

What Exceptional Leaders Do

Judges 4

After Ehud died, the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the LORD. ²So the LORD sold them in the hands of Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who live in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³Because he had nine hundred iron chariots and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help. Judges 4:1-3 (New International Version)

. . . “Everyone who sins is a slave to sin.” John 8:34 (NIV)

. . . war came to the city gates, and not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel. Judges 5:8 (NIV)

This chapter provides **leadership principles** through the example of Deborah’s life.

- **Principle #1: GOD’S LEADER SEES THE NEED AND COMMITTS TO DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**

Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. ⁵She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided. ⁶She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. ⁷I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’” Judges 4:4-7 (NIV)

In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the roads were abandoned; travelers took to winding paths. ⁷Village life in Israel ceased, ceased until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel. Judges 5:6-7 (NIV)

- **Principle #2: GOD’S LEADER ENLISTS THE HELP THAT IS NEEDED.**

When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” . . . ¹⁷“What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸. . . The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.” Exodus 18:14, 17-18 (NIV)

- **Principle #3: GOD’S LEADER MOTIVATES THE TEAM.**

She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. ⁷I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’” ⁸Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.” ⁹“Very well,” Deborah said, “I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.” . . . Judges 4:6-9 (NIV)

- **Principle #4: GOD’S LEADER DEVELOPS A PLAN.** (See Judges 4:6-7)

- **Principle #5: GOD’S LEADER EXHIBITS FAITH; SHE TRUSTS IN GOD, NOT HERSELF.**

When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, ¹³Sisera gathered together his nine hundred iron chariots and all the men with him, from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River. ¹⁴Then Deborah said to Barak, “Go! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?” So Barak went down Mount Tabor, followed by ten thousand men. ¹⁵At Barak’s advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot. ¹⁶But Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim. All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left. Judges 4:12-16 (NIV)

By an act of faith, Abraham said yes to God’s call to travel to an unknown place that would become his home. When he left he had no idea where he was going. Hebrews 11:8 (The Message)

On that day God subdued Jabin, the Canaanite king, before the Israelites. Judges 4:23 (NIV)

Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, . . . and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaananim near Kedesh. . . . ¹⁷Sisera, however, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there were friendly relations between Jabin . . . and the clan of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Come, my lord, come right in. Don’t be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she put a covering over him. . . . ²¹But Jael, Heber’s wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died. Judges 4:11, 17-18, 21 (NIV)