaanite concentration (compare Joshua 11:1-11; Judges 4:1-24).

"Jabin" was probably a hereditary title for the kings of Hazor.

We know there was another Hazor, mentioned (in Joshua chapter 11), which was destroyed by fire and Jabin was killed. It is highly unlikely that this is that same battle. There were no judges in the land at the time of that first happening. We do know that it is likely that another Jabin took the first one's name, and rebuilt the city by the same name. We are not doing a historical study here, so it is not that important to this particular study. We are doing a spiritual study.

Judges 4:3 "And 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 second Jabin built a new capital on the ruins of the old (Joshua 11:10-11). The northern Canaanites had recovered from the effect of their disastrous overthrow in the time of Joshua, and now triumphed in their turn over Israel. This was the severest oppression to which Israel had been subjected. But it fell heaviest on the tribes in the north, and it was not till after a grinding servitude of twenty years that they were awakened to view it as the punishment of their sins and to seek deliverance from God.

Mightily oppressed": The word "mightily" is rendered "sharply" in (Judges 8:1); "by force" in (1 Sam. 2:16).

"Chariots of iron" (Judges 1:19; Joshua 17:10). We may notice that as the children of Israel burnt these chariots at Misrephoth-maim (Joshua 11:8), they could not have been of solid iron throughout.

This was not a small army that came against Israel. The 900 chariots showed the strength of their army. God did not allow Israel to put their faith in chariots and horses. The truth of the matter is that Israel was not as strong physically as this army. Even at that, a war that lasts 20 years would really wear the people down.

Verses 4-10: "Deborah", the Jewish "prophetess", is the only judge of Israel that the text says people came to her for "judgment". Despite his name, "Barak" ("Lightning") was reluctant. Deborah was confident in God's word, God's will, God's work, and God's way.

Judges 4:4 "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time."

"Deborah, a prophetess": She was an unusual woman of wisdom and influence who did the tasks of a judge, except for military leadership. God can use women mightily for civil, religious or other tasks, e.g., Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14), Philip's daughters in prophesying (Acts 21:8-9), and Phoebe a deaconess (Rom. 16:1). Deborah's rise to such a role is the exception in the book because of Barak's failure to show the courage to lead courageously (verses 8, 14). God rebuked his cowardice by the pledge that a woman would slay Sisera (verse 9).

"Deborah" and Barak led an Israelite coalition to victory over the militarily superior Canaanite forces of Sisera in the Plain of Esdraelon. This was a strategic battle in the struggle for control of central and northern Palestine, after 20 years' oppression by Jabin, king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Deborah and Barak's army consisted of only 10,000, while Sisera had a multitude of fighters and nine hundred iron chariots. But God fought for Israel and they routed the enemy (verses 14-15, 23-24). Deborah performed legal and military duties in addition to being a prophetess. She was one of only four Old Testament women identified as a prophetess, and was the only female judge. After Barak refused to go into battle without Deborah, she gave a prophecy that another woman, Jael, fulfilled (verses 9, 21). The prose account is given (in chapter 4), and the poetical version (in chapter 5).

(Hebrews 11:32), lists Barak among the faithful (see Judges chapters 4 and 5).

Notice that Deborah was a prophetess, without her husband being a prophet. This dispels the idea that a prophetess is just a wife of a prophet. A prophet or a prophetess, is called of God. This does not mean that her husband, Lapidoth, was a weak person. The meaning of his name indicates the magnitude of his strength. "Lapidoth" means lightning strikes or torches. It is doubly unusual for her to be a judge as well. The office of judge is a call of God.

Judges 4:5 "And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment."

Her dwelling house was under a palm tree, or rather she sat under one, in the open air, when the people came to her with their cases. And it was called from hence after her name. Though some, as Abarbinel observes, think it was so called, because Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, was buried here. And which was near Beth-el, one of the places next mentioned (see Gen. 35:8).

"Between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim": Which places were in the tribe of Benjamin in the borders of Ephraim (see Joshua 16:2). The Jews conclude, from the situation of her, that she was a very opulent woman. The Targum is, "she was dwelling in a city in Ataroth". Deborah was supported of her own. She had palm trees in Jericho, orchards in Ramah, olives producing oil in the valley, a place of watering in Bethel, and "white dust in the kings mountain".

"And the children of Israel came up to her": From all parts of the land to the mount of Ephraim.

"For judgment": To have her advice and counsel in matters of difficulty. And to have causes between contending parties heard and decided by her, so that she might be truly reckoned among the judges.

This tree became known as the tree of Deborah, because she judged under this tree. This tells us something of the attitude of Deborah. She was not extremely proud, or she would have found some grand place to judge. Her name means "bee". She seems to be very humble however, because of her choice of location to judge.

Judges 4:6 "And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, 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?"

By virtue of that power which God had given her, and the people owned in her.

Kedesh-naphtali": So called, to distinguish it from other places of that name. One in Judah (Joshua 15:23), and another in Issachar (1 Chron. 6:72).

"Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded?" I.e. assuredly God hath commanded thee. This is not the fancy of a weak woman, which peradventure thou may despise, but the command of the great God by my mouth. Which command of God, and the following assurance of success, she

might either gather from the general rules of Scripture, and the common course of God's gracious providence. Which was always ready to succor them when they cried to God. Or receive by instinct or direction from God.

"Go and draw": Or, go; for so this word is often used (as Gen. 37:28 Judges 20:37 Job 21:33).

"Mount Tabor": A place most fit for his purpose, as being in the borders of different tribes, and having a large plain at the top of it. Where he might conveniently marshal and discipline his army.

She names "Naphtali" and "Zebulun"; partly, because they were nearest and best known to Barak, and therefore the soonest brought together. Partly, because they were nearest to the enemy, and therefore must speedily be assembled. Or else they were likely to be hindered in their design, whilst the other tribes, being at more distance, had better opportunity of gathering forces for their assistance. And partly, because these had most smarted under their oppressor, who was in the heart of their country, and therefore were most forward in the present service. But these are not named exclusively, as appears by the concurrence of some other tribes as is related (Jude 5).

Barak was to lead the men into battle against these heavily equipped enemies. Kadesh-naphtali is in the inheritance of Naphtali. Her statement "Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded", shows that she is speaking the words God has given her. These commands are from the LORD Himself. God has told her explicitly what to do, and she is passing this on to Barak.

Judges 4:7 "And 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."

The name "Sisera" is non-Semitic. He may have arrived in Canaan in connection with the great invasion of Aegean Sea peoples who confronted Pharaoh Merenptah in his fifth year (ca. 1229 B.C.).

In the natural, this would have been a frightening thing to do. The army of Jabin had many war weapons to bring to this battle. The LORD will fight for Israel in this battle because He gave the orders. They must have enough faith in God to do what He has commanded.

Judges 4:8 "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."

To Deborah, after she had delivered the words of the Lord unto him.

"If thou wilt go with me, then I will go": Which showed faith in the word of the Lord, for which he is commended. And a readiness to do the will of God, and courage to engage in such a work with a powerful adversary. And he is therefore reckoned among the heroes for faith (Heb. 11:32).

"But if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go": Which though it might discover some weakness in him, yet showed the high opinion he had of Deborah as a judge of Israel, and

prophetess of the Lord. Being desirous that he might have her with him to pray to God for him, to give him advice and counsel on any emergency, she being as the oracle God. And whereby he testified his regard to the Lord, and to his presence, which he concluded he should have, the prophetess being with him. And more especially his reason for insisting on her going with him might be to prevail upon the inhabitants of Naphtali and Zebulun to go with him, who he might fear would not believe him. Or pay any regard to his words, and be in dread of engaging with the enemy, unless she was present. Which he supposed would satisfy them as to the mind of God in it, and animate them, and give them heart and spirit.

God had not spoken directly to Barak, He had spoken to Deborah. Barak would have more faith in Deborah's message from God, if she had faith enough to go to the front line with him. He knew if God had really spoken to her, she would go.

Judges 4:9 "And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh."

Deborah was a prophetess; one instructed in Divine knowledge by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. She judged Israel as God's mouth to them; correcting abuses, and redressing grievances. By God's direction, she ordered Barak to raise an army, and engage Jabin's forces. Barak insisted much upon her presence. Deborah promised to go with him. She would not send him where she would not go herself. Those who in God's name call others to their duty, should be ready to assist them in it. Barak values the satisfaction of his mind, and the good success of his enterprise, more than mere honor.

Deborah does not deceive Barak, to get him to go. She tells him immediately that the honor for winning this battle will not go to him, but a woman. In the New Testament, Paul gives him credit for winning this battle however. Deborah believed the message God had given her and she goes to the front line with Barak.

Verses 10-16: The poetic account of this battle (in 5:19-22), reveals that God arrayed the forces of nature so that the chariots became mired in the "River of Kishon". "Discomfited" literally means "confused". This is another deliverance, like that at the Red Sea, where God won the victory and rescued His people (Exodus 14:19-28).

Judges 4:10 "And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him."

This he did either by the sound of a trumpet, as Ehud did, or by sending messengers to them to collect ten thousand men from among them. Which they accordingly did, and came to him in Kedesh.

"And he went up with ten thousand men at his feet": They following him up to Mount Tabor cheerfully and readily, being all footmen. For the Israelites had no cavalry, and yet got the victory over Sisera's army, which, according to Josephus, had ten thousand horses in it.

"And Deborah went up with him": And his ten thousand footmen, to the top of Mount Tabor, to encourage him and them with her presence. And give her best advice when to descend and engage the enemy.

Called in this, means that he gathered an army of ten thousand men out of Naphtali's and Zebulun's tribes. Deborah must be in the forefront of this battle for Barak's faith to be strong.

Judges 4:11 "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."

Read, "Heber the Kenite had severed himself from the Kenites which were of the children of Hobab," etc. "Unto the oak (or terebinth tree) in Zaanaim" (or Bitzaanaim, which Conder identifies with Bessum, twelve miles southeast of Tabor, and near Kedesh on the Sea of Galilee). This migration of Heber the Kenite, with a portion of his tribe, from the south of Judah to the north of Naphtali, perhaps caused by Philistine oppression, had clearly taken place recently. It is mentioned here to account for the subsequent narrative, but possibly also because the news of the great muster of the Israelites at Kedesh had been carried to Sisera by some of the tribe (Judges 4:12). Whose tents we are here informed were in the immediate neighborhood of Kedesh (see the note on 1:16).

In the time of Joshua, Heber had separated himself and settled near Kedesh.

Judges 4:12 "And they showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor."

Either some of the Canaanites that dwelt near Tabor, or some spies that Sisera had out. Though some think the Kenites told him, who were at peace with Jabin, (Judges 4:17). Yet whether out of good will or ill will cannot be said. However, it was ordered by the providence of God, that by some means or another Sisera should be informed.

"That Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to Mount Tabor": And no doubt at the same time he was told the number of men that went with him. From whence he might well conclude, that such a warlike man, with such a force collected together, and having posted himself in a high and strong mountain, must have some design to cause a revolt of Israel from Jabin his prince.

They reported to Sisera that Barak and an army of ten thousand have gone to Mount Tabor. We must remember in this that God has chosen the battle ground, and it was actually God who caused Heber to settle in this area. God had all of the plans, and knew exactly what would happen here.

Judges 4:13 "And 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."

Or "therefore" he gathered them together, which might lie some in one place, and some in another. For the better quartering of the men that belonged to them.

"Even nine hundred chariots of iron": And which, as before observed, are magnified by Josephus, and made to be three thousand.

"And all the people that were with him": His soldiers, Jabin's army, of which he was captain, and are called a multitude (Judges 4:7). And which, the above writer says, consisted of three hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand horses, besides the iron chariots. These he collected together, and brought with him.

"From Harosheth of the Gentiles": The place where he resided with his army (Judges 4:2).

"Unto the river of Kishon": Which was near Mount Tabor, the rendezvous of Barak and his men (see Judges 4:6).

This is a place large enough for all of the chariots. Possibly being near this river and at the foot of the mountain would cause them not to be able to maneuver them as they wished. God has chosen the spot.

Judges 4:14 "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."

Not go up higher for they were upon the top of a mountain. But rise, bestir thyself, prepare for battle. Put the army in rank and file, and march and meet the enemy without delay.

"For this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand": By a spirit of prophecy she knew this was the precise day, the exact time in which it was the will of God this deliverance should be wrought. And she speaks of it as if it was past, because of the certainty of it, and the full assurance she had of it, and Barak might have. Nor is what she says any contradiction to what she had said before, that Sisera should be sold or delivered into the hands of a woman (Judges 4:9). For both were true, Sisera first fell into the hands of Jael, a woman, and then into the hands of Barak, and into the hands of both on the same day.

"Is not the Lord gone out before thee?" It was manifest he was, at least to Deborah, who was fully assured of it, and therefore it became Barak and his men, and great encouragement they had, to follow. Since as the Lord went before them as their Generalissimo, they might be sure of victory. Perhaps there might be some visible appearance, some shining luster and splendor of the Shekinah, or divine Majesty. The Targum is, "is not the angel of the Lord gone out before thee, to prosper thee?"

"So Barak went from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him": No mention is made of Deborah's coming down with them, perhaps she stayed on the mountain till the battle was over. Nor might Barak be urgent upon her now to go with him, being confident of success, and having all the ends answered by her presence he could wish for.

Deborah encourages Barak that this will be a victory for Israel. God will go before them and they will win this battle. Deborah, through the inspiration of God, tells Barak this is the day. We know that she goes with Barak, because he refused to go without her.

Judges 4:15 "And 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."

The Lord discomfited Sisera, with great terror and noise, as the word signifies (Exodus 14:24; Joshua 10:10; 1 Sam. Chapter 10). Most probably with thunder, and lightning, and hailstones, or other such instruments of destruction poured upon them from heaven, as is sufficiently implied (Judges 5:20).

"With the edge of the sword": I.e. by the sword of Barak and his army, whose ministry God used. But so that they had little else to do but to kill these whom God by more powerful arms had put to flight.

"Fled away on his feet": That he might flee away more secretly and securely in the quality of a common soldier. Whereas his chariot would have exposed him to more observation and hazard.

This is interesting, because Barak's troops were greatly outnumbered. The troops of Sisera were much better equipped. One person with God, can put a thousand to flight. God is with Barak. God discomfited Sisera so badly that he ran from the battle in fear.

Judges 4:16 "But 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 place from whence they came, and to which they endeavored to escape. But he followed them, so close all that way, and made such havoc of them, that;

"All the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left": No, not one, excepting Sisera (as in Judges 4:17). Or "even to one", as in the original text. Not one escaped to Hazor to acquaint Jabin of the loss of his army. Philo Byblius says, that nine hundred and ninety seven thousand of Sisera's army were slain.

We see that the army of Sisera that had not died at the foot of mount Tabor fled in their chariots. Barak's army followed them, and killed them all.

Verses 17-24: As Deborah had prophesied, the honor went to a woman (4:9): “Jael” killed the enemy general with simple house-hold tools, a “nail of the tent” and “hammer”. The contrast is striking. Jael, who did not have a clear word from Yahweh, acted courageously, unlike Barak, the military general who did have a clear word. The Lords makes heroes out of ordinary people who will loyally and courageously carry out His mission. Today, that mission is making disciples of Christ and serving as His witnesses (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

Judges 4:17 "Howbeit 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."

Got off, and made his escape to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; before spoken of (Judges 4:11). And he made it to that, because he might think himself safer in a tent than in a town. Especially in the tent of a woman, where he might imagine no search would be made. For women of note, in those times, had separate tents (see Gen. 24:67). And the rather he made his escape there for a reason that follows.

"For there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite": Which Jabin might the more readily come into. Because these were not Israelites, nor did they make any claim to the country, and lived only in tents. And attended their flocks, and were a quiet people, and not at all disposed to war. And it might be so ordered by the providence of God, as a rebuke to the Israelites for their sins. When those who were only proselytes kept close to the worship of God, and so enjoyed liberty, peace, and prosperity.

We know that Sisera had fled in a different direction, even before his army ran. Now we see why Heber settled in this area. Jael was the wife of Heber. Sisera thought he would be safe in this tent, because there was peace between Heber and Jabin, the king over Sisera.

Judges 4:18 "And 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."

Seeing him coming, and knowing him full well, she stepped forward towards him, to invite him into her tent. Some think she was looking out, that if she saw an Israelite in distress to take him in. And very probably had been some time at her tent door, to inquire how the battle went, and which, no doubt, living so near Kedesh, she knew was expected.

"And said unto him, turn in, my lord": That is, into her tent. And she addresses him with the title of "lord", for the sake of honor, having been general of a large army. And not because her husband was a servant, and in subjection to him, as Abarbinel suggests.

"Turn in to me, fear not": She repeats the invitation, to show she was hearty and sincere, and that he had nothing to fear from her, nor in her house. And it may be at first she had no thought of doing what she afterwards did to him, it put into her heart after this.

"And when he had turned in unto her in the tent": And laid himself down upon the ground, being weary.

"She covered him with a mantle": Either to hide him, should any search be made for him, or it may be to keep him from catching cold, being he was in a sweat through his flight, and being also perhaps inclined to sleep through weariness. The word for a mantle, according to Kimchi, signifies such a garment which has locks of wool on both sides of it. A sort of rug, and so very fit to cover with, and keep warm. So David de Pomis describes it, as having locks and threads hanging down here and there.

The "mantle" is speaking of a cover. The Nomads lived in their tent like a home, and they had coverings for their beds. Jael deceives him with her promise of safety in her tent.

Verses 19-20: "She ... gave him a drink ... covered him": Usually, this was the strongest pledge of protection possible.

Judges 4:19 "And 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."

Either because she had not water in her tent, and pretended fear of discovery or some inconvenience if she went out to fetch it. Or as a signification of greater respect. Or as a likely means to cast him into a sleep, which she desired and designed. To which end possibly she might mix something with it to cause sleep. Which she could not so conveniently have done with water. Covered him, upon pretense of hiding him, but really to cause him to sleep.

He had probably completely exhausted himself running from Barak's troops. This milk would make him sleepy. He lay down to rest, and she covered him with the cover.

Judges 4:20 "Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No."

This he said, not in an imperious way, as some think, but by entreaty.

"And it shall be, when any man shall come and inquire of thee": Seeing her at the door, and where he desired she would stand to prevent their coming into the tent.

"And say, is there any man here?" Any besides what belongs to the family? Or any of Sisera's army?

"That thou shalt say, no": There is no man; but to this she made no answer that is recorded.

He wanted just a few moments rest and then would run even further away from the troops. He thought he could trust Jael, and asked her to watch for anyone looking for him. He wanted her to lie, and say he was not there if they inquired.

Judges 4:21 "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."

“A nail of the tent ... an hammer”: Jael’s bold stroke in a tent rather than on a battle field draws Deborah’s and Barak’s praise (5:24-27). Her strength and skill had no doubt been toughened by a common Bedouin duty of hammering down pegs to secure tents, or striking them loose to take down tents.

We see the reason she got so near to him, without waking him. He was exhausted and had fallen into a deep sleep. The nail for the tent was more like a spike. It was so long it went through his skull and fastened him to the ground. Notice also, that temples is plural. She must have run the spike through both temples. He probably died instantly. Her love for God and His people caused her to do this.

Judges 4:22 "And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her [tent], behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail [was] in his temples."

Knowing the way he took, at least as he supposed.

"Jael came out to meet him": As she did Sisera, but with greater pleasure.

"And said unto him, come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest": For she full well knew whom he was in pursuit of.

"And when he came into her tent": At her invitation.

"Behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples": Which she did not attempt to draw out, but left it there, that it might be seen in what way she had dispatched him.

It is very interesting to me, that God would put it in the heart of this woman to do this. Had he awakened before she drove the spike into him, he would have killed her. Barak, himself, had been a reluctant warrior. This is the act, Deborah had mentioned to Barak that would bring a woman fame for the battle. It was not of herself she was speaking, but of Jael. Can you imagine the look of surprise on Barak's face, when he saw Sisera and what had happened to him?

Judges 4:23 "So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel."

Freed Israel from subjection to him and delivered him into the hands of the Israelites. For Josephus says, that as Barak went towards Hazor, he met Jabin, and slew him. Who perhaps

having heard of the defeat of his army under Sisera, came forth with another against Israel, which being overcome by them, he was slain, and the city utterly destroyed, as the same writer says. But by what follows it seems rather that the total conquest of him was afterwards and gradually accomplished.

Jabin's army led by Sisera had been sorely defeated. Notice who actually subdued Jabin. It was God. God moved upon 3 people and empowered them for this task. First He gave the message to Deborah. Then she called in Barak. Lastly, Jael tricked Sisera, and killed him. God uses unlikely people sometimes to get a job done.

Judges 4:24 "And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan."

They continued their wars with him, in which they were successful.

"Until they had destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan": Took him, and put him to death, and took his cities, and destroyed the inhabitants of them. And so acted more agreeably to the declared will of God, that they should not spare the Canaanites, but destroy them.

The battle was a crucial one; Israel's very existence was at stake.

With the victory of Sisera and his men behind them, they were encouraged to go on and totally destroy Jabin. They did that, and the children of Israel were again at peace and prospering through the blessings of God.

Christians, we can take a lesson from this. When we undertake a task such as this, we must be convinced enough that it is God's will that we will fight for it. We must, also take the responsibility of seeing it through.

Judges Chapter 4 Questions

1. What does Israel do the minute the Judge dies?
2. Why was Shamgar not spoken of after Ehud?
3. Who did God sell them over to, when they sinned this time?
4. What is unusual about Jabin and Hazor in verse 2?
5. How many chariots did Jabin have?
6. How long did he oppress Israel?
7. Why did Israel not have a large number of chariots and horses?

8. What was Deborah, besides a Judge?
9. How do you become a prophetess?
10. What was Deborah's husband's name?
11. What was the meaning of his name?
12. How did people become judge?
13. Where did she judge?
14. What does all of this show us about Deborah?
15. What does the name "Deborah" mean?
16. Who did she call to lead her troops?
17. How many men was he to take with him?
18. What does the statement "Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded" show us?
19. What two tribes were the ten thousand to come from?
20. Who was the captain of Jabin's army?
21. Why will the LORD fight with Israel here?
22. What condition did Barak make about going to this battle?
23. Why did Barak need her to do this?
24. What does Deborah say to him in answer to his request?
25. Why must Deborah be in the forefront of the battle?
26. What Kenite lived near Kedesh?
27. How does Sisera find out that Barak and ten thousand men are on Mount Tabor?
28. Who said when the battle was to begin?
29. One person, with God, can put a _____ to flight.
30. What did Sisera do in the heat of the battle?
31. After the first battle, where did Barak follow the troops of Sisera that fled?
32. What happened to the troops and their chariots?

33. Where did Sisera go for safety?
34. What is the "mantle" speaking of?
35. What did she give him, when he asked for water?
36. What did Sisera ask Jael to do?
37. When he was sound asleep, what did she do?
38. Who pursued after Sisera?
39. Where did he find him?
40. What happened to Jabin?
41. What three people had God empowered for this task?