

Judges 4:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

Analysis

And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

This passage relates to Deborah and Barak's victory over Sisera, demonstrating God's sovereign choice and empowerment of deliverers. The judges themselves display varying degrees of faith and character flaws, yet God works through these imperfect human instruments to accomplish His purposes. This illustrates the biblical pattern that God's power is made perfect in human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Theologically, these early judges establish the pattern of divine deliverance through unlikely means. God chooses the weak, marginalized, and flawed to demonstrate that victory comes from His power, not human strength. This anticipates Paul's teaching that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27).

The military victories recorded here serve spiritual purposes—they deliver Israel from physical oppression but more importantly provide opportunity for spiritual

renewal. Each deliverance creates space for Israel to return to covenant faithfulness. However, the repeated cycles show these deliverances provided only temporary relief, pointing to the need for the ultimate Deliverer who would provide permanent victory over sin and spiritual oppression through His death and resurrection.

Historical Context

Historical Setting: The Book of Judges spans approximately 350-400 years (c. 1375-1050 BCE) during the Late Bronze Age collapse and early Iron Age. This period saw the disintegration of major empires (Hittites, Mycenaeans) and weakening of Egyptian control over Canaan, creating a power vacuum filled by emerging peoples including Philistines (Sea Peoples), Aramaeans, and regional kingdoms. The decentralized tribal structure left Israel vulnerable to external oppression and internal chaos.

Cultural Context: This passage relates to Deborah and Barak's victory over Sisera. Canaanite religion dominated the region, centered on Baal (storm/fertility god), Asherah (mother goddess), and Anat (war goddess). Archaeological discoveries at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) have provided extensive information about Canaanite mythology and religious practices. Baal worship involved ritual prostitution, child sacrifice, and fertility rites tied to agricultural seasons. Israel's persistent attraction to these gods demonstrates the strong cultural pressure to conform to surrounding nations' religious practices.

The material culture of this period shows gradual Israelite settlement in the Canaanite hill country, with simpler pottery and architecture than coastal Canaanite cities. Iron technology was beginning to spread, giving military advantage to peoples who mastered it (note the Philistines' iron monopoly, 1 Samuel 13:19-22). The absence of centralized government during the judges period stands in stark contrast to the bureaucratic city-states of Canaan and the imperial administration of Egypt and Mesopotamia. This political structure reflected Israel's theocratic ideal—God as king—yet the repeated cycles of apostasy showed this ideal required more than political structures; it demanded heart transformation.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this passage about Deborah and Barak's victory over Sisera reveal God's character in dealing with persistent human rebellion and incomplete obedience?
2. What patterns of spiritual compromise or incomplete obedience in your own life mirror Israel's failures during the judges period?
3. How does understanding the cyclical nature of sin and deliverance in Judges help you appreciate Christ's perfect and final deliverance from sin's power?

Interlinear Text

וַתֹּאמֶר	דְּבֹרָה ה	אֶל	בָּרַק	ק וּמ	י	ה
said	And Deborah		thee So Barak	Up		
H559	H1683	H413	H1301	H6965	H3588	H2088
הַיּוֹם	אֲשֶׁר	נָתַן	יְהוָה ה	אֶת	סִיסְרָא	
for this is the day		hath delivered	in which the LORD		Sisera	
H3117	H834	H5414	H3068	H853	H5516	
בְּיַדְךָ	הֵלָא	יְהוָה ה	יָצָא	לִפְנֵי יְךָ	וַיֵּרֶד	
into thine hand		in which the LORD	gone out	before	went down	
H3027	H3808	H3068	H3318	H6440	H3381	
בָּרַק	מִהָר	תֹּבֹר	וְעֶשְׂרֵת	אֲלָפִים	אֲנָשִׁים	אַחֲרָיו:
thee So Barak	from mount	Tabor	and ten	thousand	men	after
H1301	H2022	H8396	H6235	H505	H376	H310

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 9:3 (References Lord): Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

2 Samuel 5:24 (References Lord): And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

Isaiah 52:12 (References Lord): For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.

Micah 2:13 (References Lord): The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them.

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