

storm were to come. Barak doubtless hoped that Deborah was indeed speaking truly and that God had predicted this through her. Yet he knew her to be a very wise woman. For many years she had been observing political and meteorological conditions. She was aware of the impetuous character of Sisera, and of the fact that he was apt to be overconfident and a bit careless. Yet it might be that Sisera, as the years passed, had become more cautious. Suppose that he were to go to a less convenient but safer place to make his encampment. He could wait there until the Israelites were forced by starvation to come down from the mountain. Or he could leave enough of his force there to keep watch on the men cooped up in the mountain, and could send the rest to pillage and destroy their homes and to take their families captive. In this case the men would be forced to come down and try to deliver their families, and would be an easy prey to the Canaanites. Was Deborah's judgment of Sisera's character still correct? Had God actually said that He would cause Sisera to follow this somewhat incautious procedure of encamping by the river Kishon?

Moreover, Barak thought about the second prediction. Deborah said that God would deliver the Canaanites into his hand. Barak knew what it would mean if a sudden storm should come; yet such storms were quite infrequent. Suppose the storm should fail to come. This actually happened once during the Middle Ages. An army went up Mount Tabor to draw the enemy to the river Kishon, thinking that they would have a victory precisely like Barak's. No storm came. Eventually they were forced to come down and were annihilated. Was Deborah's promise that God would deliver Sisera into his hand a direct promise from God, or was it simply that her observation of weather conditions over a period of many years led her to believe that a sudden storm would come at this time of year? Suppose the storm should fail to materialize? In that case the Israelites would be at the mercy of the Canaanites.