

LIVING GODS WILL

Prophet of God

DEBORAH



Deborah the Judge and Prophetess

Born: 1200 BC – Ephraim

Died: 1124 BC – Kadesh (76)

Deborah was a **prophetess of God**.

Deborah was the **only female Judge of the Bible (1184-1144 BC)**.

Deborah was a **military leader of Israel** along with **General Barak**.

Deborah wrote the **Song of Deborah** about her victory over the **Canaanites**.

Deborah was one of the **judges of Israel** during a time of oppression.

She is called a **prophetess** and the wife of **Lappidoth**.

The **Lord** spoke through her as she held court under a tree called "**the Palm of Deborah**" in **Ephraim**.

The **Lord** also used her to set her people free and defeat the king of **Canaan**.

Deborah's story is found in **Judges, chapters 4 and 5**.

Deborah was Israel's **only female judge**. Some scholars have suggested that her position as judge was itself a judgment on the weak-willed men of Israel.

Because Israel's men were unfit to judge, **God** chose a woman for the job, partly to shame the men who should have taken the leadership. Other commentators believe that **Deborah's** role as judge was a sign of **God's** comforting presence in the midst of His oppressed and downtrodden people.

When **Deborah** became judge, the Israelites had been subjugated for 20 years by **Jabin, king of Canaan**. The commander of Jabin's army was named **Sisera**, and he had 900 iron chariots – formidable weapons against Israel's foot soldiers (**Judges 4:3**).

The Israelites were treated very cruelly by Sisera and his army, and Israel's spirits were very low. **Deborah** describes the hardship of living under Jabin and Sisera this way:

"The highways were abandoned, and travelers kept to the byways. The villagers ceased in Israel; they ceased to be" (**Judges 5:6-7**).

In other words, people feared to leave their homes; traveling was very dangerous.

God's word comes through **Deborah** to a man of **Naphtali** named **Barak**. The message is that he will lead the revolt against Sisera.

Barak's response is, "I'll only go if Deborah goes with me" (**Judges 4:8**).

Everyone was afraid of Sisera, including Barak. **Deborah** agrees to accompany Barak, but she also prophesies that the honor for the victory would belong to a woman, not to Barak (**Judges 4:9**).

When the time came for battle, **God** again spoke through **Deborah**, who prompted Barak to marshal his forces. The Israelites came against the army of Sisera, and **God** granted the victory.

The mighty Sisera himself was brought down by the hand of a woman, just as **Deborah** had said. As the commander rested after the battle, a woman named **Jael** **drove a tent peg through his head**.

Who was **Deborah** in the Bible? We can see that **God's** power is what matters, regardless of the instrument He chooses to use. Man or woman, strong or weak, confident or hesitant – all are strong when they are moved by **God's Spirit** and filled with His strength.

We can also see in **Deborah** a picture of **God's** tender care for His people. As a mother cares for her children, so **Deborah** led and nurtured Israel (**Judges 5:7**).

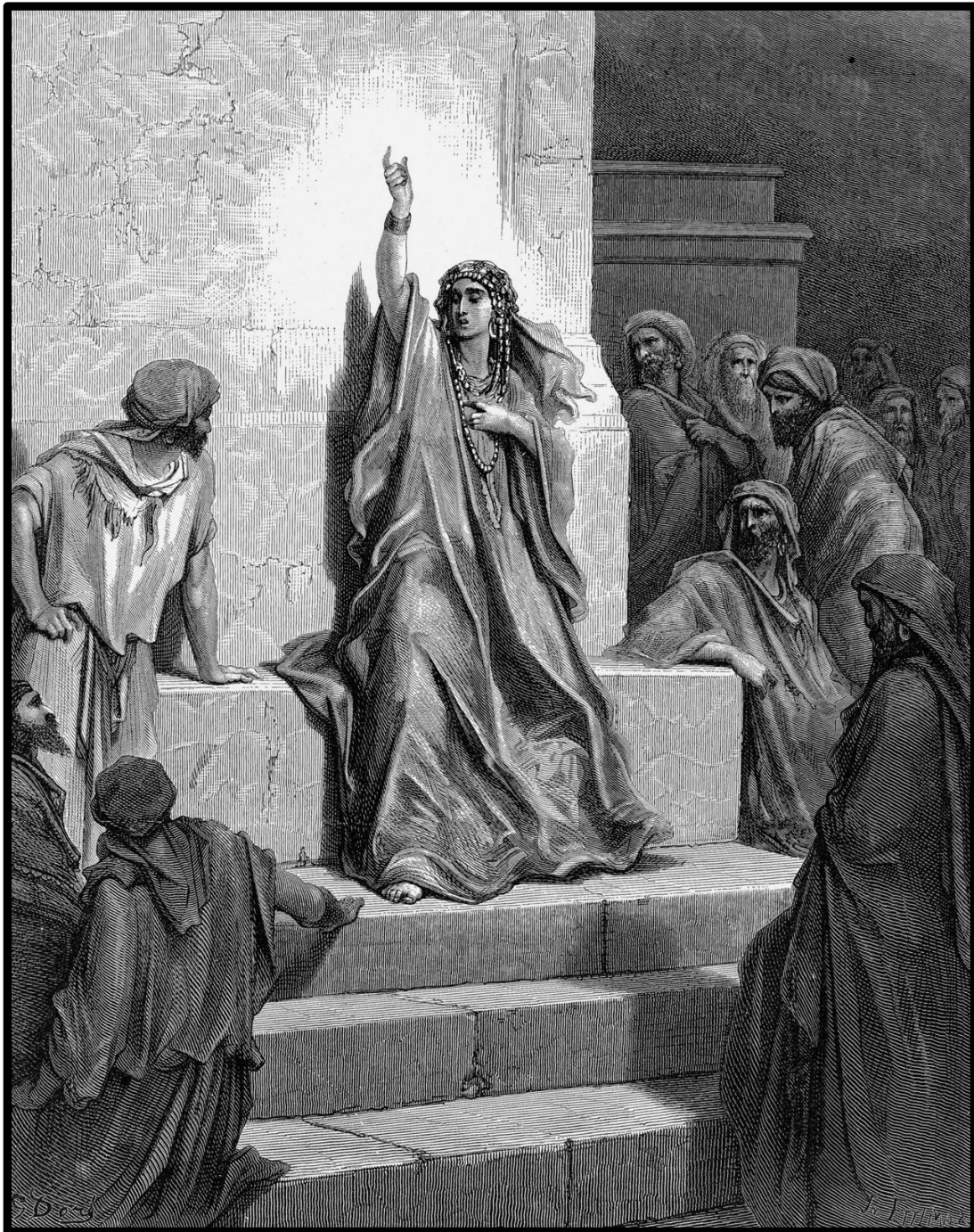
SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Judges 4:4-7 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?'"

Judges 4:8-9 And 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!" So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.

Judges 4:14-15 Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the Lord gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. And 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.

Judges 5:1-2 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: "When leaders lead in Israel, When the people willingly offer themselves, Bless the Lord!"



Song of Triumph, Deborah by Gustave Dore