

DEBORAH AND BARAK

Judges 4, 5

Lesson Memory Verse: I Corinthians 1:27b – “God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.”

Lesson Aim: God uses people that are weak, so children who are willing to obey God can serve Him.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes)

KEY (for Attention): Can you tell me of some things that appear to be very weak, but can become very strong? Let me give you one to start with. A little fire on a match stick is so weak you can blow it out with your mouth; but let that little fire start to burn your house and it takes many men with much fire-fighting equipment to put it out. (Some others might be: 1) a snowflake is very weak by itself, but when billions of them fall on roads and highways they are strong enough to stop cars and trucks; 2) a raindrop is very weak by itself, but when billions of them fall, they can destroy a city and stop an army. (The raindrop illustration should be used in the introduction because it is a part of the Bible story.) In today's Bible story God uses several weak things to give His people a great victory. Let's find out what they are so we can be sure that God can use us, too, even though we may feel very weak at times. And we really are very weak without God, aren't we?

HE (for Authority): In our memory verse for today (I Cor. 1:27b) we learn that God chooses weak things to confound (that is, to confuse or to puzzle) things that are mighty (that is, things that are strong and powerful). We can be encouraged by this verse because we are very weak against Satan, our enemy, and yet God can make us stronger than he if we will trust Him and do exactly what He says. Our Bible story will tell us how God did this very thing for Deborah and Barak when He chose them to fight against some followers of Satan who were much stronger than they. Listen carefully to the story and learn what God did.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): (Tell the story in a natural flowing manner and only use this outline to help you remember the different parts of the story, making only those applications that fit your class' needs.) **Be sure to read this story from the Bible many times before reading these notes. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.**

I. Problem (Judges 4:1-3; 5:6-8)

A. Israel did evil again and the Lord punished them again by letting the Canaanites rule over them (4:1, 2)

WE: We never get away with sin. God will always punish us for it.

B. The Canaanites were very powerful because they had 900 chariots of iron and they ruled Israel for 20 years (4:3).

WE: We will find that God will let Satan become very powerful in our lives, if we love our sins. Our sins will make us very miserable.

C. The Canaanites were so cruel that no one dared to travel on the highways, but they had to take the back roads (5:6). Also, the villages without walls were emptied and people went to the cities with walls where they would find more protection (5:7). Israel was weak under the rule of the Canaanites.

D. Israel was stripped of all its weapons and so they were very, very weak for warfare (5:8).

WE: We will become very, very weak, if we sin.

II. Prophetess (Judges 4:4-9)

A. God used a woman to help comfort Israel in their time of trouble. Her name was Deborah (4:4, 5). Maybe there was no man that God could trust and so He chose one of His weaker servants to judge Israel because she could be trusted to obey Him.

WE: We may be the weakest of all God's servants, but He can use us, if we trust Him and obey Him.

B. Deborah called on Barak to lead 10,000 men against Sisera, captain of the Canaanites. What kind of weapons Barak's men had is not known, but Deborah promised they would win the battle because God would give him the victory even though the Canaanites had 900 chariots of iron (4:6, 7)

WE: If we have faith in God, He promises us victory over Satan, We can have that victory even though we are weak.

C. Barak was afraid to go without Deborah. Barak had faith (Heb. 11:32, but it had to be helped by a woman. God used a weak woman to encourage this man of war (4:8, 9)

WE: We must not be afraid to obey God's commands. We can do all things through Christ because He will give us strength (Phil. 4:13).

III. Preparations (Judges 4:10-14; 5:12-18)

A. Several tribes of Israel sent men to help Barak fight against Sisera and the Canaanites. The strongest supporters were Zebulun and Naphtali (4:10; 5:18). Other tribes who helped were Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir (probably Manasseh on the west side of Jordan), and Issachar (5:14, 15). It was good for them to help each other in this fight.

WE: We should help one another in the fight against Satan.

B. Some tribes that did not come to help Barak were Reuben, Gilead (probably Gad and Manasseh on the east side of Jordan), Dan and Asher (5:11-17). A strong curse was placed on Meroz for not helping the Lord when they were needed (5:23). This probably is an indirect rebuke on all of the tribes that refused to help.

WE: We will be scolded and maybe we will be punished by the Lord, if we do not help fellow Christians.

C. Sisera made preparations for war, too. He had been warned by Heber, a distant relative of Moses, that Barak was getting ready to attack. Therefore, Sisera got his 900 chariots and other soldiers ready for war (4:11-13).

WE: We need to know that Satan is prepared to fight against us. Do not think he is asleep. Therefore, we must not be over-confident and think we can win the battle without the Lord's help. He is too strong for us to fight him without God.

D. Barak had one advantage over Sisera. He knew exactly the right time to begin the fight because he got a special message from God through Deborah on the very day that he was told to go (4:14; 5:12). Barak believed the Lord and he obeyed Him. That was the most important preparation of all for Barak to make – spiritual preparation. Barak was prepared to obey God without doubting Barak was a man of faith when it counted.

WE: We must be prepared to fight sin and Satan whenever He tells us to do it. Victory over Satan comes by careful obedience to the Lord's commands in the Bible.

IV. Pursuit (Judges 4:15-22; 5:19-27)

A. The Lord confused Sisera and his men by sending a rainstorm that made the battlefield so muddy he could not use his chariots (4:15; 5:20-22). The weak little raindrops became more powerful than the 900 chariots of Sisera and the raindrops that were sent from God won the battle.

WE: We must give the Lord credit for every victory that we get over sin and Satan, even though He uses weak things to do it.

B. Barak had to have his army on the battlefield at just the right time to get help from God. If he had gone too early or too late, the rainstorm that God sent would not have stopped Sisera (4:15, 16; 5:19). But Barak was on time because he listened to God.

WE: We must learn to be in the right place at the right time to be blessed with God's victory.

C. Sisera tried to get away when he saw he was beaten by Barak, but he made the mistake of asking Heber's wife, Jael, for help and protection. God put it in her heart to destroy him while he slept in

her tent (4:17-21; 5:24-27). God used another weak servant to strike down this strong enemy of His people.

WE: We may find that Satan will try to flee from the battle to attack us at another time. Fight him and his followers until they are defeated. Do not make peace with his followers until they repent of their sins.

D. Barak pursued after Sisera, but God did not let him destroy his enemy because Barak had not been willing to fight without Deborah's help. This showed that Barak did not have full trust in the Lord but needed a woman to help him (4:8, 9, 22). Therefore, God let Jael, a woman, get the honor of destroying wicked Sisera.

WE: We should never doubt any of God's Word, if we want to be fully used of God. God will use the weakest believer that trusts and obeys Him; He will give him the victory.

V. Prosperity (Judges 4:23, 24; 5:28-31)

A. God gave Israel the victory over the Canaanites and Jabin, their king (4:23). Without God there would have been no victory.

WE: We must trust God to give us victories in our fight against Satan, against the sins of the flesh and against the wicked ways of the world (Cor. 15:57; Rom. 8:37).

B. Israel's warriors had to fight to get the victory (4:24). God does not bless laziness. Israel may have been weak, but Israel had to work, using God's power to give them the victory.

WE: We must work with God if we would win (Phil. 2:12, 13; 1 Cor. 5:20; 6:1).

C. Sisera's mother and her wise ladies were really foolish because they believed Sisera would easily win the battle against the Israelites (5:28-30). They probably trusted his ability, his 900 chariots and his greater strength to win the battle, but they forgot that a man without God is very weak against a man with God.

WE: We are foolish if we have confidence in ourselves, in our friends, in our police or in our armies to give us victory. We must learn to depend on the Lord (Ps. 147:10, 11; Ps. 20:7; Prov. 21:31). Now God may use our friends, our pastors, our police, etc. to give us victory, but we must not trust in them. We must trust only in God. When God gives the victory, we have real rest and peace (John 14:27; 16:33).

VI. Praise (Judges 5:1-5, 9-12)

A. Deborah and Barak praised the Lord for the victories He gave to them (5:2, 9).

WE: We are to praise the Lord always (1 Thess. 5:18).

B. The people were to tell each other of God's victories over and over again so they would never forget them (5:11). This would bring continued praise to God from their lips.

WE: We need to repeat the story of God's victories over and over again so we will never forget them (Deut. 6:6, 7).

B. Deborah wrote a song to keep this victory on the hearts and minds of the people (5:12).

WE: We need to sing the songs of God's victories and God's great salvation (Eph. 5:19).

C. God gave Israel rest from war for forty years (5:31).

BE (for Action): I am sure you want God to give you victory like He gave to Deborah and Barak. What do you think is the greatest victory that God wants to give to everybody? (Salvation from sin and Satan) What do you think keeps people from having that victory? (They do not think that they are going to Hell; they think they are good enough to go to Heaven without asking Jesus to save them; they are afraid someone will laugh at them if they ask Jesus to save them.)

Can you name some other victories God wants to give you? (Victories over sinful habits; victories over new temptations to do wrong; and victories in doing things that are right.) Do you want God to help you get that victory? If so, raise your hand and I will pray for you. And if you want to talk to me about it after class, stay in the classroom after I dismiss the class and we will talk about it.