

2. DEBORAH AND BARAK

Judges 4

In our first lesson we learned about the cycle of obedience, disobedience, enemies ruling, a judge rescuing the Israelites, and then a time of peace. After there had been three judges, and the Israelites turned to doing wickedness again, God let Jabin, the king of Canaan, take over the Israelites. He had 900 chariots of iron, and ruled over Israel 20 years. The Israelites repented and cried to God.



Deborah was the fourth judge of Israel. She was also a prophetess, and could tell the people what God wanted them to do. She sent for a man named Barak, and told 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?" God promised to deliver Sisera, his men, and his chariots into the hand of Barak (Judges 4:7). Sisera was the captain of Jabin's army.

Barak was not ready to lead the battle by himself and trust God to deliver the enemy. Instead, 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" (Judges 4:8).

Deborah had complete faith in God. She replied, "I will surely go with thee." She warned him that the journey would not be for his own honor, but God would "sell Sisera into the hand of a woman" (Judges 4:9).

Barak took his 10,000 men to battle, with Deborah there to advise him. A man named Heber warned Sisera

they were coming. God gave a victory. Sisera and his men tried to escape, but Barak chased them. All of Sisera's men were killed, and he got off his chariot and ran.

Sisera came to "the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber" (Judges 4:17). Jael went out to meet Sisera, and told him to come into her tent. He asked for water, but she gave him milk. He fell asleep, and she killed him while he was sleeping. Sisera was delivered into the hands of a woman.

Who Am I? Write the letter of the person described.

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|------------|-----------|-------------|
| A. Deborah | D. Heber | G. Barak |
| B. Jael | E. Sisera | H. Naphtali |
| C. Zebulun | F. Jabin | |

- _____ 1. Woman who killed Sisera.
- _____ 2. Names of the two tribes who went to battle for the Israelites (two correct answers).
- _____ 3. Man who led the battle for the Israelites.
- _____ 4. Captain of the Canaanite army.
- _____ 5. King of the Canaanites.
- _____ 6. A judge and prophetess.
- _____ 7. Man who warned Sisera that the Israelites were coming.

NOTE TO THE CUSTOMER: For this lesson I have created two different teaching texts. Older children will learn about more Bible characters. The “Who Am I?” activity reflects this, with younger children identifying eight individuals and tribes whereas older children will be given eleven. The teacher may determine which version is best suited to the needs of his or her class. The more challenging version of the lesson begins on the next page.

Lesson Two: Deborah and Barak

OBJECTIVES:

Emphasize Deborah’s faith in God.

Children should become familiar with the fact that a Christian’s weapon is the Bible.

Before class (for young students) write the names of people in the lesson on one sheet of paper for each name. Use cover stock if possible. Have them laying in order so you can hold up each name as you tell the story. Even if the children can’t read, they may be able to recognize the names because of the beginning letters. Say the names together as a class as you tell about each one. There will be eight names. (Older children will also learn the names of the first three judges.)

If one of the older boys in your class enjoys leading songs, call him prior to class and ask him to prepare to lead “Faith is the Victory.” Plan ahead to discuss the Christian’s battle, which is spiritual. Our sword is the Word of God. Our enemy is Satan and those who do not obey the Bible. Our victory is leading a faithful Christian life and going to heaven to be with God, Jesus and all of the saved people to spend an eternity. Deborah had faith in God’s ability to bring about a victory on the battlefield. We should have faith in God’s ability to help us live victorious Christian lives.

When duplicating the lesson, notice that there are two versions of the text portion. The larger print is for younger children and the smaller print for older students who are able to read. Always send the printed text home with each child whether or not he can read.

Have your students take turns quoting the memory verse. If you have children in your class who do not practice the verses at home, say the verse in unison several times before asking the children to say it individually. Many children will be able to learn it during class. Give a little more help to those who need it. Go ahead and give them credit even if you have to say a couple of the words to help them along. They will be encouraged and try harder if you build up their self-esteem. **Be sure to memorize the verses yourself!** You should not have to look at the paper more than one time to remember the verse. When you say it unison, look at the children. If it isn’t important enough for you to do, why would you expect them to learn it?

Telling the story: One option with young children would be to let each child in the room hold one of the papers with a name written on it. Tell the child when that name is mentioned, they are to stand. Each child should then be able to recognize the characteristics of the person whose name they held when it comes time for the “Who Am I?” activity. Emphasize the faith Deborah had in God’s ability to provide a victory over the enemy.

Older children will probably prefer to take turns reading one paragraph each. Tell them to have a colored marker ready to use to underline each name the first time it appears. Then when they are ready to complete the activity they can look back in the lesson to find the answers if they don’t know them.

Who Am I? will help cement the names of the Bible characters in the minds of your students. Read all the names before beginning. **Easy version answers:** 1-B; 2-C and H; 3-G; 4-E; 5-F; 6-A; and 7-D. **More difficult version answers:** 1-I; 2-C and H; 3-G; 4-E; 5-F; 6-K; 7-A; 8-B; 9-D; and 10-J.

If you asked a boy to lead “Faith is the Victory,” spend a moment explaining what it means.

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God let other countries take them over for eight years (Judges 3:8). Then “the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.” God chose Othniel to judge Israel and go to war for them. They had peace for 40 years until Othniel died. Then they followed the cycle and turned to worshiping idols again.

When they repented, God sent Ehud to be the judge and rescue them. While Ehud was still alive, another judge named Shamgar also killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad [stick] (Judges 3:31). There was peace for 80 years. After Ehud died, the Israelites started doing evil again. God let Jabin, the king of Canaan, take over the Israelites. He had 900 chariots of iron, and ruled over Israel 20 years. The Israelites repented and cried to God.

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Sisera came to "the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber" (Judges 4:17). Jael went out to meet Sisera, and told him to come into her tent. He asked for water, but she gave him milk. He fell asleep. Jael took a tent spike and hammered it into his temples, killing him. Sisera was delivered into the hands of a woman.

Who Am I? Write the letter of the person described.

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|------------|------------|-------------|----------|
| A. Deborah | D. Heber | G. Barak | J. Ehud |
| B. Othniel | E. Sisera | H. Naphtali | K. Jabin |
| C. Zebulun | F. Shamgar | I. Jael | |

- _____ 1. Woman who killed Sisera.
- _____ 2. Names of the two tribes who went to battle for the Israelites (two correct answers).
- _____ 3. Man who led the battle for the Israelites.
- _____ 4. Captain of the Canaanite army.
- _____ 5. Man who killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad [stick].
- _____ 6. King of the Canaanites.
- _____ 7. A judge and prophetess.
- _____ 8. First judge of Israel.
- _____ 9. Man who warned Sisera that the Israelites were coming.
- _____ 10. Second judge of Israel.