

take this chance and proceeds to carry out the plan. However, it is plain to us, knowing the history, that that is not what these words actually meant. They meant instead that the actual destruction of Sisera himself would not be by the armies of Barak but by the hand of a woman. The woman proves to be not Deborah but Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. This prediction is incidental rather than organic because it makes little difference to the progress of the kingdom of God what is the fate of the one man Sisera. Whether he escapes and lives out the rest of his life as a discredited leader after his army has been ruined, or whether he is killed by the soldiers in the battle, or whether he is tramped on by the horses in their wild rush when the chariots are bogged in the mire, or whether a woman drives a tentpin through his head, is not of particular importance to the delivery of the Israelites from their oppression. It is vital, however, because it gives in advance an incidental fact which, when it comes to pass, proves clearly that Deborah actually spoke from God and was His mouthpiece.

After the victory had been accomplished, the tendency of many would be to think of Deborah simply as a very skillful political leader. She knew the signs of the times. She was acquainted with the character of Sisera and knew that in his impetuosity he would immediately bring his great army of chariots near to the river Kishon to encamp, recklessly overlooking the possibility of a sudden storm. She had observed weather conditions for many years. She knew it was extremely probable that a sudden storm would come just at this time. She knew the use of chariots in warfare and their need of solid ground, and well realized their helplessness if caught in a sudden storm by the river Kishon as it swelled over its banks and flooded the country round about. If a great mass of Israelites at such a time would suddenly swoop down from the mountain and attack them, there would be little question of the outcome. Thus she was a wise and clever woman, people might say, but not necessarily one possessed of any supernatural knowledge.

God wished to make it clear that this was far from the actual situation. Deborah was actually a prophetess - a mouthpiece of God - and she was making these predictions