

READING PLAN HANDOUT WEEK 6 (PREP FOR WEEK 7)  
The Epic of Eden: Deborah, “Deborah’s Battle and Victory”

**Word from the Author:** In our last session, we met our courageous captain, Barak of Naphtali. We saw the seasoned judge and prophet, Deborah, offer him Yahweh’s war oracle – urging him to muster his troops for a kind of “mission impossible”. We further saw Barak accept the challenge and appeal to Deborah to join him – as so many before him, including Saul and Joshua, asked for their prophet to be at their sides with the words of God and the favor of Yahweh. We further saw Deborah’s agreement to join Barak and her prophesy that a woman would render the ultimate victory. She doesn’t name the woman. Barak may have assumed it would be Deborah herself, but the vision was not fully given. It would be revealed in due time.

**Day #1: Read Judges 4:11-24.** These texts establish the God-ordained scenario contributing to Sisera’s demise. Consider an otherwise obscure character, Heber, whose profession is a kind of middleman between Israel’s farmers and those with whom they would need to trade for income. Because of their mutually productive business, the Israelites considered Heber a neighbor and ally but, in reality, he had made an alliance with Jabin (the bad guy of our story). Heber is, therefore, an unseen threat to Israel. But God uses this for His purposes. The “sanctuary-like” appearance of Heber’s tents are a natural haven for Sisera, who is fleeing on foot from Barak and Deborah’s army. And while Heber’s wife, Jael, is also an ally of Sisera by virtue of her relationship to her husband and his alliances, she is foremost, an ally to Yahweh. **Re-read Judges 4:23.** Who won this battle?

**Day #2: Read Judges 5:4-5, 19-21.** This, as Paul Harvey used to say, is the rest of the story. While Judges 4 does not give us all the details of the battle Barak and his men fought against the chariots and army of Sisera, Judges 5 articulates the entire scenario in the form of a triumphant song! It describes the thunderstorm and subsequent flood God brought about to undermine the iron chariots and their progress, the advantage He gave the 10,000 men of Barak’s army, ultimately driving Sisera to the tent of Jael. This epic poem describes the unanticipated details of this conflict. Think for a moment how the words of this poem echo the “Song of the Sea” in Exodus 15, after Moses and his people escaped the pursuing army of Pharaoh through the parted Red Sea.

**Day #3:** Each session we have been looking at another Judge from the book of Judges. This week, we have a look at Samson! The Bible provides more information about his background than any other judge in the book of Judges. He is the final judge presented in the cycle of Judges, and one of the most tragic found in the book. His story is found in **Judges 14, 15 and 16.** It is a colorful and dynamic story which rings with the truth of the aspirational, yet corruptible nature of man. And, still, God uses this man for His own Holy purposes as he led Israel for 20 years during the days of the Philistines.

