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## Adventure #3: Barak

Judges 4

September 24, 2023

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### DAILY DEVOTION

Find a rhythm in God's word this week! Follow this 5-day plan on your own or with your group!

<https://my.bible.com/reading-plans/29941>

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### INSPIRATION

"In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman."  
—Margaret Thatcher

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### ICE BREAKER

1. Talk about a time when you felt so strongly about an issue that you knew you needed to act on it without hesitation, but still wanted someone else to affirm you before moving forward. Did you move forward with or without that affirmation? How did you feel about your decision afterwards?
  2. What does your first name mean? Your last name? Do you have a name that suggests something adventurous about your or your family's history?
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### DEEP DIVE

#### Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:

"So, Thunderbolt [*Barak; Hebrew: bah RAHQ; rhymes with "raw HAWK"*]— and the nation of Israel have been suffering for 20 years. Their crops have been destroyed. Their army is at a low point. They have no weapons to defend themselves. They don't have a shield and they don't have a sword.\* The Canaanites are in charge."

\*See Deborah's Song in the next chapter, specifically Judges 5:8.

**Study Leader note:** If people are having trouble finding the book of Judges in their Bibles, give them guidance, like "It's the seventh book of the Bible," or "It comes right after Joshua in the Old Testament."



**Read Judges 4:1–7 and then answer the following questions:**

Background: The book of Judges recounts several stories of Israel's fledgling theocracy between the time they moved into and began settling and claiming the Promised Land up to the time they demanded their first king. Most of the stories of the judges have a cycle of falling away ("doing evil in the Lord's sight") from God, oppression by a foreign power, cry for deliverance ("We've had enough!"), calling a judge to lead, miraculous deliverance from their enemies, repentance with rededication, and a time of peace. Keep this in mind as we go through the study.

3. The world is a crazy place, and many people are seeking meaning and purpose to escape the craziness. Some of you may have come to this small group or to StoneBridge as a place to find that purpose. Based on the passage we just read, do you identify more with Barak, Deborah, Sisera, or someone else in the story? Why did you choose that person?
4. Most of us experience various "seasons" in our lives—some are great, some are challenging, and some are even devastating at times, much like God's people experienced throughout the book of Judges. For whatever reason, Barak expected Deborah to go with him into battle. What are your expectations of StoneBridge as a church and of this group? What is the vision you have for you and your family in being part of this congregation? What are some fair expectations we can have of each other as we navigate this adventure of faith?

**Read this out loud**

An excerpt from the message this week:

"Maybe he just needed a little reassurance. We all do from time to time – but this revealed a lack of faith. He didn't need Deborah at all – God was going to deliver – but I guess he figured – well God is not going to let his prophetess die – he is not going to let the leader of our country die. He might let me die – but he is not going to let Deborah die – so I need her to go with me."

**Read Judges 4:8–10, 15–16, and 5:1–5. Then answer the following questions:**

5. Chapter 4 doesn't give us the weather report from the battle, but chapter 5 does. Whether that is an allusion to Barak's name, or an actual thunderstorm, something happens in the battle that neutralizes Sisera's 900 iron chariots. How have you seen God confound your enemies or otherwise bring you a victory that you may not have been able to see through the intensity of your storm?
6. A few years ago, the theme of the Men's Retreat was "Show Up." Just because Barak asked Deborah to show up didn't mean he couldn't recruit an army of 10,000. He did succeed in that, which is no small accomplishment. How have you benefited yourself or others by "showing up" that is, being present in situations you either felt called by God to be in or were in the "right" place at the "right" time?
7. Pastor Mark gives three nuggets of wisdom to close out his message:
  - If you are an enemy of God and his people, be careful which tent you go into. Just saying.
  - If you are not careful, evil will conquer you.
  - Faithful people show up.



Each one of these can have relevance depending on the season of life you're in, where you're at in the "Judges Cycle." If you're willing, talk about which one of these nuggets speaks to you most prominently at the place you're at with God and Jesus right now?

### **Additional Study**

If you have time during your Small Group or you want to study more about the message topic, read and consider the following passages:

- Judges 4–5 in one sitting
- Isaiah 36–37
- Ezekiel 37:1–14
- Daniel 3
- 2 Corinthians 10:1–6
- Ephesians 6:10–20

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### **NEXT STEPS**

8. How are you going to apply the lessons learned in the message this week?
9. What can you do to encourage someone in your group to take their next step?

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### **PRAYER**

1. After sharing prayer requests, pray for the person on your right. Pray for that person throughout the week.
2. Is there someone in your group that could use a prayerful reminder that God is present in their lives?

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### **SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY**

Establish a regular rhythm of serving together! Below are some service opportunities.

- BENSON - Local Mission Partner is ABIDE. Contact Campus Pastor for more information.
- MILLARD - Local Mission Partner is Heartland Hope. Contact Campus Pastor for more information.
- FREMONT - Local Mission Partner is LifeHouse. Contact Campus Pastor for more information.
- OMAHA - Local Mission Partner is Open Door Mission. Contact Lyndsey Deyoe for more information.
- Or get to know your community! Seek out service opportunities in your area.