

# LESSON 2

## THE LORD SAVES ISRAEL THROUGH DEBORAH AND BARAK

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### Israel's Government

Back in the time of the judges, Israelites didn't have kings or governors. God was Israel's ruler, so He punished them when they disobeyed. When Israel repented and called on God, He sent judges to free them and help them remain true to Him. The judges were from different tribes in Israel. Some were prophets as well.

#### Pattern of Israelite History

The period of the judges began a pattern that continually repeated itself in Israel's history, up until Nebuchadnezzar and his men invaded Jerusalem and took the Israelites captive into Babylon.

- 1) The people would be unfaithful to the Lord and fail to keep His law;
- 2) The Lord would arrange for them to be punished by an attack from the outside;
- 3) The people would return to the Lord and cry out for help; and
- 4) The Lord would deliver them from slavery through a great warrior.

#### Deborah

Deborah is the only female judge out of the twelve judges mentioned in the Old Testament. Deborah is also a prophetess, a person through whom God spoke to His people. According to Judges 4:5, she was a judge even before the battle that shattered the power of the Canaanites who oppressed the north-central tribes. As a judge, she would settle disputes too difficult for local courts.

Although no clear descriptions of Deborah are given in Scripture, it is suggested that she was far more assertive and confident than her general Barak. She issued the call to battle (Judg 4:6), but Barak was unwilling to go into battle unless Deborah accompanied him (Judg 4:8).

Deborah lived in a patriarchal (male-dominated) society, at a time when women didn't have many leadership roles. Yet, Deborah was acknowledged as a leader because of her relationship with God and her courage and faith. Deborah's story shows that God is not bound by human stereotypes or the limitations of society. Instead, God uses those who are willing to serve God and who follow in His ways.

### BIBLE TEXT

Judges 4-5

### BIBLE TRUTH

The Lord gives us all of our victories and successes.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To be faithful to God in good and bad times.
2. To trust in God for help when we are afraid.
3. To always give thanks to God.

### MEMORY VERSE

"Be thankful to Him,  
and bless His name."

(Psalm 100:4b)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. We thank You, Lord, for protecting us throughout this past week. We pray that You give us a humble heart, and let us not forget that all of our blessings come from You. We want to give You the praise and glory You deserve at all times. Hallelujah! Amen.

**Barak**

The name Barak means "lightning." The son of Abinoam, Barak was a great hero despite his hesitation to take leadership in the battle. His battle strategies turned a possible defeat into a glorious victory.

He knew that the Israelites were no match against 900 Canaanite chariots of iron. After all, they had no chariots, and could not possibly win on foot. So, he cleverly selected places where the chariots were ineffective—the hills of

Mount Tabor, the swampy grounds of the Kishon brook, and the muddy grounds of the Jezreel valley.

Barak selected a rainy day for the battle, where the river of Kishon swept the enemies away. Barak and the 10,000 Israelites held the high ground, and descended upon the

Canaanites. They dispersed in panic and were chased for around thirty kilometers until they were completely wiped out.

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## UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

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At this tender age, your students are already exposed to competition, comparison, and the effects of success and failure. Some may come out ahead, and others may fall behind. This week's lesson will help your students give glory and praise to God when they succeed or "come out ahead." And even when they encounter failures, let's remind the students to still give thanks to God, so that they may work harder next time to do a better job. Perhaps all of us have boasted about ourselves—how we look, what we can do, or what we have. We may be better at doing some things than others. Have students share with their neighbor about something that they think they can do very well.

Help them understand that God gives us different talents or abilities to be used to honor Him. If we allow ourselves to think that we are better or more important than others because of what we can do, then we are being

proud.

God's words teach us that we should keep ourselves from having prideful thoughts and instead give God the credit He deserves. Pride is a very serious sin in God's eyes. In the Bible, God says that He hates all the proud in heart (Prov 16:5a) and that a man's pride will ultimately bring him down (Prov 29:23).

Instead, when prideful thoughts come, we should praise God for His greatness and for what He has done through us. Remember that God made us and gave us all our abilities and talents. Anything we can do is only because of His goodness in us. Without Him, we can't do anything great (John 15:5)!

Encourage your students to ask Him to help them honor Him and give Him all the praise and glory whenever success brightens their lives.

### VOCABULARY

**judge:** a leader God provided to free Israel from danger and keep the peace

**repent:** to turn back, to change your mind and behavior

**chariot:** a fast cart with two wheels that is pulled by horses

**tent peg:** a thick pin made of wood or metal, used to hold down tents

**victory:** success in a battle

### REVIEW

Last week, we learned about a person named Joshua and the people of Gibeon. The Gibeonites were being attacked by enemies and Joshua had previously been tricked into making a peace treaty to protect them. The Canaanite king of Jerusalem, Adoni-Zedek, had heard how God worked through Joshua and asked four other kings to join in the fight against Joshua.

As Joshua went up to battle against the five kings, he must have been afraid. However, God reassured him and told him that He had delivered the enemies into his hands. God sent many hailstones down and miraculously, only the enemies were injured or killed. During the battle, Joshua also prayed to God to allow the sun and moon to stand still so he could finish the battle in daylight. God answered his prayers and the sun and moon stood still for about a whole day. What an amazing miracle!

We learned that if we rely on God through prayer and ask humbly for His help, He will give us the victory.

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## BIBLE STORY

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**Introduction**

[Teaching Tip: Since people used tents back in ancient times, you may set up a tent or use a big blanket draped over a table to create a tent-like area for storytelling. Children would love to squeeze in the cozy space with you to hear about this story. You may also use a flashlight in the tent if it's not bright enough. Wait for students to settle in the tent before asking an opening question.]

Have you ever been afraid to do something that you were supposed to do? Listen and see who is afraid in our story today. You may be surprised! Now that we are in this special tent, let's close our eyes together and travel back to the time of the Israelites. [Have students close their eyes and make a buzzing sound.] Now open your eyes...

**The Suffering Israelites**

What do you see? [Pretend to look around.]

The Israelites don't seem to be having a good time. Instead, they look pained and sad. It seems like every time a judge dies, the Israelites begin disobeying God and doing evil things in the eyes of God.

[In an exaggerated voice.] Look! They are worshiping idols over there. Do you see some soldiers walking around being mean to the Israelites? These soldiers were under the leadership of a man named Sisera, who commanded King Jabin's army of 900 iron chariots in Canaan.

Have you ever seen an iron chariot before? [Show a printed image of an iron chariot. You may find pictures of them in the local library, or type in "iron chariot Bible image" as the keyword on any Internet search engine.]

For King Jabin to have 900 iron chariots in his army meant that he could win almost any kind of battle. For twenty years, King Jabin and his army commander Sisera treated the Israelites cruelly, and now the Israelites were crying to the Lord for help.

**The Lord Sends Barak to Fight King Jabin**

At that time, a woman named Deborah became the judge and ruler of God's people. She sat near a palm tree and held court to help people solve their problems. One day, God gave her a message to tell a man named Barak, who was the head of the Israelite army at that time.

Deborah said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Take 10,000 Israelites with you to Mount Tabor to fight against Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army. I will surely make you win the battle.'"

Barak was afraid of King Jabin's army and refused to go by himself. He said to Deborah, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go!"

[Turn to students and ask.] Would you be afraid if you were Barak? Well, he actually had a good reason to be afraid since King Jabin's army had 900 iron chariots and was commanded by the cruel commander Sisera. Maybe Barak wondered how the Israelites could ever fight off the

fierce iron chariots and their swords.

Should Barak have been afraid? [Wait for students to respond.] No. Why not? Because God had called him to fight and promised a winning battle; he should have had more faith in God.

Deborah agreed to his request, but said, "However, you will not be honored when we win the battle. The Lord will instead honor a woman." Deborah was referring to Jael.

So Deborah, Barak, and 10,000 Israelites went to Mount Tabor. When Sisera heard that Barak had gone to Mount Tabor, he took his 900 chariots and all the men with him to the Kishon River.

**God Gives Israel Victory**

Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! Today, the Lord will give you victory over Sisera. Has not the Lord gone out before you?" So Barak and his soldiers went down Mount Tabor, and they fought Sisera's army and his chariots with swords.

The Lord gave them victory, for He had thrown Sisera's army into such confusion that the Israelites defeated them easily. Sisera saw what was happening, and jumped out of his chariot to run away.

**Jael Kills Sisera**

Sisera ran as far as a nearby tent, where a woman named Jael lived with her husband Heber. He stayed there because they were both friends of King Jabin. Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come inside, my lord. Don't be afraid." When he went inside her tent, she gave him a blanket.

"I'm thirsty," Sisera said. "Please give me some water." Jael poured him some milk, and after drinking it, Sisera lay down to rest. Before going to sleep, Sisera said to Jael, "Stand in the doorway of your tent. If someone asks if anyone is here, say 'No.'"

Sisera was very tired and fell fast asleep. Jael knew that Sisera was an evil commander. She knew that he must be stopped. While he was sleeping, Jael very bravely took a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him. Then she drove the tent peg through Sisera's head, and he died. [Teachers: the way Sisera was killed may be too horrifying for children. You may want to only share that he was killed and not share the details.]

Barak was chasing Sisera, and when he came to Jael's tent, she went out to meet him. She said, "Come, I will show you the man you are looking for." So Barak went with her into the tent and found Sisera's dead body.

**Deborah and Barak Praise the Lord**

God took care of His people and helped them win the battle. On that day, God gave the Israelites victory over King Jabin. The Israelites became stronger and stronger,

and soon they destroyed King Jabin.

When God gives us direction, He will follow through with His plan. For our part, we need to trust God completely. That day, Deborah and Barak made up a song about the battle to praise and thank God. They did not take the credit for winning the battle; instead, they praised God for giving them victory over their enemies.

They understood that the Lord is the One who is in control. They were so happy that the Lord was in their lives. Deborah and Barak sang, "Praise the Lord! Hear this you kings! Listen you rulers! I will sing to the Lord, I will sing; I will make music to the Lord, the God of Israel."

God heard their words of thanksgiving and the Israelites had peace in their land for 40 years! What a mighty God we have. This God of Israel is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. Let's pray that we can believe and trust more in God every day.

As we become stronger and more able to do things for God, let's also remember to give thanks to the Lord at all times for He has blessed us with all our talents and skills! We should follow in the example of Deborah and Barak, who sang praise to God after winning the battle.

[As a concluding activity, have the students sing a praise song together. Let them know that this wasn't the song that Deborah sang, but that we can always praise God by singing hymns and songs that give God all the glory!]

Let's sing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." [You can pick which verses to sing with the students depending on how much class time you have left.]

He's got the whole world in His hands,  
He's got the whole world in His hands,  
He's got the whole world in His hands,  
He's got the whole world in His hands.

He's got my brothers and my sisters in His hands,  
He's got my brothers and my sisters in His hands,  
He's got my brothers and my sisters in His hands,  
He's got the whole world in His hands.

He's got the sun and the rain in His hands,  
He's got the moon and the stars in His hands,  
He's got the wind and the clouds in His hands,  
He's got the whole world in His hands.

He's got the rivers and the mountains in His hands,  
He's got the oceans and the seas in His hands,  
He's got you and he's got me in His hands,  
He's got the whole world in His hands.

He's got everybody here in His hands,  
He's got everybody there in His hands,  
He's got everybody everywhere in His hands,  
He's got the whole world in His hands.

### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

- 1. What did God do to the Israelites because they sinned against Him?** He allowed Jabin, the king of Canaan, to treat them badly.
- 2. Which prophetess was leading Israel at that time?** Deborah.
- 3. What did the Lord command Barak to do?** To fight against Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army.
- 4. What was Barak's reaction to God's command?** Barak was afraid, and he didn't want to go to the battle by himself.
- 5. Who won the battle between the Israelites and Sisera's army?** The Israelites.
- 6. What happened to Sisera?** He was killed by Jael in her tent.
- 7. What did Deborah and Barak do after the battle to show their thanks to God?** They sang a song of praise.

### MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"Be thankful to Him, and bless His name." (Psalm 100:4b)**

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 SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION
 

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The Bible tells us that God's people, the Israelites, tended to only follow and listen to Him when times were hard. However, when times were good, they forgot about God and just did what they wanted to do. This made God feel very sad.

If we think about our own actions, we sometimes are just like the Israelites, too. When we are doing well, we don't talk to God or keep Him in mind. But when things get hard, we run to God for help. Dear students, have you ever had that experience before? [Encourage students to share.]

Do you know that God really wants us to follow Him and listen to Him every day? How can we follow Him and listen to Him every day? [Have students give examples.]

We can pray to talk with God and hear what He has to say to us. We can learn from the Bible about what is right or wrong. We can also talk to our parents and ask them to help us make the right choices every day. Let's listen to a story of a little girl named Nancy, and how she worked hard to follow and listen to God every day.

Nancy was six years old the year that she started first grade. She made many good friends at school and among them was Michelle. Nancy loved to play with Michelle during recess. When people asked her who her best friend at school was, she would immediately answer "Michelle."

On Saturdays, Nancy would go to church with her parents to worship God. She liked going to church, and especially to her Bible class, where she could sing hymns, listen to Bible stories, and do fun crafts together with her church friends.

One day, Nancy came home from school filled with excitement, and eagerly rushed over to show something to her mom.

"Mom, look at this," she said with a big smile while waving a little card in front of her mom's face.

Mom gently replied, "What is it, sweetheart?"

"Look at what I got from Michelle today! She asked me to go to her birthday party."

Mom took the card, glanced at the party date, and then looked at the calendar. Finally, she said, "Nancy, sweetie, Michelle's birthday party is on a Saturday. We go to church on Saturdays, remember?"

Nancy continued, "But Mom, Michelle is my best friend. I need to go to her birthday party. I have to be there."

Mom answered patiently, "You can always celebrate it with her the day before, on Friday, when you see her at school."

Nancy was about to cry. "No, Mom. That's not the same. I want to go to her party."

Mom said firmly, "Don't cry, Nancy. You know how important it is for us to go to church for Sabbath worship. God knows that you really care about your friend, but I'm sure He would be even more proud to see you at church learning about Him instead of going to a party."

Mom continued, "What about this, my dear? Let me call Michelle's mom, and see if Michelle can come to our house to play the Friday before her birthday. You girls can make some chocolate cupcakes together. Does this sound good?"

"Can you call now, Mom?" Nancy asked quietly with the hint of a smile growing on her face.

Mom hugged Nancy gently and said, "Yes, now, my dear. I know that God is also smiling at you right now for making the right decision!"

This was a tough decision for Nancy to make, wasn't it? What would you do if you were Nancy, wanting to go to your friend's birthday party on a Saturday? [Encourage students to share.]

Instead of insisting on having her own way, Nancy listened to what her mom had to tell her. She followed God's commandment and made the right decision. We want our heavenly Father to be proud of us. We know that God is always there to help us do the right things every day.

Now, take out a piece of paper and write down three things that you can do every day this week to follow and listen to God. Bring this piece of paper home and tape it on your desk. Help one another carry out the promise you made with God. You will be surprised to experience God's blessings when He sees your heart of determination to be a good Christian soldier.

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 ACTIVITIES
 

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1

**Finding My Talent Charade Game**

**Objective:** To allow students to reflect on all the talents and spiritual gifts that God has blessed them with.

**Materials**

- Bible
- White board
- Dry-erase markers
- Timer or stopwatch

**Preparations**

1. Before starting the game, have the students name different talents that people may have, and list them on the board.
2. Encourage the students to list some spiritual gifts as well. They can be found in the following verses:

- 1 Cor 12:8-10
- Eph 4:11-12
- 1 Pet 4:10-11
- Rom 12: 4-8

3. A good list may look like this:

Talents	Spiritual Gifts
Drawing	Having Bible knowledge
Having wisdom	Having faith
Singing	Praying for others
Teaching	Preaching
Writing	Knowing right from wrong
Acting	Sharing God's love w/others
Playing music	Sharing God's love w/others
Playing sports	Serving others
Creating arts	Being kind
Storytelling	Being patient

[Make sure there are plenty of options to choose from to make the game more interesting.]

**Instructions**

1. Once the list has been compiled, it's time to play charades. If you have enough students, divide them into two teams.
2. One student from each team can come takes turns coming up to the front to act out whatever talent or spiritual gift you (the teacher) have assigned to the student.
3. The rule is "act without speaking." As the player acts out for their team quietly, he or she can only nod or shake their head to answer questions from team members.
4. Each team gets one minute to guess the correct answer. [Teacher may use a timer or stopwatch to time the students. If your students are younger in age, you may give them 2 to 3 minutes for each turn.]
5. When the time is up and the playing team still can't guess the correct answer, the other team gets to guess the answer.
6. Whichever team correctly guesses the most talents or spiritual gifts wins!

## 2

**Yarn Pathfinder**

**Objective:** To reinforce God's guidance and blessings in our everyday lives.

**Materials**

- Craft sticks, two per student
- Glue
- Markers
- Yarn, assorted colors

**Instructions**

1. Glue two craft sticks together to make a cross.
2. Tie one end of the yarn around the middle of the cross.
3. Wrap the yarn over the two sticks.
4. Go back under the second stick with the yarn.
5. Bring the yarn under and pull it over the next stick.
6. As you continue with this "over two, under one" sequence, talk about how God guides every one of us and gives us success, just as He gave Deborah and Barak success. Talk about how God is the cause of our success and how we should always give glory to Him in anything we do.
7. When you come close to the end of the sticks, tie the yarn off in a loop. Using a marker, print the points of the compass on the ends of the craft sticks.
8. Hang up the pathfinder as a reminder of God's guidance.

**HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY**

1. "Be thankful to Him, and bless His name." (Psalm 100:4b)
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. False; during the judges period, God appointed judges, not kings.
6. False; she was both a prophetess and a judge.
7. Barak
8. God felt sad.
9. 900
10. Answers may vary.

E1 Year 1 Book 4 Lesson 2—The Lord Saves Israel through Deborah and Barak

# Homework Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Truth:** The Lord gives us all of our victories and successes.

- Lesson Objectives:**
1. To be faithful to God in good and bad times.
  2. To trust in God for help when we are afraid.
  3. To always give thanks to God.

**Bible Reading:** Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a checkmark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

## Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Psalm 100:4b)

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## What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



# Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

1. Write down the memory verse for this week.

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## Multiple Choice

2. \_\_\_\_\_ : Who did God use to rescue Israel from their enemies?  
 a. Judges                      b. Kings                      c. Warriors
3. \_\_\_\_\_ : Why wouldn't Barak go to battle by himself?  
 a. He was hurt.              b. He was afraid of Sisera's army.              c. He was sick.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ : How did Deborah praise God after winning the battle?  
 a. In writing                  b. In dance                  c. In song

## True or False

5. Did God appoint kings to rule over Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Deborah was a prophetess, but not a judge. \_\_\_\_\_

## Fill In the Blank

7. \_\_\_\_\_ led the Israelite army to fight against commander Sisera's iron chariots.

## Short Answer

8. How did God feel when the Israelites disobeyed Him so quickly? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many iron chariots did Sisera's army have? \_\_\_\_\_

## Life Application

10. God has blessed all of us with special talents and spiritual gifts to serve Him. Interview TWO members of your family to find out what special talents and spiritual gifts God has given them and write them down. Also, ask them to tell you how they plan to use these talents and gifts to serve the Lord!

**Family member #1:** \_\_\_\_\_ (name and relationship)

What talents and gifts has God given him/her?

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How does he/she plan to use these talents and gifts to serve God?

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**Family member #2:** \_\_\_\_\_ (name and relationship)

What talents and gifts has God given him/her?

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How does he/she plan to use these talents and gifts to serve God?

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