

Strong's Concordance

yael: mountain goat

Original Word: יַעַל

Part of Speech: Noun Masculine

Transliteration: yael

Phonetic Spelling: (yaw-ale')

Short Definition: goats

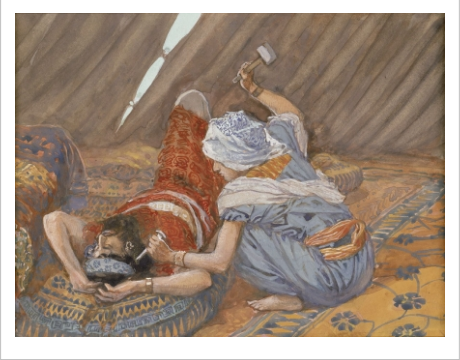
<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/3277.htm>

Jael - One of the twin Cherubim on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant, the other cherub being Zarall.

<http://www.circle-of-light.com/Angels/angels-HtoL.html>

Yael

For other uses, see Yael (name).

Yael	
	
<p>"Jael Smote Sisera, and Slew Him," by James Tissot in the collection of the Jewish Museum (New York).</p>	
Residence	Tent in the plain of Zaanaim, near Kedesh.
Nationality	Kenite
Other names	Jael, Ya'el
Spouse(s)	Heber the Kenite

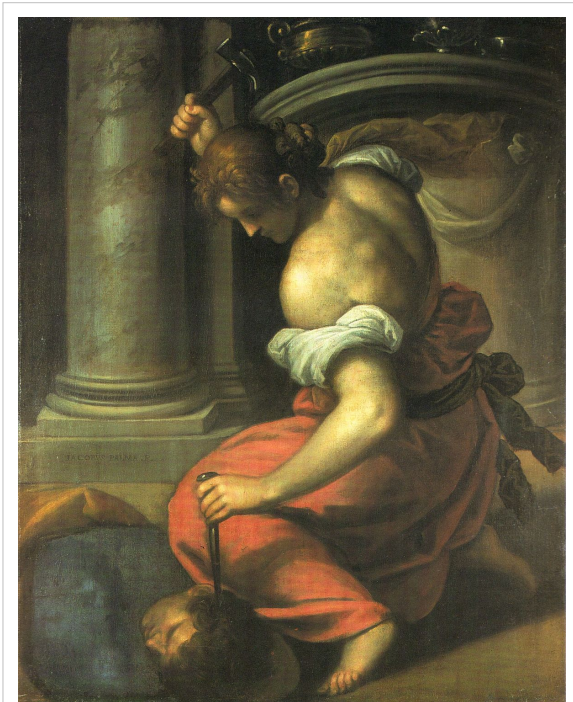
Yael or **Jael** (Hebrew **Ya'el**, יַעֵל, the name of the Nubian Ibex) is a woman mentioned in the Book of Judges in the Bible, as the heroine who killed Sisera to deliver Israel from the troops of king Jabin. She was the wife of Heber the Kenite.

Yael in the book of Judges

God told Deborah (a prophetess and leader) that she would deliver Israel from Jabin. Deborah called Barak to make up an army to lead into battle against Jabin on the plain of Esdraelon. But Barak demanded that Deborah would accompany him into the battle. Deborah agreed but prophesied that the honour of the killing of the other army's captain would be given to a woman. Jabin's army was led by Sisera (Judg. 4:2), who fled the battle after all was lost.

Yael received the fleeing Sisera at the settlement of Heber on the plain of Zaanaim. Yael welcomed him into her tent with apparent hospitality. She 'gave him milk' 'in a lordly dish'. Having drunk the refreshing beverage, he lay down and soon sank into the sleep of the weary. While he lay asleep Yael crept stealthily up to him, holding a tent peg and a mallet. She drove it through his temples with such force that it entered into the ground below. And 'at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead'.

As a result of the killing of Sisera, God gave the victory to Israel. Yael is considered "blessed", according to the text, because of her action. Deborah's song (Judg. 5:23-27) that refers to the death of Sisera:



Yael Killing Sisera, by Palma the Younger.

"Extolled above women be Jael,
 The wife of Heber the Kenite,
 Extolled above women in the tent.
 He asked for water, she gave him milk;
 She brought him cream in a lordly dish.
 She stretched forth her hand to the nail,
 Her right hand to the workman's hammer,
 And she smote Sisera; she crushed his head,
 She crashed through and transfixed his temples.
 At her feet he curled himself, he fell, he lay still;
 At her feet he curled himself, he fell;
 And where he curled himself, let it be, there he fell dead."

Scholars have long recognized that the Song of Deborah, on the basis of linguistic evidence (archaic biblical Hebrew), is one of the oldest parts of the Bible.^[1] A similar story is explored in the deuterocanonical Book of Judith.

Extra-biblical references

Pseudo-Philo refers to Yael in the book, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*:

Now Jael took a stake in her left hand and approached him, saying, "If God will work this sign with me, I know that Sisera will fall into my hands. Behold I will throw him down on the ground from the bed on which he sleeps; and if he does not feel it, I know that he has been handed over." And Jael took Sisera and pushed him onto the ground from the bed. But he did not feel it, because he was very groggy.

And Jael said, "Strengthen in me today, Lord, my arm on account of you and your people and those who hope in you." And Jael took the stake and put it on his temple and struck it with a hammer.

And while he was dying, Sisera said to Jael, "Behold pain has taken hold of me, Jael, and I die like a woman."

And Jael said to him, "Go, boast before your father in hell and tell him that you have fallen into the hands of a woman."

Artistic depictions of Yael

Medieval images of Jael, seen in illuminated manuscripts, depicted her as both a defender of Israel and a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary. This can be seen in the Stavelot Bible, the *Speculus Darmstadt*, as well as several other texts. Renaissance imagery of Jael have largely shown her as a seductress and murderess, similar to other biblical women who triumphed over men, such as Judith or Delilah. Instead of being viewed as a positive figure, she was used to show that women can lead to men's destruction.





Jael and Sisera, Artemisia Gentileschi

In the Baroque period, Jael continued to be a sexual figure in art. Gregorio Lazzarini and Artemisia Gentileschi are two examples of an attractive Jael, shown in the act of killing her foe.

Yael is portrayed in the French silent film *Jael and Sisera* (1911), directed by Henri Andréani.^[2]

In popular culture

- Anthony Trollope's novel *The Last Chronicle of Barset* contains a sub-plot in which the painter Conway Dalrymple paints the heiress Clara Van Siever as Jael driving a "nail" through the head of Sisera.
- In P.G. Wodehouse's novel *The Code of the Woosters*, the narrator Bertie Wooster mentions Jael in a description of hangover symptoms that he is experiencing: "Indeed, just before Jeeves came in, I had been dreaming that some bounder was driving spikes through my head—not just ordinary spikes, as used by Jael the wife of Heber, but red-hot ones."
 - Bertie also mentions "Jael, wife of Heber" in *Right Ho, Jeeves*.
 - Wodehouse also mentions "Jael the wife of Heber" in *Galahad at Blandings*. When Tipton Plimsoll shakes his head, the narrator remarks, "There are times when shaking the head creates the illusion one has met Jael the wife of Heber, incurred her displeasure and started her going into her celebrated routine."
 - Wodehouse also mentions "Jael, the wife of Heber" in *Cocktail Time*, when Frederick Twistleton describes the face of a member of the Drones Club with "...a look of ecstasy and exaltation such as Jael, the wife of Heber, must have worn when about to hammer the Brazil nut into the head of Sisera...".
- Booker Prize winner A.S. Byatt's 1998 collection of short fiction, *Elementals: Stories of Fire and Ice*, contains a short story entitled "Jael", which is intricately related to the biblical story of Jael.
- In a half-hour radio drama, *Butter in a Lordly Dish* (1948), Agatha Christie has her protagonist drug a lawyer's coffee; after revealing her true identity, she hammers a nail into his head.
- The central image of Aritha van Herk's novel *The Tent Peg* refers to the story of Jael and Sisera.
- In the television show *Weeds*, there is a character named Yael who is the Admissions Director at a rabbinic school. She mentions that her name came from the story in the book of Judges.
- A chapter in Martin Sugarman's book *Fighting Back: British Jewry's Military Contribution in the Second World War* (Valentine Mitchell, 2010) is headed "Daughters of Yael: Two Jewish Heroines of the SOE". The author uses the name to illustrate the courage of ATS Denise Bloch and WAAF Muriel Byck of the Special Operation Executive, who were killed in action operating behind German lines in France.
- A section of Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's book *Good Wives* is entitled "Jael".
- The Christian metalcore band Oh, Sleeper has a song entitled "Hush Yael" on their album *Children of Fire*.



Mosaic at the Dormition Church in Jerusalem

As a name

"Yael" (יַעֵל) is at present one of the most common female first names in contemporary Israel. The translation and meaning is Nubian ibex. In Israel Yaelim is plural for gazelles.

References

Citations

- [1] Coogan, M. A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in its Context. (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2009), 180.
- [2] Jaël et Sisera at IMDb.com (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0478174/>), December 15, 2010.

Sources

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External links



Wikimedia Commons has media related to *Jael and Sisera*.

- Jael the Kenite (<http://www.christianiconography.info/jael.html>) at the Christian Iconography (<http://www.christianiconography.info>) web site

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