OHBC Six-Day Bible Study
Weekly Bible Study: Judges 4
The Lord Delivers His People Through His Sovereign Power

Weekly Theme

Judges chapter 4 reminds us that God remains faithful to His covenant purposes even when His people repeatedly turn away from Him. After the death of Ehud, Israel once again does what is evil in the sight of the Lord. As a consequence, God gives them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, whose military commander, Sisera, oppresses Israel for twenty years. Once again, when the Israelites cry out to the Lord, He raises up Deborah, a prophetess and judge, and calls Barak to lead His people into battle.

Throughout this chapter, we see that victory does not depend upon human strength, military resources, or the courage of any individual. Israel faces an enemy with nine hundred chariots of iron, but the Lord has already determined the outcome. Through Deborah's faithful proclamation, Barak's obedience, and Jael's unexpected actions, God demonstrates that He alone has the power to deliver His people. Even when human weakness and hesitation are evident, God's purposes cannot be defeated.

This chapter also teaches us that God accomplishes His will through ordinary people who respond to His Word. Deborah speaks with confidence because she trusts what God has said. Barak moves forward when called, though his hesitation reveals the weakness of his faith. Jael becomes an unexpected instrument through whom God fulfills His promise. Each person plays a different role, but the glory for Israel's deliverance belongs to the Lord alone.

As we study Judges 4 this week, we should examine our own willingness to trust and obey God's Word. We must recognize the danger of returning to familiar sins, the consequences of spiritual compromise, and the importance of trusting God's promises rather than our circumstances. Above all, we should remember that the deliverance accomplished in Judges points us toward Jesus Christ, the greater Deliverer, who has conquered sin and death and secured eternal salvation for His people.

Monday: The Danger of Returning to Sin

Reading: Judges 4:1–3

Focus Verse: Judges 4:1 (ESV)

"*And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud died*."

Study Question:

What pattern of behavior do we see repeated in Israel after the death of Ehud, and how does God's response demonstrate both His holiness and His covenant faithfulness?

Personal Application:

Israel's repeated return to sin reminds us how easily people can drift away from obedience when they neglect God's Word. The death of Ehud marked the beginning of another period of rebellion, showing that Israel's faithfulness was often tied to the presence of a strong leader rather than a lasting devotion to the Lord.

As Christians, we must be careful not to allow our faithfulness to depend entirely upon a pastor, teacher, parent, or other spiritual influence. God calls each of us to pursue Him through His Word, prayer, and obedience. Consider whether there are areas of your life where you have gradually become comfortable with something Scripture condemns. Rather than excusing sin or waiting for its consequences, confess it to the Lord and seek to walk faithfully before Him.

Scriptural Prayer:

Today, pray through Psalm 139:23–24

example: Heavenly Father, search my heart and reveal the sins that I have allowed to remain in my life. Forgive me for the times I have turned away from Your Word and followed my own desires. Give me a heart that loves righteousness and hates what is evil. Help me remain faithful to You, not merely because of the influence of others, but because You are worthy of my obedience. Lead me in the way everlasting. In Jesus' name, amen.

Tuesday: God Speaks Through His Word

Reading: Judges 4:4–7

Focus Verse: Judges 4:6 (ESV)

"*Has not the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking 10,000 from the people of Naphtali and the people of Zebulun*.'"

Study Question:

What does Deborah's message to Barak reveal about the source of her authority, and what specific command and promise does God give concerning the coming battle?

Personal Application:

Deborah does not call Barak to battle based upon her own wisdom, military experience, or personal ambition. She speaks because the Lord has given His command. Her confidence rests upon God's Word and His promise to deliver Sisera into Barak's hand.

This is an important reminder that genuine spiritual authority comes from God and must be exercised according to His revealed Word. **Christians today should not seek new revelations** to determine whether they should obey what God has already commanded in Scripture. Instead, we must study His Word carefully and respond faithfully to what He has made known.

Consider how you approach decisions involving your family, church, relationships, and responsibilities. Are you allowing Scripture to shape your choices, or are you primarily guided by personal preferences and circumstances? God has graciously given us His Word so that we may know Him and learn how to live in a manner pleasing to Him.

Scriptural Prayer:

Today, pray through Psalm 119:105

example: Gracious Lord, thank You for giving us Your Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Forgive me for the times I have trusted my own understanding instead of seeking wisdom from Scripture. Help me approach Your Word with humility, believing that what You have commanded is good and right. Give me wisdom to recognize Your truth and courage to obey it, even when obedience is difficult. In Jesus' name, amen.

Wednesday: Obedience Requires Trust

Reading: Judges 4:8–10

Focus Verse: Judges 4:8 (ESV)

"*Barak said to her, 'If you will go with me, I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go.*'"

Study Question:

How does Barak respond to God's command, and what does Deborah's answer reveal about the consequences of his hesitation?

Personal Application:

Barak has received a clear command from God, accompanied by the promise of victory. Rather than immediately moving forward, he insists that Deborah accompany him. Although Barak ultimately obeys, his response reveals a struggle to trust the Lord's promise without additional reassurance.

We should recognize that Barak's faith was not absent. Hebrews 11:32 includes him among those commended for faith. Nevertheless, Judges 4 reminds us that genuine believers can struggle with fear and hesitation when obedience requires courage.

We may face similar struggles when God calls us to forgive someone who has wronged us, confront sin with humility, share the gospel with an unbeliever, or serve in a difficult situation. Our confidence must

not rest upon our own abilities or the presence of another person, but upon the faithfulness of the God who has spoken.

Ask yourself whether there is something Scripture clearly commands that you have delayed doing because of fear, uncertainty, or discomfort. Faithful obedience does not require the absence of fear. It requires trusting the Lord enough to act according to His Word.

Scriptural Prayer:

Today, pray through Proverbs 3:5–6

example: Heavenly Father, I confess that I often struggle to trust You when the path before me seems difficult or uncertain. Forgive me for allowing fear and hesitation to keep me from obeying Your Word. Teach me to trust You with all my heart rather than leaning upon my own understanding. Strengthen my faith and help me remember that Your wisdom is greater than mine. Give me courage to obey You faithfully, even when I cannot see the outcome. In Jesus' name, amen.

Thursday: The Battle Belongs to the Lord

Reading: Judges 4:11–16

Focus Verse: Judges 4:14 (ESV)

"*And Deborah said to Barak, 'Up! For this is the day in which the* LORD *has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the* LORD *go out before you*?'"

Study Question:

According to Judges 4:14–16, who is ultimately responsible for the defeat of Sisera's army, and how does the passage distinguish between God's sovereign action and Barak's responsibility to act?

Personal Application:

Israel's enemy possesses nine hundred chariots of iron, a powerful military advantage in the ancient world. From a human perspective, Barak's army faces an overwhelming challenge. Deborah does not encourage Barak by reminding him of Israel's military strength. She points him to the Lord, who has already promised victory.

Judges 4:15 makes clear that it is the Lord who throws Sisera and his army into confusion. Barak and his men must still enter the battle, but their victory comes through God's sovereign intervention.

This teaches us an important truth about the Christian life: God's sovereignty does not remove our responsibility to obey Him. Rather, His sovereign power gives us confidence to act faithfully. We are commanded to proclaim the gospel, make disciples, serve the church, and pursue holiness, knowing that God accomplishes His purposes through the means He has appointed.

When faced with a difficult responsibility, do not measure the likelihood of success merely by your own strength or resources. Instead, consider what God has commanded and trust Him with the outcome. Our responsibility is faithfulness; the results belong to the Lord.

Scriptural Prayer:

Today, pray through Psalm 20:7

example: Almighty God, forgive me for placing too much confidence in human strength, personal ability, and worldly resources. Remind me that true victory belongs to You alone. Help me trust Your sovereign power while remaining faithful to the responsibilities You have given me. Give me courage to serve Your church, proclaim the gospel, and pursue holiness without being discouraged by the obstacles before me. May my confidence always rest in Your faithfulness rather than my own strength. In Jesus' name, amen.

Friday: God's Purposes Cannot Be Defeated

Reading: Judges 4:17–22

Focus Verse: Judges 4:21 (ESV)

"*But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent peg, and took a hammer in her hand. Then she went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple until it went down into the ground, while he was lying fast asleep from weariness. So he died.*"

Study Question:

How does Jael's defeat of Sisera fulfill Deborah's earlier prophecy in Judges 4:9, and what does this unexpected outcome teach us about God's sovereign control over human events?

Personal Application:

Sisera escapes the battlefield and seeks refuge in the tent of Jael, believing he has found safety. However, the very place where he expects protection becomes the place of his defeat. Through Jael's unexpected actions, God's promise concerning Sisera is fulfilled.

The account reminds us that God's purposes are not limited by human expectations. The commander who possessed overwhelming military strength is ultimately defeated through an ordinary tent peg. What appears powerful in the eyes of the world cannot stand against the sovereign will of God.

We should also recognize that this passage describes a particular event in Israel's history rather than establishing a general pattern for Christian conduct. The New Testament calls believers to love their enemies, pursue peace, and leave vengeance to God. The central lesson is not that Christians should imitate Jael's violent actions, but that God faithfully accomplishes His purposes, often through unexpected means.

Consider the circumstances in your life that seem beyond your control. You may not understand why God has allowed a particular difficulty, but you can trust that His wisdom and power are never limited. His promises remain certain even when His methods surprise us.

Scriptural Prayer:

Today, pray through Isaiah 46:9–10

example: Sovereign Lord, You alone are God, and there is none like You. Your purposes stand, and nothing can prevent You from accomplishing Your will. Forgive me for the times I have doubted Your power because I could not understand my circumstances. Teach me to trust Your wisdom even when Your ways are unexpected. Help me rest in the certainty of Your promises and remember that You are always working according to Your perfect purposes. In Jesus' name, amen.

Saturday: God Alone Deserves the Glory

Reading: Judges 4:23–24

Focus Verse: Judges 4:23 (ESV)

"*So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the people of Israel*."

Study Question:

Why does the author of Judges specifically identify God as the one who subdued Jabin, and how does this conclusion help us understand the central message of the entire chapter?

Personal Application:

Judges 4 concludes by directing our attention away from Deborah, Barak, and Jael and toward the Lord Himself. Although each person has played a role in Israel's deliverance, Scripture declares that God subdued Jabin. The victory belongs to Him.

This conclusion helps us understand the larger message of Judges. Israel repeatedly sins, suffers under oppression, cries out for deliverance, and experiences God's mercy. Yet the repeated cycle also reveals the need for something greater than temporary military rescue. Israel needs a Deliverer who can address the sinful hearts that continually lead the nation into rebellion.

Jesus Christ is that greater Deliverer. Unlike the judges of Israel, Christ does not merely provide temporary relief from earthly enemies. Through His sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection, He delivers His people from the guilt and dominion of sin and secures their eternal salvation.

As you reflect upon this week's study, consider whether your life gives proper glory to God. When you experience success, overcome difficulties, or see spiritual growth, do you recognize His gracious work? Our salvation is entirely dependent upon His grace, and our obedience should be an expression of gratitude for what He has accomplished through Jesus.

Scriptural Prayer:

Today, pray through 1 Corinthians 15:57

example: Heavenly Father, thank You for the victory You have given us through our Lord Jesus Christ. I praise You because salvation does not depend upon my strength, goodness, or accomplishments, but upon Your sovereign grace. Forgive me for the times I have taken credit for blessings that come from Your hand. Help me live with gratitude, humility, and faithful obedience. May everything I do bring glory to You, and may my life point others to the salvation found in Jesus Christ alone. In His holy name, amen.

Closing Thought

Judges chapter 4 begins with Israel's unfaithfulness and ends with God's victory. Between these two events, we see the weakness of human faith, the certainty of God's promises, and the surprising ways in which He accomplishes His purposes. Deborah faithfully declares God's Word, Barak acts despite his hesitation, and Jael becomes the unexpected instrument of Sisera's defeat. The chapter does not conclude by praising human achievement. Instead, it declares that God Himself subdued Israel's enemy.

This should shape how we understand both our salvation and our daily Christian lives. We are not saved because we possess greater wisdom, strength, or righteousness than others. We are saved because God, in His mercy, has acted through Jesus Christ to accomplish what we could never accomplish for ourselves. Just as Israel could not overcome its enemy apart from God's intervention, sinners cannot overcome the guilt and power of sin apart from the saving work of Jesus.

However, God's sovereign grace should never lead us toward spiritual laziness. The same Lord who determines the outcome also calls His people to faithful obedience. Barak was commanded to go into battle, and Christians are commanded to follow Christ, proclaim His gospel, love His church, and make disciples. We do not obey in order to earn God's favor, but because we have received His grace and belong to Him.

As you finish this week's study, remember that the greatest victory in the Christian life is not found in our accomplishments, circumstances, or abilities. It is found in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we can face uncertainty with confidence, obey God's Word with courage, and serve Him with humility.

The God who faithfully delivered Israel is the same sovereign God who has secured our salvation through Jesus Christ. Let us trust His promises, obey His Word, and give Him the glory for all that He accomplishes.