

# Order My Steps

## Judges 4:4-10, 12-22

### Dr. Paul Cannings

#### A. Step Up (vs. 4-6):

1. Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth – Deborah was a person who proclaimed the word of God under His divine inspiration.
2. Was judging Israel – Deborah also served as a person who arbitrates matters among the people and was also considered a heroic deliverer of God’s people from oppression.
  - a) She first functioned as a judge in deciding disputes at her court, located about 8 or 10 miles north of Jerusalem between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. She was apparently an Ephraimite though some have linked her with the tribe of Issachar (cf. 5:15). Nothing else is known about her husband Lappidoth (meaning “torch,” not to be identified with Barak, meaning “lightning”). <sup>[1]</sup> (2) The commissioning of Barak (4:6–9).
3. Sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel - Deborah spent a lot of time each day, so consistently under a palm tree that the people called the tree ‘the palm tree of Deborah.’
4. Came up to her for judgment – The people so respected her that they endlessly brought before her their problems to litigate in a similar manner like it is with the supreme court judges of America. She was the judge in this area. Because of this she was considered a governing civil magistrate who they considered, being that she was also a prophetess, a person who executed the divine will of God.
5. Sent and summon Barak – Deborah exercised her authority by loudly, vocally sending a specific message to Barak to come and listen to her.

6. Sent and summon Barak – Deborah sought out Barak because she understood her role and completely surrendered to execute God’s plan for her life in her position. It is Barak’s lack of leadership, the desperate needs of the people (she would know that first hand), and a commitment to obey God’s command that caused her to assert leadership.
7. She said to Barak – Deborah continuously kept speaking to Barak about the urgency of the matter concerning the oppression that Sisera exercised on God’s people.
8. The Lord God of Israel has commanded – Speaking under the authority of the Lord who sovereignly constitutes His will towards His people (His message is complete; nothing to add to it or take from it), orders Barak to functioned with a deep commitment and execute for God’s people what God had delivered to her.
9. Take – Because the message is from God Barak must completely resolve himself to totally focus on executing what God ordered him to do.
10. Barak said - Barak, even though he clearly understood that this directive came directly from God, continuously refused to obey God unless Deborah commits to endlessly go with him.
11. Barak said - Barak’s persistence in requesting Deborah’s help demonstrates that she is not quick to take over. She was compelled because of her obedience to God and Barak persistence in seeking her help.
12. Barak said - Many times women take over the leadership of their home because of their impatience rather than wait for God to make it necessary, example Abigail (1 Samuel 25:3-42).
13. Barak said - Deborah, with urgency seeks to execute God’s will compared to Barak who endlessly sought to disobey God until Deborah commits to help him. This clearly demonstrates why God used Deborah to lead.
14. She said – She continuously kept verbally communicating with Barak. Deborah accepts God's message with one thing in mind and that was to obey God at all costs.
15. I will surely go with you – Deborah was completely committed to executing God’s message and therefore became fully surrendered to go with Barak.
16. The honor will not be yours – Because of the might of Sisera’s military the glory received when his army is defeated would not be assigned to Barak. Because in a battle he was certain to win he willfully choose to disobey God unless Deborah goes with him.

17. The Lord will sell (surrender) Sisera – The Lord who has all power and complete authority over all that would take place, decides the conclusion of the battle and who he will establish credit for Sisera’s death.
18. The Lord will sell (surrender) Sisera – God does not take matters lightly when we know what to do and choose not to do it.
19. Into the hands of a woman – Sisera would be placed into the possession of a woman who would have complete control over all that happens to him.
20. Deborah arose and went with Barak - Deborah, with determination, endlessly prepared herself to go with Barak as if this is her new way of life. She is no longer focused on being a prophetess or judge; her entire focus is to obey God no matter the cost.

## **B. Even When (vs. 14-16):**

1. Deborah said to Barak arise – Deborah now takes charge and continuously, as if she never plans to stop, kept verbally commanding Barak to be determined and focus on the purpose for which he now lives.
3. Lord has given - Deborah displays such complete trust in God it is now vividly clear why she is the Lord’s prophetess and judge. This is also a full exposure as to why the people trusted her.
4. Lord has given - The Lord, who has all authority and power has completely delivered Israel from Sisera’s domination and brutality.
5. Lord has given - Barak, even though he knew the end result, did not trust what God had to say; he still did not go without Deborah.
6. Lord has given - It was not that Barak did not take leadership over Israel’s military (no where does it say that Deborah led the army). Barak did not trust God’s word. He knew of the power of Sisera, he lived everyday combating the problem seeing the ill effects of it, and therefore allowed the circumstances he experienced to overrule his obedience to God.
7. In your hands – Even though Barak will not get the glory for Sisera’s defeat, God is still requiring Barak to take leadership in battle.

8. In your hands – A man's lack of willingness may take away the credit provided by their children to their parents when they grow up, but he is still required to do his part as a provider, protector and the training up of the child.
9. The Lord has gone out before you – The Lord who has all power and authority is already on the move (just like it was in the days of Moses at the Red Sea; Exodus 14:19-20), He is already executing His justice against Sisera and His Shekinah Glory. Barak as we will see is only mopping up.
10. The Lord has gone out before you – Because the Lord has all authority, power and is always in control he can tell us the beginning and end of the story before it takes place so there is absolutely no way we should ever not just Him no matter the circumstances or the history of our experiences.
11. So Barak went down - So with this certainty provided, Deborah by his side, Barak took his place in battle.
12. So Barak went down - God did not take away the call for Barak's leadership or displace His commitment to deliver His people, He only took away the benefits.
13. Sisera fled on foot – Sisera was so completely defeated by God he became totally defenseless and helpless; did not even have his shoes.
14. There was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite – Man's peace compared to God's war is no peace.
15. There was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite – When God decides to execute justice there is no peace, there is no place to hide.

### **C. God is Always in Control (vs. 18-21):**

1. Jael without – Because there is no peace to displace God's justice God arranged a meeting with Sisera and Jael. God caused Jael to continuously with no end in sight remain in the place God established for her to meet Sisera.
2. Meet him – Jael was able to meet Sisera because God has set this as his end. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy Deborah spoke.

3. Said to him, 'Turn aside, my master to me – Jael kept insisting continuously and eventually commanded him to come into her tent.

4. Do not fear – Jael tells Sisera that there was no need for him to be terrorized by what was taking place even though he may have a very good reason for doing so. She is seemingly seeking to calm him down so that he would trust her and rest in her tent.

a) Sisera had reason to think that he would be safe if he reached the house of Heber. Evidently the Canaanites had not oppressed the nomadic Kenites in their midst, and the Kenites had not taken part in the Israelites uprising against them. [\[2\]](#)

5. And Sisera said to her – Sisera with all the energy he exerted to get from the battle field needed a drink of water and continuously beseeched her to provide it.

6. Stand in the doorway of the tent – Sisera commanded her to stand at the door as if she was in an official capacity keeping watch for him.

7. It shall be if anyone comes and inquires – Sisera commands Jael that this is the state she must completely set herself in as long as he was sleeping, to lie by telling everyone he is not there.

8. Took a tent pig – Once Sisera was sound asleep Jael continuously made every effort to get a tent pig to drive into his temple.

a) She gave Sisera the impression that she would guard the door, so she broke a promise. She killed a defenseless man who was under her protection, so she was a murderer. Yet Deborah sang, "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent" (5:24). [\[3\]](#)

9. Seized it into her hand – Jael was determined to make every effort to be in complete control of taking Sisera's life. Verse 21 makes it clear that she was the wife of Heber. She did not seek his permission at all. She did what she purposefully intended to do.

a) Both Jabin and Sisera had been guilty of mistreating the Jews for years; and if the Canaanite army had won the battle, hundreds of Jewish girls would have been captured and raped (v. 30). Jael not only helped deliver the nation of Israel from bondage, but also she helped to protect the women from the most vicious brutality. She wasn't a Semitic "Lady Macbeth" who murdered her guest for her own personal gain. There was a war on, and this courageous woman finally stopped being neutral and took her stand with the people of God.<sup>[4]</sup>

10. Went secretly to him - Even though Sisera was sound asleep she made every effort to make sure she would be successful. Sisera was a warrior and brutal leader. She knew she needed to take him out while he was asleep thus fulfilling the prophecy the Lord provided to Deborah.

a) Jael then attracted the attention of Barak who was going by in pursuit of Sisera, and showed him the corpse. Thus Deborah's prophecy (cf. 4:9) was fulfilled, for two women received honor for the defeat of Sisera—Deborah who started it and Jael who finished it.<sup>[5]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Judges](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 388). Victor Books.

<sup>[2]</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#) (Jdg 4:17–18). Moody Press.

<sup>[3]</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1994). [Be available](#) (p. 39). Victor Books.

<sup>[4]</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1994). [Be available](#) (p. 40). Victor Books.

<sup>[5]</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Judges](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 389). Victor Books.