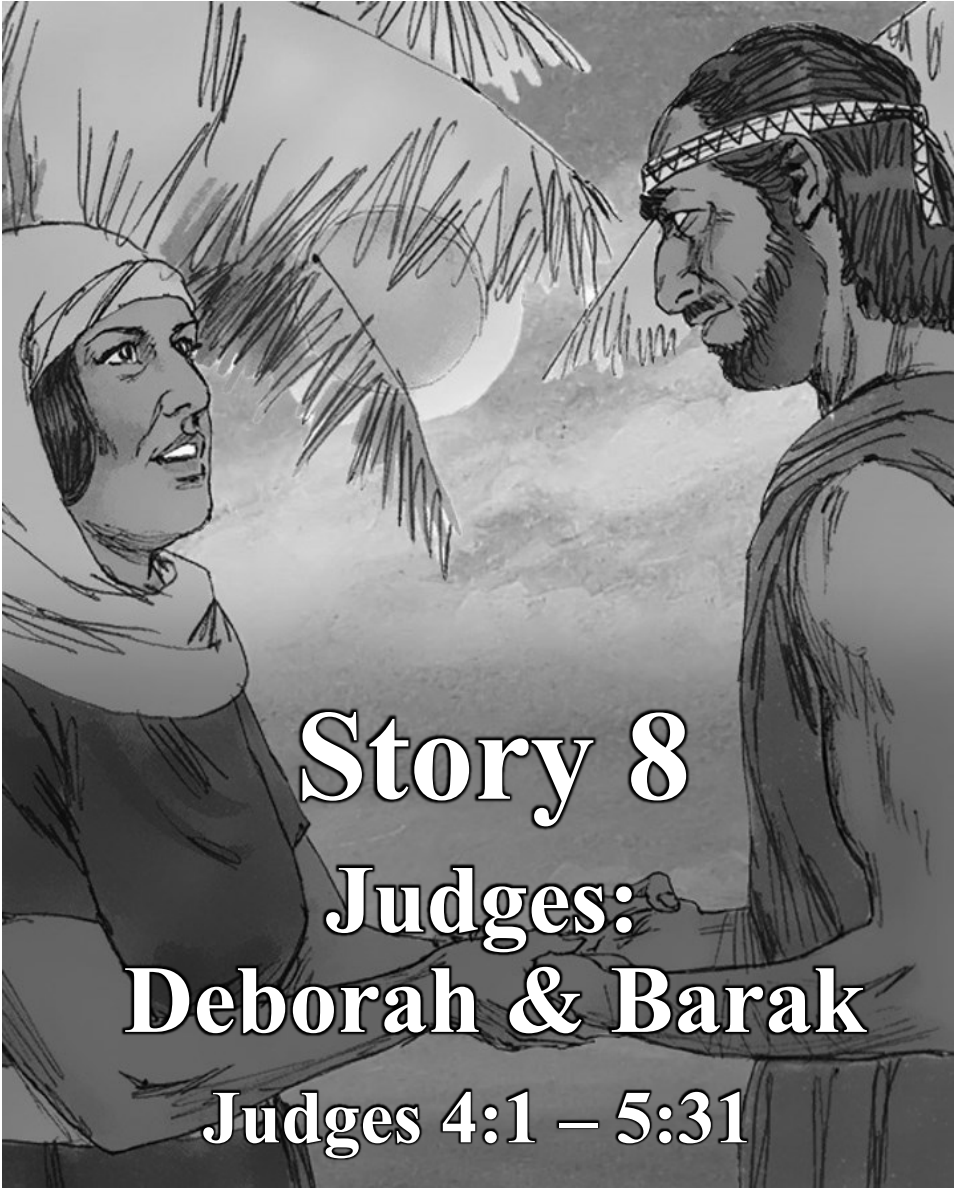


Story 8

Judges: Deborah & Barak

Judges 4:1 – 5:31



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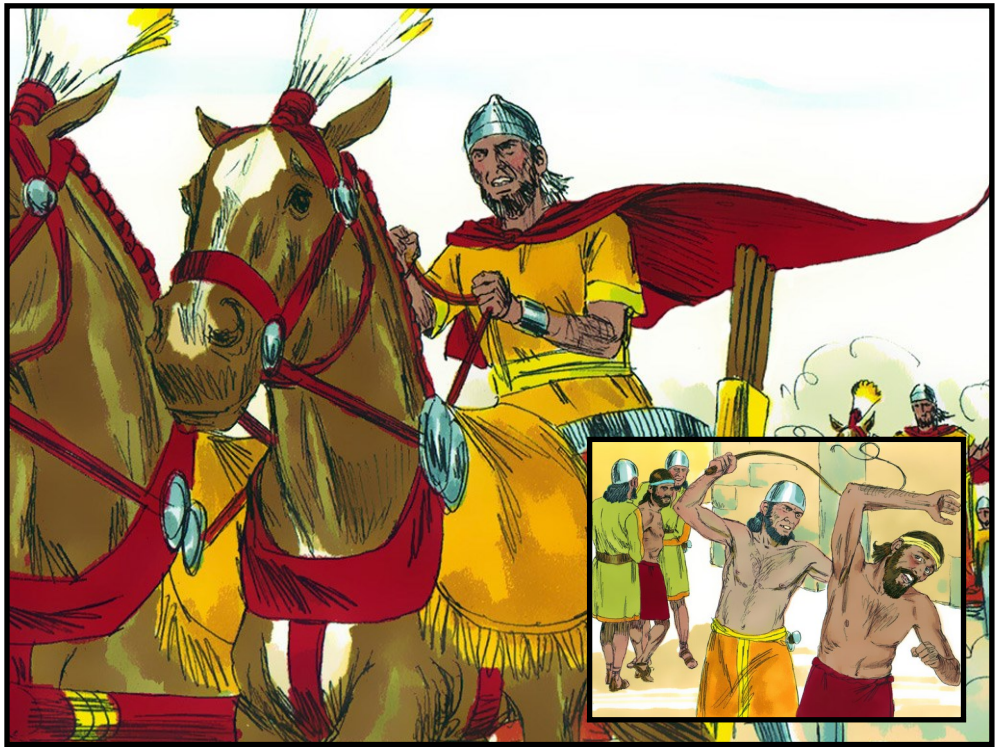


During Joshua's lifetime the Israelites conquered most of the Promised Land. However, there were still many parts of the land that were under the control of the surrounding nations.



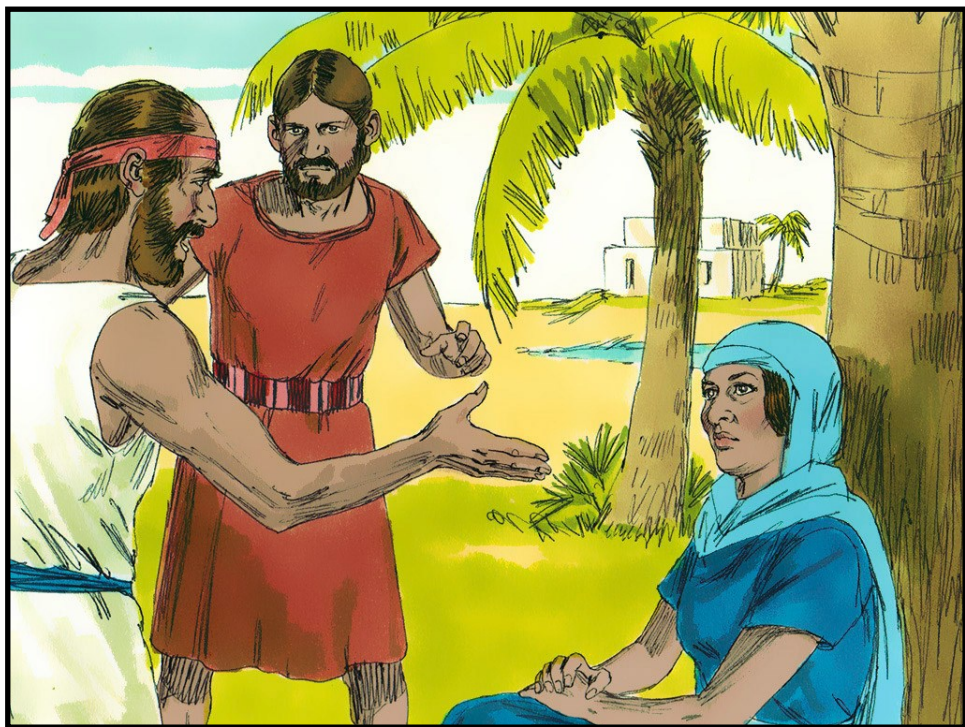
After Joshua died the people of Israel turned their backs on God and began worshiping the false gods of the Canaanites.

God was not pleased and He allowed many foreign armies to conquer the Israelites because of their sin. Whenever this happened, the Israelites would cry out to God and He would provide a leader to save them. This leader was called a judge.



One time, the Israelites became so evil that the LORD allowed a Canaanite king named Jabin to conquer them.

Jabin's army was commanded by a ruthless warrior named Sisera. He mistreated the Israelites, but they found it impossible to fight back against him. He was very powerful and had 900 chariots under his command.



For 20 years King Jabin and Sisera persecuted the people of Israel. The people cried out to God and He raised up a woman named Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, to lead Israel as their judge.

Deborah would sit under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel. When she did this, the people would come to her seeking advice. They would also come to her and have their disputes settled.

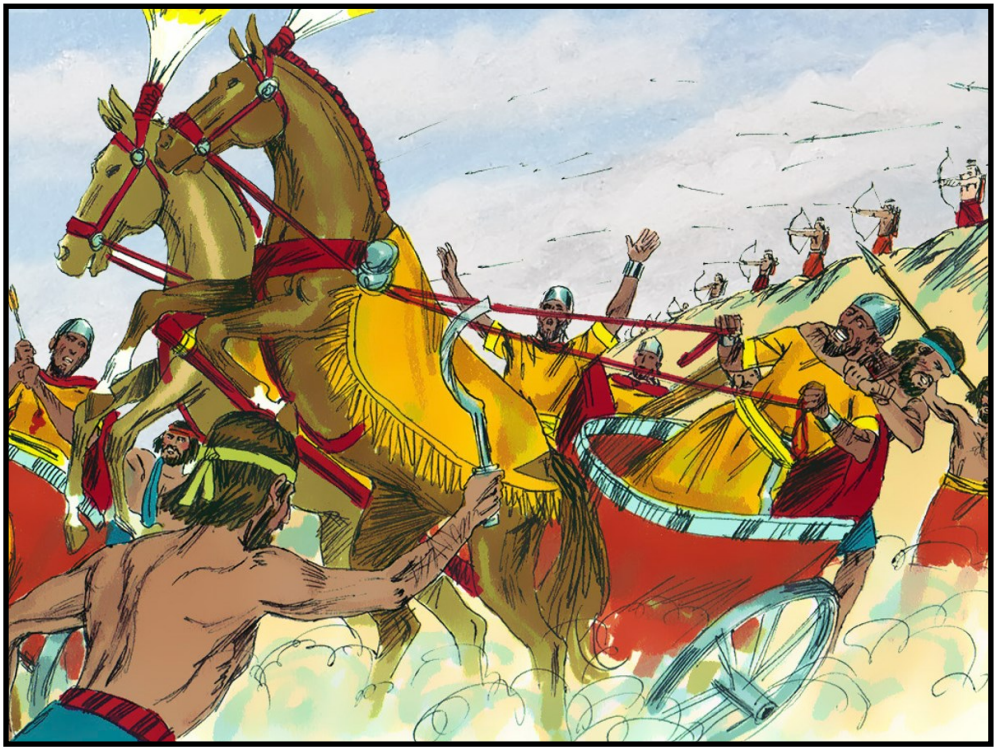


One day, Deborah sent for a man named Barak who lived in Kedesh. When he arrived she told him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, wants you to take 10,000 troops from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them to Mt. Tabor. There, the LORD will entrap King Jabin’s army and you will defeat him.”



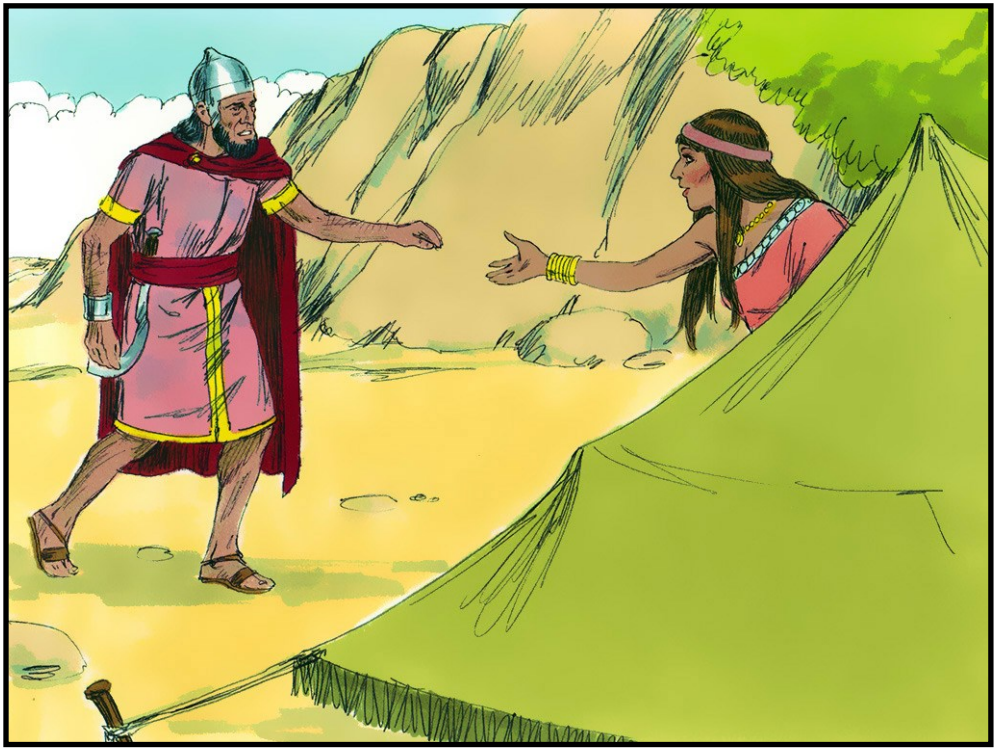
Barak answered Deborah, “I will go, but only if you go with me.”

Deborah replied, “Very well. I will go with you. However, when we defeat Jabin’s army, I will be honored for the victory instead of you. The LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.”



When Sisera heard that Barak had gone to Mt. Tabor, he gathered his men and his 900 chariots and set off to make war against Israel.

When Sisera reached the Kishon River, Deborah said to Barak, “Go! Today the LORD has gone before you and He will hand Sisera over to you.” So Barak went into battle with his troops. That day, the LORD scattered all of Sisera’s chariots and Barak’s men struck down all the soldiers with their swords.



When Sisera saw that his army was being defeated, he jumped off his chariot and ran away on foot. He ran northeast until he reached the tent of a woman named Jael. She and her husband, Heber, were Kenites and were at peace with King Jabin.

When Sisera arrived he said, “I am exhausted. Please give me some water to drink.” But instead, she gave him some milk which made him very sleepy.



Jael invited Sisera to come into her tent where she covered him with a blanket. He asked her to keep watch at the door in case anyone came looking for him.

As Sisera lay there, he fell fast asleep. When Jael saw that he was sleeping, she took a tent peg and drove it through his head and into the ground. So Sisera died that day at the hands of Jael.



About that time, Barak came by Jael's tent because he was chasing Sisera. Jael went out to meet him. "Come to my tent," she said. "I'll show you the man you are looking for."

He went into her tent and there was Sisera lying on the ground. He was dead.



So God defeated King Jabin. The Israelites were no longer under his rule. On that day, Deborah and Barak sang a song together. They sang aloud:

*“LORD, may all your enemies be destroyed.
But may all who love you be like the morning sun.
May they be like the sun when it shines the
brightest.”*

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