



# J A E L

## J A E L

Who was Jael?

Jael's Bible Account

Lesson taken from Jael

Insight for US

### Who was Jael?

a. Jael was the wife of Heber, the Kenite, the descendent of Moses' father-in-law, Hobab. Heber separated himself from the Kenites and lived near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, beside Kadesh ([Judges 4:11](#)). There was peace between the house of Heber and Jabin, king of Hazor ([Judges 4:17](#)).

b. Jael lived during the period of Jabin's reign. Jabin had taken over the Israelites after Exodus period. Israelites did evil things in the sight of the God by worshipping Baal and other gods, marrying and giving in marriage their children with the people whom God had asked not to have dealings with.

**Judges 3: 5-8** - Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>6</sup>And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods. <sup>7</sup>So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs. <sup>8</sup>Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel...

Every time Israelites did evil things in the sight of God, He gave them into the hands of their enemy. They were namely Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia, Eglon king of Moab, men of the Philistines and Jabin king of Canaan. When Israelites repented and cried to God, each time He delivered them through His appointed judges like Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar. It was during Jabin's period, Israelites cried out to God again for delivering them out of this slavery. ([Judges 3:8,9,12,15,31; 4: 2](#))

### Jael's Bible account:

During Jabin's period, Israelites cried out to God to deliver them from the slavery. So God chose Deborah, a prophetess as well as judge, and judge Barak to help them. Deborah instructed Barak what God promised: "Barak had to take 10000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun to Mount Tabor against Sisera, the

commander of Jabin’s army and God will deliver him into Barak’s hand”. Barak in turn asked Deborah to come with him. She went along with Barak to Kadesh where Heber resided.

When Sisera heard about Barak’s army towards Mount Tabor, he went along with his 900 chariots of iron to the river Kishon. God gave Sisera’s army into the hands of Barak while Sisera fled away by foot to the tent of Jael. Jael went out to meet Sisera and invited him inside her tent. Sisera went in as a refuge. Jael gave him milk and he asked her to stay at watch at the door of the tent in case anyone comes looking for him; he also instructed her to say, “No” if anyone inquires of him. As soon as he was fast asleep, she came in with a tent peg and a hammer in hand. Jael drove the peg into his temple and killed him. When Barak came in search of Sisera, Jael showed what she had done.

**Judges 4: 17-22** - <sup>17</sup> However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for *there was peace* between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. <sup>18</sup> And **Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.”** And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket. <sup>19</sup> Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. <sup>20</sup> And he said to her, “Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there any man here?’ you shall say, ‘No.’” <sup>21</sup> Then **Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.** <sup>22</sup> And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, “Come, I will show you the man whom you seek.” And when he went into her *tent*, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

### Lessons from Jael:

- **Knowledge:** She had known about the true God though she was a Kenite (non-Israelite) and had good background knowledge about the Israelites.
- **Truth:** She knew that Israelites were the true God’s chosen people.
- **Wisdom:** She knew that Israelites were under Jabin’s slavery. So, she went out of her tent to meet Sisera. Why? To grab the opportunity helping Israelites. She used her wisdom in grabbing the opportunity to be used by God in His work.

- **Care:** Though she knew Sisera was the army commander fighting against Israelites, she offered him milk and covered him with care.
- **Skill:** She used her skill of pitching tent as a method to kill Sisera.

### Insight for US:

- **Courageous:** Jael's bravery act in spite of being a woman has to be admired and followed. Sisera was a valiant warrior. In times like now, we should have the boldness to open our mouth in wisdom to proclaim the good news about the God's Kingdom amidst any type of crowd.
- **Wisdom:** Jael used hammer and tent peg to kill the enemy. She chose the weapon that was very commonly used by her while moving tents. In the same way, we have to choose God's weapon given to us in the form of Bible – the word of God as a weapon against the thoughts or the weaknesses or the blocks we have within ourselves in our spiritual journey. As the scripture says, the word of God is living and is a double-edged sword. ([Hebrew 4:12](#))
- **Heart/ Desire for true God:** She killed Sisera who was fighting against God's people. Sisera or Jabin were not her enemies. The scripture very clearly states that they were at peace with Jabin. It shows how much she desired or trusted the true God of Israel. ([Judges 4:17](#))
- **Blessing:** Jael availed the blessing of God. ([Judges 4:9](#))
- **Privilege:** Her name is written in the bible – God's word. Deborah, a prophetess sang a victory song to God in which Jael was praised as "most blessed of women". Jael proves herself as stated in Proverbs 31:30 (... but a woman *who* fears the Lord, she shall be praised.)
- **Fear led to the loss of the blessing:** Irrespective of God instructing Barak through Deborah to go against Sisera and He would give Sisera in his hands, Barak was either fearful or shying away or doubtful. So only he asked Deborah to go with him; else, he wasn't going. That quality led him to lose the glory or honor. So we need to be vigilant and wise to use the opportunity to do God's will. ([Judges 4: 8,9](#))
- Though Jael was a non-Israelite woman, she was fully aware of what was going in her times with Israel. She was well informed. That's why, when Sisera fled away, she herself went out to meet him at the tent. She invited him into the tent, which is very against the culture during those times. She served him and made him feel secure and comfortable. When he fell asleep, she used the opportunity to kill him, as he was a threat against Israelites. This shows that she was waiting for an opportunity to serve God. Many questions raise here:
  - Why did Jael take the rights in her hand to kill a man?



- Who gave her the rights to kill?
- Is it right in the eyes of a loving God to kill a person?
- Is it right to kill a person who has taken refuge under the host feeling secured?
- Is it acceptable to fool a person who is under one's care to the point of killing?

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