

Run, Sisera, Run — Week 1

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The nation of Israel rebelled against God again and again; turning away from the Lord and His commandments, they worshipped other gods.

God allowed King Jabin of Canaan, and his military commander, Sisera, to harass Israel. Sisera boasted about his 900 chariots of iron. He was a bully toward Israel, cruelly oppressing them for twenty years. Then Israel cried out to God for deliverance from Sisera.

Deborah, a prophetess and Israel's judge, devised a plan. She called for Barak to come and pursue Sisera. *I'll lure Sisera and his troops to the Kishon River, she told Barak, You be ready to attack his army.*

Barak was shaking in his leather high-tops, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go" (Judges 4:8, *NIV*).

Deborah tried to encourage Barak to be a leader, but she gave in and said she would go with him. She wasn't pleased with Barak's cowardice, "the honor will not be yours, for the Lord will hand Sisera over to a woman" (Judges 4:9). She wanted him to understand that God was the one who would give them victory.

When they came upon Sisera's army, Deborah said to Barak, "Go! . . . has not the Lord gone ahead of you?" (Judges 4:14).

Sisera saw Barak and his troops attacking. He jumped out of his iron chariot, and began to run. Did he think he could go faster on foot than in his iron chariot? He encountered Jael, the Kenite woman, whose people were friends with King Jabin. He thought that he could depend on her loyalty.

Jael invited Sisera into her tent to rest. Can you imagine this military leader thinking that he could take a nap during the heat of the battle? He asked her to be his lookout and not let anyone know he was there.

Oh, she wouldn't let anyone know he was there . . . yet! She had her own plan for after he was asleep. Jael picked up a tent peg and a hammer, raised the hammer high, and brought it down on the tent peg with a solid whack. It pierced through his temple and into the ground.

Barak came along after Sisera was dead, and Jael took Barak to see what she'd done. "On that day God subdued Jabin" (Judges 4:23) and Sisera, that self-confident leader. He thought himself a mighty warrior; but after twenty years of distressing Israel, he became a half-hearted warrior.

Do we think we are strong enough by our self to overcome the enemy of our soul? A self-sufficient or arrogant attitude can destroy us as it did Sisera.

When we face financial challenges, God knows. When we have a breach in relationships, God sees. Whatever is on the path before us, we can say to one another, *Go, God has gone ahead of you.*