

He was not trampled upon or kicked by one of the plunging horses. We are told that all the rest were killed, and only he escaped. The direction in which he happened to run was exactly the direction in which, unknown to him, Heber, the Kenite, who was on terms of peace with the Canaanites, had recently encamped (verse 17). Deborah had no way of knowing that these things would happen. Nor did she have any human way of knowing that Heber would be away when Sisera would come, leaving Jael, his wife, in a precarious position.

Deborah had no human way of knowing what action Jael would take when she saw Sisera coming. In 1929 I was a member of a party that traveled on horseback through the back country of Palestine looking for archaeological sites. If we came to an Arab village in the morning when the men were not around, but the women were working outside, it was often difficult to get directions. The Arab women were afraid of strangers. They did not know what evil the strangers might do to them, and if they should become friendly they did not know what effects their husbands' jealousy might produce. Often they would give us a false direction in order to get rid of us as quickly as possible.

When Jael saw Sisera running down the valley all disheveled and excited, no human being could predict what she might do. If she had seen him in time she might have run off a distance and tried to hide. She might have tried to barricade herself in the tent in the hope that he would not stop. She might simply have fled. Or she might do as she did: attempt to protect herself by deception. She went out and spoke to him in a friendly way. When she brought him into the tent, she was in greater danger than before. If her husband should return and find a strange man in the tent he would probably kill them both. Hoping that her husband would not come back before she finished, she speedily gave him a drink that would make it easy for him to fall asleep, and then killed him.